



Press Release

Chairperson concludes official visit to Europe with meetings in Brussels with Senior NATO and EU Officials

Addis Ababa, 06 April 2011 -- The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Dr. Jean Ping, has concluded a three-day official visit to Europe, which began in London on Sunday, 3 April 2011, and ended yesterday with several important meetings at the Brussels Headquarters of the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), with Senior Officials of both organizations, including: Mr. [Herman Van Rompuy](#), the President of the EU Council, Ms Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative, and Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

During his meeting with President Van Rompuy, the Chairperson underscored the strong partnership that exists between the European Union and the African Union on many regional and global issues, including peace and security matters.

Both parties agreed to continue working closely together, within the framework of this partnership and as part of the international efforts for a resolution of the conflicts in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire.

With specific regard to Côte d'Ivoire, the Chairperson and the President stressed the need to ensure the protection of the civilian population, in line with the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, and expressed the wish that Mr. Alassane Ouattara will soon be able to assume the office of the President of the Republic to which he has been democratically elected.

On Libya, the Chairperson and his interlocutor agreed on the need for a broad-based intra-Libyan dialogue, culminating in a political dispensation that fulfills the legitimate aspirations of the Libyan people to democracy, justice and the rule of law.

The situations in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire were also discussed at the meeting between the Chairperson and High Representative Ashton, who said she was delighted to meet with Dr. Ping, and stated that the EU and AU are "close partners on many issues and we attach great value to our cooperation."

On Libya, both parties agreed on the crucial importance of EU and AU engagement in the long term, together with the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to build a solid foundation for democracy and to give the Libyan people the possibility to choose their leaders.

On Côte d'Ivoire, the Chairperson and the High Representative agreed that Mr. Alassane Ouattara will soon be able to assume the office of the President of the Republic to which he has been democratically elected. They stressed the need to promote reconciliation among all Ivoirians as a pre-requisite for long term stability and development in Côte d'Ivoire. The European Union and the African Union will co-operate closely in this effort.

Chairperson Ping also exchanged views on several issues of mutual interest with the NATO Secretary General, Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen. The meeting was followed by a discussion between the Chairperson and the North Atlantic Council on the situation in Libya, within the framework of NATO's operational cooperation with the African Union.

Both parties agreed on the importance of the role played by the AU in achieving an early and peaceful solution to the Libyan crisis, and agreed to maintain a close dialogue on Libya and other peace and security matters in Africa, including Somalia, where NATO is providing logistical and planning support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

At the conclusion of his fruitful visit, the Chairperson left Europe for Cotonou, where he will participate in the inauguration of the re-elected President of Benin, Mr. Boni Yayi. He will then travel to Niamey to witness a similar ceremony for the newly elected President of Niger, Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou.

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