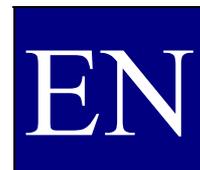




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Luxembourg, 26 May 2005
9430/05 (Presse 128)

**Andean Community-EU Ministerial meeting
Luxembourg, 26 May 2005**

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

1. The meeting of the EU Ministers with the Ministers of the Andean Community held in Luxembourg on 26 May 2005 was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Mr Jean Asselborn, President of the EU Council. The Andean Community delegation was led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr Alí Rodríguez Araque. The General Secretariat of the Andean Community was represented by Ambassador Allan Wagner, Secretary General. The European Commission was represented by Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations. Bulgaria and Romania, as acceding States to the EU, attended the meeting as active observers.

P R E S S

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2. The Ministers reaffirmed that the conclusion of an Association Agreement between the European Union and the Andean Community, including a Free Trade Area, remained their common strategic objective, as declared in May 2004 in Guadalajara. In this context they welcomed the launching of the joint assessment exercise on regional economic integration in January 2005 and the setting up of an ad hoc joint Working Group which is scheduled to meet three times in 2005 to complete the said assessment. The assessment will lead, in due course, to negotiations.

No effort will be spared to ensure that the Doha Round advances as much as possible towards its rapid conclusion. Any Free Trade Agreement shall be built upon the outcome of the Doha Development Agenda and the realization of a sufficient level of regional economic integration.

Ministers applauded the constructive spirit in which the first meeting of the Working Group was conducted in Lima in April 2005, and reaffirmed that the Joint Committee established by the Cooperation Agreement between the Andean Community and the EU would meet, if possible, before the end of 2005 to discuss the results of the joint assessment. The EU Ministers recalled that an important part of its technical assistance at regional level focuses on regional integration. This contributes to the common strategic objective as referred to in the Guadalajara Declaration. The Andean Community Ministers expressed their expectation to launch negotiations of an Association Agreement, including a Free Trade Agreement, at the Vienna Summit to be held in May 2006.

3. The Ministers stressed the importance of strengthening relations between the two regions and reiterated the need to continue to promote their partnership. They noted the importance of implementation of the 2003 Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement, and recalled that this agreement will considerably reinforce the already close relations between the European Union and the Andean Community.

The Andean Community Ministers informed the EU side that the 2003 Agreement had already been adopted through Foreign Affairs Council Decision N° 595 of July 11, 2004.

The Andean Community Ministers thanked the EU and highlighted the importance of its development cooperation. The parties committed themselves to improving the coordination of their cooperation programmes taking into account, inter alia, the national priorities of the Andean countries, in order to enhance their impacts and improve their efficiency.

4. The Ministers reaffirmed the principle of shared responsibility as the cornerstone of the fight against illicit drugs; and emphasized the importance of ensuring a balanced, multilateral, inclusive and non-selective approach to this issue. In this vein Ministers stressed the importance of stepping up cooperation and of strengthening efforts to address, in a comprehensive way, all relevant supply and demand issues, including political and social stability, security and sustainable development.

The Ministers of the two regions recognised the importance of international cooperation to support alternative development in the Andean region in order to give productive and sustainable economic options to communities that have abandoned illegal crops.

The Ministers welcomed the forthcoming organisation of the VI Meeting for the Follow up of Chemical Precursors Agreements between the Andean Community and the European Union, and the VIII High Level Specialized Dialogue on Drugs between the Andean Community and the European Union in Lima which would allow for a more in-depth discussion and greater commitment on the issue of the fight against drugs, with the view to discuss a possible Action Programme.

