



**COUNCIL OF
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Santo Domingo, 19 April 2007
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EU-ANDEAN COMMUNITY MINISTERIAL MEETING

Santo Domingo, 19 April 2007

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

The XIII Ministerial Meeting between the Andean Community and the European Union took place in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on 19 April 2007.

The Meeting was co-chaired by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Religious Affairs of the Republic of Bolivia, Mr. David Choquehuanca and President Pro Tempore of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Andean Community, and by Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany and President in-office of the Council of the European Union. The General Secretariat of the Andean Community was represented by its Secretary General, Mr. Freddy Ehlers. The European Commission was represented by Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy. The meeting was also attended by Mr Javier Solana, Secretary General of the Council of the European Union and EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

P R E S S

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Ministers assessed the initiatives undertaken since the last high-level meeting held in Brussels on 12/13 July 2006, in relation to the future negotiations on an Association Agreement between the CAN and the EU. The discussions focused also on Regional Integration, Fight against Drugs, Rule of Law and Sustainable Human Development.

Member States of CAN and the European Union were also represented by their ministers of Foreign Affairs.

I. Regional Integration, Negotiations on an Association Agreement CAN-EU

Following the decision taken at the Vienna Summit of May 2006 and in the High Level Meeting of July 2006 held in Brussels, the Ministers underlined the important progress achieved by the Andean Community in key sectors of regional economic integration.

In this context, the Ministers emphasized the importance to conclude the envisaged Association Agreement between the two regions as soon as possible. Therefore, the Ministers expressed the intention to start the negotiations in La Paz, Bolivia at the margins of the next EU-CAN Joint Committee that will be held in the last week of May 2007. In this respect, it is expected that the CAN will continue making further progress in the definition of a common tariff reduction point, as well as in the process of taking the necessary decisions on the harmonization of the Andean Customs Regimes.

The Andean Community will spare no effort to improve conditions for intraregional trade by introducing measures facilitating cross-border road transport.

Both parties considered that the Association Agreement will contribute to eradicate poverty, strengthening social cohesion and reduce the asymmetries between and within each of the regions.

II. Sustainable Human Development

Convinced that Sustainable Human Development has as priority objective the eradication of poverty, they agreed that this objective should underpin the relation between the Andean Community and the European Union. Ministers recognized the diversity of models of economic and social organization to achieve this objective.

On the other hand, Ministers agreed that the improvement of living conditions of people is not possible without the respect of the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources.

III. Fight against illicit drugs

In accordance with the discussion within the XIII. Ministerial Meeting of the EU-Rio Group, ministers recalled their policies based on the Panama Action Plan and reiterated their commitment to approach the global fight against drugs from all its angles: control of demand, control of supply, diversion of precursors, illicit traffic of drugs (including synthetic drugs), related and associated crimes, money laundering and arms traffic. In addition, they welcomed the efforts made by the CAN in the fight against production and traffic of narcotic drugs and they committed to intensify the cooperation and to strengthen the initiatives with the Andean countries to deepening joined action as to ensure more effective results against drugs, under the principles of a comprehensive and multilateral approach as well as shared responsibility, with the aim of a well balanced cooperation.

In this perspective, they reiterated their conviction that the alternative, sustainable and comprehensive development constitute one the best tools in the context of socio-economic strategies to promote social inclusion and to eradicate extreme poverty.

They acknowledged that the principle of multilateralism entails associating others international actors in the fight against drugs. In this sense, the meetings of the EU-CAN High-Level Specialised Dialogue on Drugs and of the Joint Group for the follow-up of the agreements Precursors and Controlled Chemicals, which will be held in Colombia at the end of 2007, will allow to examine at the appropriate political level new possibilities for a multilateral approach in the cooperation in the fight against drugs.

IV. Rule of Law

Ministers recognized that the respect for the independence of democratic institutions is key to maintain the rule of law. They agreed to continue their cooperation focused in particular on supporting social cohesion. They underlined the importance of respecting the legitimacy of the democratic institutions, the rule of law, the division of powers, the independence of the judiciary and respect for human rights as essential elements in this process.

Within this line, they agreed that strengthening democratic institutions is fundamental to ensure the important role that is attached to the human dimension of development.