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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	14 October 2019
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Cameroon
	- Council conclusions (14 October 2019)

Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on Cameroon as adopted at the 3720th meeting of the Council on 14 October 2019.

Cameroon**Council conclusions**

1. The EU welcomes the halting of prosecution by the military courts of Maurice Kamto and supporters of his party, the Cameroon Renaissance Movement, and of individuals arrested and detained in the context of the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions. These decisions are a significant gesture of goodwill.
2. Three years after the crisis began, a national dialogue recently held in Yaoundé offered a first opportunity to open up prospects for a sustainable exit from the crisis. The EU calls for this process to be continued in order to develop responses to meet the population's legitimate expectations, while encouraging the involvement of all those concerned both inside the country and from the diaspora, including women, young people and civil society.
3. The EU reiterates the importance of respecting and promoting human rights, the rule of law and the fundamental freedoms of the citizens of Cameroon. The EU will continue to call on Cameroon's authorities and institutions to act in a proportionate manner, while respecting the obligations stemming from Cameroon's Constitution and the international treaties and conventions on human rights to which Cameroon has subscribed. In particular, the principle of access to justice and the right to a fair trial before an independent court must be respected. In the face of worrying restrictions on political space, the EU considers that respect for the freedom of assembly, the freedom of expression and the involvement of civil society in the public debate are essential for any democratic and pluralistic state. For this reason, the EU calls for the whole of Cameroon's opposition to be able to express themselves freely, in accordance with the law, and to participate without hindrance in the process of national dialogue and in the local and general elections planned for 2020.

4. The EU remains concerned and strongly condemns the continued violence and the level of insecurity in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, especially where the civilian population is affected. Numerous and serious violations of human rights continue to be reported and predatory crime has become widespread. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported that severe abuses have been committed, including arbitrary arrests and detentions, the burning of homes, the excessive use of force against civilians and sexual violence. This has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis, forcing more people into exile, with almost 42 000 refugees in Nigeria and 530 000 internally displaced people in the North-West and South-West regions. The economic situation is also severely affected.
5. The EU reiterates that the primary responsibility for protecting the population and maintaining security lies with the Cameroonian authorities. Access by humanitarian organisations and health workers to the populations affected must be ensured. The fight against impunity and compensation for all victims must also be guaranteed.
6. The use of violence in these regions is not the answer. The EU reaffirms the need for all parties in Cameroon to respect the rule of law and resolve this crisis peacefully through an inclusive dialogue. In coordination with its international and regional partners, the EU will continue to support all efforts, such as the facilitation work by the Swiss authorities, able to build on this momentum.

7. The EU also reaffirms its commitment to the economic development and stability of Cameroon as a partner at the crossroads between the Sahel and Central Africa and as an important player in the fight against Boko Haram and in the peace process in the Central African Republic. Improving the stability of Cameroon will help to strengthen this cooperation, including its trade and investment dimensions. The EU expresses its hope that Cameroon will find the ways and means to achieve a national revival that will bring about the lasting reconciliation the country so greatly needs.
 8. The EU will remain committed to addressing the humanitarian needs of the populations affected and reiterates the importance of ensuring safe and unhindered humanitarian access to the entire country.
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