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## FACT SHEET

### Central African Republic

The European Union (EU) is a key partner of the Central African Republic (CAR) and the country's main donor. Relations are bound by the Cotonou Agreement.

Even before the current crisis, CAR faced a daunting mix of governance, economic, social, and humanitarian as well as security challenges. In response, the EU has been committed in many critical areas to support longer-term socio-economic recovery, in the framework of a comprehensive state- and peacebuilding agenda, and to help build a more stable country.

The EU has been concerned about the continuously deteriorating security, political and humanitarian situation in CAR, especially throughout 2012.

The staggered implementation of previous peace agreements, combined with chronic under-development and the country's long experience of political instability, led to the outbreak of a new conflict in December 2012. Despite the signature on 11 January 2013 in Libreville of a political agreement initiating a transition period, tensions culminated in the violent seizure of power and the unconstitutional change of government by SELEKA rebel groups in March 2013.

The current crisis is affecting the majority of the population (4.6 million, half of them children). As of 24 September, there were 394,900 IDPs in CAR and nearly 61,000 Central Africans have sought refuge in neighboring countries (OCHA). Humanitarian access has been restricted by insecurity. Lack of access makes it difficult to monitor the overall humanitarian situation. The EU has taken the lead in advocacy and funding on CAR among humanitarian donors, and has had a permanent humanitarian presence in Bangui since long before the latest events.

The situation in the CAR is having a potential destabilizing impact which could spread to the region.

#### FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780 - [Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu) @EUHighRepSpox  
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - [Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu) @AshtonSpox Maja  
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - [Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu)  
Iulia Costea +32 460 75 07 17 - [Iulia.Costea@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Iulia.Costea@ec.europa.eu)

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The lack of official security forces further increases the risk of the country becoming a safe haven for criminal and armed groups from the neighboring countries.

The country, which previously has already been characterized as an archetype of a “fragile state”, is now confronted with a total breakdown of law and order and the collapse of state institutions.

The Libreville Agreements and the N’Djamena declaration of 18 April, both brokered by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), continue to provide the basis for political resolution of the crisis in the Central African Republic. According to the framework developed by ECCAS, a transitional Charter and transitional authorities have been put in place to lead the 18-month transition period that should lead up to the organization of general elections by the beginning of 2015 and the re-establishment of constitutional order.

The restoration of security and public order remain the immediate priorities to stabilize the country in support of the political process. Improving humanitarian coverage and re-launching development assistance are directly linked to positive developments in the security situation.

### **EU response to the crisis**

Since the outbreak of new violence late 2012, the EU has intensified its outreach to partners. It is actively engaged in international and regional efforts to stabilize the situation in the CAR and to restore a more stable government in the country. Commissioner Georgieva has visited the country twice in 2013 (most recently, on 13 October, for a joint mission with French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius), and co-chaired a ministerial meeting on the humanitarian crisis in CAR at the 2013 UN General Assembly with France and the UN.

In June 2013, the EU dispatched an inter-service mission (EEAS, Commission) to the CAR to review the situation on the ground and EU’s options. As part of the recommended comprehensive set of urgent actions that could be taken by the EU to further support stabilization and the fragile political process, the European Commission adopted mid-August a €10 million stabilization program in response to the post-coup crisis under the Instrument of Stability (IfS). The program has been designed to ensure complementarity with on-going projects funded under the 10th EDF (European Development Fund). The different components of the program:

1. include an initial support package for civilian security forces, through a pilot action on restoring elements of the police and gendarmerie in the capital;
2. support the reinstatement of the capacities of independent media in order to contribute to the availability of objective and conflict sensitive information in Bangui and the provinces;
3. aim to prevent further human rights violations through the deployment of human rights observation missions, to be carried out by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR);
4. focus on fostering inter-community dialogue and the de-escalation of rising tensions between Christians and Muslims.

In line with the findings of the inter-service mission, a re-adjustment exercise has been launched by EU Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs, to better fit the existing EU development assistance to the new needs (see below).

The EU remains strongly committed to support the transition process in the CAR.

## **EU Humanitarian Aid**

The priority of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Office's (ECHO) in the Central African Republic is to assist the most vulnerable people in the conflict areas of the country. The initial €8 million envelope for 2013 has been increased to €20 million, making the EU (ECHO) the country's main donor. These funds are being used to support protection, access to health care, food and nutrition assistance interventions, drinking-water distribution, sanitation services, logistics and humanitarian coordination as well as catering for the needs of the conflict-affected. The funding also supports an enhanced capacity for emergency humanitarian response of UN agencies and NGOs.

Due to difficult access to people in need of humanitarian assistance in CAR, the European Commission also supports the United Nations Humanitarian Aid Service (UNHAS) with €650 000.

A team of EU (ECHO) humanitarian experts is on the ground and monitoring the situation, assessing needs, overseeing the use of EU funds, and working closely with EU Member States and other donors. The EU works with those humanitarian organizations that are best placed to deliver assistance in CAR (UNICEF, the International Committee of the Red Cross, UNOCHA and several NGOs).

The EU (ECHO) has been supporting life-saving activities in CAR since 2001 with a total budget of €63.7 million, and has been leading efforts to raise the profile of a humanitarian crisis that has for many years been 'forgotten'.

## **EU Development Assistance**

The EU has also provided over the years development assistance to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable people. With the events in December 2012 and March 2013, EU development assistance has not been suspended but has been partly put on hold for security reasons. Our priorities are being adapted in the light of the situation on the ground. Priority will now be given to labor-intensive infrastructure programs in Bangui area to provide direct support to the population and to technical assistance to help restore the administration.

Between 2008 and 2013, around €225 million have been allocated for the whole country through the different financial instruments (€160 million through the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) and €65 million through the EU budget).

Additional measures to support civil society organizations and local authorities, democracy and human rights related activities but also to contribute to forestry governance are funded under several thematic instruments coming from the EU budget.

## **Support for MICOPAX / AFISM-CAR**

In the past, CAR hosted several regional and international peace-support operations. The current one is the MICOPAX operation, deployed since July 2008, falls under the responsibility of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). MICOPAX was expected to be phased out until the new crisis erupted at the end of 2012. It played an important stabilization role, but given its limited troop numbers, it was however unable to stop SELEKA rebels from entering the Capital, Bangui.

The crisis lead ECCAS to request to reconfigure MICOPAX with a new mandate to restore stability, protect civilians, support the CAR security forces and the organization of elections. Troop levels

increased accordingly from initial 700 to more than 2,300 men. Via the African Peace Facility (APF), the EU has supported MICOPAX and its predecessor (FOMUC) since 2008 with an amount of €90 million.

On 18 July 2013, African Union Political and Security Committee approved the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (AFISM-CAR) to the country. It will have a wider mandate than MICOPAX and will also dispose of additional troops (up to 3,500).

Though ECCAS troops will constitute its backbone, it will also allow for other countries to contribute. The transfer of responsibility between ECCAS/MICOPAX and the AU/AFISM-CAR is expected to take place before the end of 2013. The EU is willing to provide financial support to AFISM-CAR within its limit of available resources.

#### **More information**

[Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions – 21 October](#)

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