



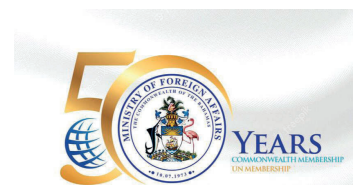
JOINT COMMUNIQUE
European Union - The Bahamas
Political Dialogue
Sunday, 22nd October 2023

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas and the European Union (EU) held their 2023 Article 8 Cotonou Agreement Political Dialogue on Sunday 22nd October in the margins of The Bahamas Diplomatic Week 2023. The Cotonou Agreement, which is the overarching framework for EU relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, requires that the Parties regularly engage in a deep political dialogue. The Dialogue seeks to facilitate consultations and strengthen cooperation between both sides while promoting a system of effective multilateralism. It also seeks to support sustainable development in the ACP states, with a view to fostering global peace and security and promoting a stable and democratic political environment.

This year, the Honourable Frederick A. Mitchell, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas and Her Excellency Marianne van Steen, Ambassador of the EU Delegation Mission Office in Jamaica, co-chaired the meeting. The Bahamas delegation was led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and included officials of the Ministries of Economic Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Health, the Environment & Natural Resources, National Security, the Offices of the Attorney-General, His Excellency Godfrey Rolle, His Excellency Stan Smith, Her Excellency Patricia Hermanns and Her Excellency Cheryl Bazard. The EU delegation included Ambassadors and representatives of Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain as well as representatives of the European Union.

The Dialogue focused on priority issues of interest to The Bahamas and the EU, including political and economic developments in a geopolitically changing landscape. The Bahamas and the EU reiterated their support for the principles of multilateralism and the rules-based international order in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Their dialogue reflected on the strong bilateral relationship built on common principles and values, sharing views on democracy and human rights, the rule of law, climate change, sustainable development, and peace and security. The Dialogue served as a platform for both sides to re-commit to building and strengthening a mutually beneficial partnership.

The Dialogue welcomed the upcoming signature of the Samoa Agreement and its entry into force during 2024, upgrading the relationship to a more equal partnership. Delegates discussed the follow-up to the successful Third EU-CELAC Summit and EU Summit with Caribbean leaders that took place in Brussels in July 2023. Those meetings centred on efforts to strengthen bi-regional relations, dialogue and cooperation, the launching of the EU's Global Gateway Investment Agenda and the EU-funded cooperation programmes in The Bahamas.



Delegates expressed concern over the political and economic developments in a geopolitically challenging landscape characterized by rampant insecurity and complex, multi-layered crises in Haiti, the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and the security and humanitarian situation in the Middle East. The Dialogue supported the call for compliance with international humanitarian law, norms and principles in conflict affected areas.

Delegates discussed matters pertaining to development cooperation, trade and investment, good governance, migration, and organized crime. Frank discussions took place on the EU listings addressing money-laundering, the financing of terrorism, and tax governance. The Bahamas, although optimistic about the recommendations of the OECD Forum on Harmful Tax Practices review at the end of this month, reiterated its interest to see the UN's role in tax-norm shaping and rule setting increased.