5. The Ministers referred to the new system of generalised preferences (GSP), which is expected to enter into force shortly. They underlined the importance of GSP, and of the "Special incentive arrangement for promoting sustainable development and good governance".
6. The Andean Community Ministers informed the EU Ministers that the Commission of the Andean Community adopted on March 29, 2005, a Work Programme aimed at deepening economic integration, which comprises commitments and specific short term goals regarding further trade liberalization in goods and services, consolidating the customs union and strengthening the legal and institutional systems, among others. Thus, it intends significantly to push forward efforts to secure and build up the enhanced Andean market as well as its institutional framework.

The Andean Community Ministers also pointed out that the adoption of the Integrated Social Development Plan on September 21, 2004, represented a major step towards contributing to strengthen Member Countries' efforts to attain higher standards of living throughout the region, by means of actions aimed at fostering decent work for all, health and education, especially in frontier zones and rural areas.

7. The EU Ministers expressed their appreciation for the progress made. They warmly welcomed the adoption of the Work Programme. In particular, they congratulated the Andean Ministers on the Andean Integrated Social Development Plan, adopted in September 2004, which they considered a helpful tool for fostering social cohesion in the Andean Community.
8. The Ministers stressed the importance of involving civil society in the regional integration process. In this context, the European Commission noted a regional project that the EU is supporting and the first EU-CAN Civil Society Forum it organised in Brussels in March 2005.
9. The Ministers had an exchange of views on recent developments in the European Union and in the Andean region. The EU referred to its historic enlargement with the accession of ten new Member States in May 2004 and the signing of the Treaty of Accession with Romania and Bulgaria on 25 April 2005. The EU also referred to the enlargement processes initiated and the European aspirations of other countries. The EU pointed out that the enlargement dynamic had contributed to the maintenance of peace and the consolidation of democracy and to economic and social development on the European continent.
10. The EU also mentioned the draft Constitution, signed by the Heads of State or Government in October 2004. The purpose of the Constitution, following ratification by the Member States, is in particular to simplify the decision-making process in the EU and to ensure greater consistency in external policy and representation.
11. The Ministers reaffirmed their resolve to play a major role within the United Nations in general and in preparations for the United Nations Summit in September 2005 in particular. Ministers were determined that this process should result in the devising of common responses to the main development, security and human rights problems.

12. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the joint and integrated management of issues related to migration. They will maintain an open dialogue on these issues, in a spirit of partnership, and with the aim of enhancing the mutual benefits of migration, in particular for the development of source countries.

They will in particular emphasise the fight against smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings. In this sense, they acknowledge that the challenge for the states of origin, transit and destination of migrants is the formulation of suitable and adequate policies on these issues.

In addition, they will seek to ensure in their relations progress on the commitments taken by countries from Latin America, the Caribbean and the EU at the Guadalajara Summit.

13. The Ministers highlighted that development is a basic foundation for peace and security and emphasised that increased ODA is urgently needed to achieve the MDGs. They warmly welcomed the decision reached by the EU at the Council of 24 May 2005 whereby the EU agreed to a new collective EU target of 0,56% ODA/GNI by 2010, that would result in additional annual € 20bn ODA by that time, as well as to undertake to reach the UN target for ODA of 0,7% in line with the commitment made in the 2002 Monterrey Consensus, and the decisions taken by the Council of 24 May 2005. Furthermore, the two sides will continue to consider the most promising options for innovative sources of financing for development, in order to increase the resources available in a sustainable and predictable way.
14. The Andean Ministers stressed the significance of the creation of the South American Community of Nations at the III South American Presidential Summit, held in Cusco, Peru, on 8 December 2004, which will be built upon the convergence between the Andean Community and MERCOSUR integration processes as well as Chile, and shall ensure the progressive incorporation of Guyana and Suriname.

15. The Ministers also underlined their commitment to promote peace and stability in both regions through further strengthening of democracy, good governance and the rule of law, as well as guaranteeing the defence and promotion of human rights.

 16. The Ministers of the Andean Community expressed their thanks to the Government and people of Luxembourg for their warm hospitality and the excellent organisation, which contributed to making this Ministerial Meeting between the European Union and the Andean Community a complete success.
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