

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

CO-OPERATION IN POLITICAL MATTERS

ARTICLE 123

Political Affairs

1. In order to promote the achievement of the objectives of the Community as set out in Article 5 of this Treaty particularly with respect to the eventual establishment of a Political Federation of the Partner States, the Partner States shall establish common foreign and security policies.
2. For purposes of paragraph 1 of this Article, the Community and its Partner States shall define and implement common foreign and security policies.
3. The objectives of the common foreign and security policies shall be to:
 - (a) safeguard the common values, fundamental interests and independence of the Community;
 - (b) strengthen the security of the Community and its Partner States in all ways;
 - (c) develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
 - (d) preserve peace and strengthen international security among the Partner States and within the Community;
 - (e) promote co-operation at international fora; and
 - (f) enhance the eventual establishment of a Political Federation of the Partner States.
4. The Community shall pursue the objectives set out in paragraph 3 of this Article by:
 - (a) establishing systematic co-operation between the Partner States on any matter of foreign or security policies of general interest within the Community in order to define a common position to be applied by the Partner States;
 - (b) the co-ordination of the actions of the Partner States and the upholding by them of such co-ordinated actions in international organisations and at international conferences;

- (c) the unreserved support of the Partner States of the Community's foreign and security policies and the avoidance by the Partner States of any action on their part which is contrary to the interests of the Community or is likely to impair the effectiveness of the Community as a cohesive force in international relations;
 - (d) peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts between and within the Partner States;
 - (e) the co-ordination of the defence policies of the Partner States; and
 - (f) the promotion of co-operation among the National Assemblies of the Partner States and also with the Assembly.
5. The Council shall determine when the provisions of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of this Article shall become operative and shall prescribe in detail how the provisions of this Article shall be implemented.
 6. The Summit shall initiate the process towards the establishment of a Political Federation of the Partner States by directing the Council to undertake the process.
 7. For purposes of paragraph 6 of this Article, the Summit may order a study to be first undertaken by the Council.

ARTICLE 124

Regional Peace and Security

1. The Partner States agree that peace and security are pre-requisites to social and economic development within the Community and vital to the achievement of the objectives of the Community. In this regard, the Partner States agree to foster and maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to peace and security through co-operation and consultations on issues pertaining to peace and security of the Partner States with a view to prevention, better management and resolution of disputes and conflicts between them.
2. The Partner States undertake to promote and maintain good neighbourliness as a basis for promoting peace and security within the Community.
3. The Partner States shall evolve and establish regional disaster management mechanisms which shall harmonise training operations, technical co-operation and support in this area.
4. The Partner States undertake to establish common mechanisms for the management

of refugees.

5. The Partner States agree to enhance co-operation in the handling of cross border crime, provision of mutual assistance in criminal matters including the arrest and repatriation of fugitive offenders and the exchange of information on national mechanisms for combating criminal activities. To this end the Partner States undertake to adopt the following measures for maintaining and promoting security in their territories to:
 - (a) enhance the exchange of criminal intelligence and other security information between the Partner States' central criminal intelligence information centres;
 - (b) enhance joint operations such as hot pursuit of criminals and joint patrols to promote border security;
 - (c) establish common communication facilities for border security;
 - (d) adopt the United Nations model law on mutual assistance on criminal matters;
 - (e) conclude a Protocol on Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking;
 - (f) enhance the exchange of visits by security authorities;
 - (g) exchange training programmes for security personnel; and
 - (h) establish common mechanisms for the management of refugees.
6. The Partner States undertake to co-operate in reviewing the region's security particularly on the threat of terrorism and formulate security measures to combat terrorism.

ARTICLE 125

Defence

1. In order to promote the achievement of the objectives of the Community as set out in Article 5 of this Treaty particularly with respect to the promotion of peace, security and stability within, and good neighbourliness among the Partner States, and in accordance with Article 124 of this Treaty, the Partner States agree to closely co-operate in defence affairs.
2. For purposes of paragraph 1 of this Article, the Partner States agree to establish a framework for co-operation.