



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

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Subject: Council conclusions on elections in Nigeria

1. At its meeting on 9 February 2015, the Council adopted the Council conclusions set out in the annex to this note.

Council conclusions on elections in Nigeria

1. Africa's vigorous democratic culture is demonstrated by the large number of elections to be held on the continent in 2015. The European Union reaffirms its wider policy of support for peaceful, inclusive, transparent and credible elections and its readiness to assist Nigeria in this respect. The European Union will also be providing electoral support to a number of countries in Africa this year.

The European Union will be focusing with particular interest on the Nigerian Presidential, Parliamentary and Gubernatorial elections: the largest single exercise in democracy in Africa. The conduct and quality of this electoral process will be key for the future of Nigeria, the region and the continent. The EU is therefore disappointed by the postponement of the elections on the basis of security advice delivered at very late notice.

2. The European Union strongly urges the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure the necessary arrangements are in place for transparent and well-run elections. It calls on all parties to respect the independence of INEC, ensure that elections take place without further delay and enable each eligible Nigerian citizen to cast their vote fairly, including those affected by the security situation in the north east of the country.

3. The Council welcomes the signing of the "Abuja Accord", on 14 January 2015, in which political leaders committed to preventing electoral violence before, during and after the elections. It is essential for both the people of Nigeria and for Nigeria's international standing that this commitment is honoured without exception throughout the electoral process, irrespective of results. The EU would be particularly concerned by deliberate attempts to undermine the electoral process, by violent or any other means, and would have to consider swiftly how to respond. The European Union underlines that all disputes over the conduct or results of the elections should be dealt with through the proper judicial processes. In this respect, the Council calls upon the Nigerian security services to fulfill their obligation to support the constitution and to maintain law and order during the electoral process in an even-handed and proportionate manner, to allow all eligible citizens to exercise freely and peacefully their democratic rights. As the media have an important role to play in the delivery of transparent elections, the EU calls on all authorities to ensure full media freedoms and access.

4. To support these efforts the European Union has provided a package of assistance to the Nigerian electoral process totaling €35 million, and at the invitation of the Nigerian authorities, has deployed an EU electoral observation mission led by MEP Mr Santiago Fisas Ayxelà, who will be returning to Nigeria this week to undertake a continued and comprehensive assessment of the elections, in cooperation with other observer missions.
