

The Role of the EU in ECCAS Security Architecture

Etah F. Ewane¹

¹ Albert-Ludwig University, Seminar für Wissenschaftliche Politik/Arnold Bergstraesser Institut, Freiburg, Germany

etahewane@ymail.com

ECCAS countries which constitute part of the Gulf of Guinea are richly endowed with cultural and natural resources. The abundance of petroleum, timber and other mineral resources in the sub-region have increased its economic and geopolitical importance in world economy. Despite the abundance of natural resources, ECCAS countries still face major development and security challenges. Some continue to be the playground of persistent insecurity and instability: The DR Congo has been in conflict since 1996, the Angolan civil war lasted well over 25 years, recurrent civil wars in the Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Chad, the Rwandan genocide and the bloody civil war in Burundi have been proof of the region's vulnerability to insecurity and instability. The numerous conflicts in many ECCAS countries have had far reaching repercussions on the region's economy and led to massive human rights abuses, poor governance and the non-respect of democratic values. Based on these challenges, ECCAS countries multiplied their collective efforts over the last decade towards deeper integration and have come up with common mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution. This was not without the expressed stewardship of development partners. In 1994, some Central African countries signed a non-aggression pact during the UN Consultative Council. The Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) was created in 1999 to promote, maintain and consolidate peace and security in Central Africa. In 2003, an agreement was reached to create a peacekeeping brigade (CENTBRIG) which will contribute one of the 5 brigades of the African Standby Force (ASF). However, national interests of member states and other technical problems have greatly hindered the effective operation of the ECCAS security architecture. The EU made a firm commitment and enhanced political consultations with the region in order to create a stable and peaceful Central African region within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The aim of this paper is to elucidate and critically analyse the EU's support to ECCAS security architecture with particular emphasis on military advice, training and funding. The paper will address the question of why despite such widespread support so little has been achieved in improving security in ECCAS.