

(Acts adopted pursuant to Title V of the Treaty on European Union)

COMMON POSITION

of 2 June 1997

defined by the Council on the basis of Article J.2 of the Treaty on European Union, concerning
conflict prevention and resolution in Africa

(97/356/CFSP)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union and in particular Article J.2 thereof,

Having regard to the conclusions of the European Councils of Essen and Madrid,

Having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,

Whereas prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa constitute priorities for the European Union;

Whereas the primary responsibility for prevention and resolution of conflicts on the African continent lies with the Africans themselves;

Whereas the prevention and resolution of conflicts have been the subject of dialogue with the Organization of African Unity (OAU);

Whereas the UN Secretary-General has also put forward proposals on improving preparedness for conflict prevention and peacekeeping in Africa;

Whereas some other concrete proposals have already been made concerning the reinforcement of African peacekeeping capabilities,

HAS DEFINED THIS COMMON POSITION:

Article 1

1. Pursuant to the objectives of the common foreign and security policy, as defined in Article J.1 of the Treaty, the European Union shall actively support efforts in favour of the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa.

2. The Union shall pursue its policies and actions within the appropriate political and legal framework

(United Nations, OAU, subregional organizations), where necessary, and in close cooperation with the relevant bodies.

3. The policy of the Union is to facilitate African capacity and means of action in the field of conflict prevention and resolution, in particular through support for the OAU and subregional organizations and initiatives.

4. The Union shall develop a proactive, comprehensive and integrated approach, which shall also serve as a common framework for actions of individual Member States.

Article 2

While recognizing the need to respond to existing crises, the Union's policy shall also focus on preventing the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflicts, including at an early stage, and on post-conflict peace-building.

Article 3

In order to contribute better to the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa, the Union shall seek:

- to improve linkage between its efforts (policies and actions) and those of the Africans, and
- to use the various instruments available coherently to promote effective conflict prevention and resolution.

The Council notes that, in accordance with the relevant procedures, steps will be taken to ensure coordination of the efforts of the European Community and those of the Member States in this field, including with regard to development cooperation and the support for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance.

Article 4

Recognizing that the availability of arms in quantities exceeding needs for self-defence may be a factor contributing to situations of instability, the Member States shall:

- reaffirm their commitment to exercise continuing responsibility with regard to arms exports, taking full account of the eight criteria for arms exports established by the European Council⁽¹⁾,
- strengthen their efforts to 'prevent and to combat illicit trafficking of arms, and
- encourage African States to submit annual returns to the UN Register of Conventional Arms as a means of promoting transparency and building confidence.

Article 5

Where any Union initiative undertaken in furtherance of the objectives defined in Article 1 has defence implications, the Union shall request the Western European Union to elaborate and implement this initiative as regards these defence implications, in particular the use of military means, in accordance with Article J.4 (2) of the Treaty.

Article 6

On the basis of a report by the Presidency, in association with the Commission, this common position, together with the Council's conclusions of the same date, shall be reviewed after one year.

Article 7

1. The Union is ready to assist in building the capacities for conflict prevention and resolution in Africa on the basis of concrete project proposals, in particular through the OAU and African subregional organizations.

2. The Council shall decide on the principle, arrangements and financing of such projects, on the basis of an assessment to be carried out by a Union fact-finding mission.

3. The Council takes note of bilateral contributions by Member States as well as of the intention of the Commission to propose Community action in support of the objectives of this common position.

Article 8

This common position shall take effect on the day of its adoption.

Article 9

This common position shall be published in the Official Journal.

Done at Luxembourg, 2 June 1997.

For the Council

The President

H. VAN MIERLO

⁽¹⁾ The European Council of Luxembourg, June 1991 and the European Council of Lisbon, June 1992.