COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Council conclusions on West Africa's EPA Development Programme (PAPED)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 17 March 2014

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1 The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) is an important step for the partnership between West Africa and the European Union, in coherence with the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, for sustainable economic development that can benefit the West African population including its poorest segments.

2. In this context, the EU reaffirms the principles of the Council conclusions of 10 May 2010 concerning the EPA Development Programme (PAPED) and the importance of national and regional ownership. In addition, the EU welcomes the efforts and progress which West African countries and regional institutions have made to foster regional integration. The Council recalls the fundamental role of regional integration as being instrumental in securing peace, stability and sustainable economic development, as well as its political commitment in support of aid for trade and to mobilise financial flows.

3. Support to the PAPED from the EU, its Member States and the European Investment Bank (EIB) during the period 2010-2014 has already exceeded the Council's commitment of 6.5 billion euros and reached more than 8.2 billion euros in funding. In the next years, the EU stands committed to again provide at least 6.5 billion euros for activities linked to the PAPED in West Africa for the 2015-2020 period from all its financing instruments, those of its Member States and the EIB.

4. Support to the PAPED will be in line with the principles and objectives of EU development cooperation as well as the Agenda for Change, the objectives of the Doha Development Agenda and with the decisions taken at the WTO's 9th Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia, on 3-6 December 2013. It will be delivered and implemented in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, notably the 11th EDF National and Regional Indicative Programmes, as well as the relevant instruments of the EU general budget, aid mechanisms of Member States willing to support the PAPED and the EIB, while also assisting West Africa in increasing its absorption capacities."

P R E S S

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