

Brussels, 31 October 2023

The Coordination Europe Haiti appeals to the European Union to support a new governance for a democratic and peaceful future in Haiti.

The Coordination Europe-Haiti (CoEH) held its general meeting in mid-October 2023 to discuss the latest developments and the increasingly catastrophic situation in Haiti. The CoEH is a network of European civil society organisations and platforms founded in 2004 that works closely with civil society organisations and movements in Haiti. The CoEH's mission is to make the voices of Haitians heard by the European Union (EU) and its Member States, and it is in this context that it is calling on the EU to be more attentive to this extreme situation. Our appeal is an urgent call to action to facilitate the search for a genuine solution for Haiti's future, in line with the wishes of the vast majority of the Haitian people.

Since the beginning of the year, the situation in Haiti has only worsened. The country is sinking deeper and deeper into chaos, with no prospect of a future for the population. This chaos is characterised by the unrestrained deployment of armed groups, who everyday control larger areas of the capital and certain provincial regions, particularly Artibonite, the country's main breadbasket. These bandits, who act with complete impunity, drive people from their homes, kill, injure, burn, pillage and rape. In the first half of 2023, at least 2,000 homicides and 1,500 kidnappings were perpetrated by armed gangs, and more than 200,000 people were displaced by the violence in Haiti. On top of all this comes inflation, poverty, an economy in disarray and hunger, which affects almost one Haitian in two. This crisis has been exacerbated by the unilateral closure of the border and the massive military deployment by the Dominican Republic in retaliation for the canal project on the Massacre River, intended to irrigate almost 3,000 hectares of Haitian land.

It was in this unbearable context that the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution on 2 October authorising the deployment of a multinational security force led by Kenya to combat gang violence in Haiti, without questioning the role played by those currently in power in Haiti who are responsible for this situation of extreme violence. The sending of this yet another mission of international troops is presented as a ray of hope for a country totally abandoned by its government. But what hope are we talking about if this force, instead of attacking the root of the evil, merely reinforces the government that has led the country to the hellish state it finds itself in today?

We are convinced that any effort to solve Haiti's current problems must first and foremost involve putting in place a functional government determined to manage the country. Unfortunately, this is not the case with the government of Mr Ariel Henry, which has no legitimacy, no mandate and concentrates all the powers in its hands without any control. Haiti now needs new leadership, a transitional government made up of credible, progressive figures committed to promoting democracy, human rights, and respect for the rule of law. This new government should create the conditions for the restoration of security in the country and facilitate the holding of free and fair elections, allowing non-gang-affiliated politicians to stand for election and guaranteeing the people's freedom to vote and their right to choose their leaders. Only the establishment of a credible transitional government will enable the police and security forces, with the likely support of external forces as required, to effectively combat the gang violence and other forms of violence that are plunging the population into bereavement.

In view of these worrying developments in the situation in Haiti, and taking into account the "Resolution on the humanitarian and security situation in Haiti" adopted by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on 28 June 2023 in Brussels, the autonomous framework of restrictive measures adopted by the Council of the European Union on 28 July 2023 and the Resolution 2069 authorising the deployment of a multinational force adopted by the United Nations Security Council on 2 October 2023, the CoEH calls on the European Union to apply its fundamental values and principles of justice, democracy and human rights in its policy towards Haiti. More specifically, the CoEH calls on the EU to :

1. **No longer support the illegitimate and presumed criminal government of Ariel Henry, but rather support any initiative aimed at establishing a new governance in Haiti, which must begin with the formation of a transitional government supported by a large majority of Haitian society.**

The CoEH calls on the EU to adopt a bold change of direction and strategy with regard to Haiti by supporting a process of establishing a new governance in Haiti. The CoEH advises the EU to listen to other voices, in particular those of a civil society that demands a radical change and the real participation of Haitians in shaping their own destiny. With this in mind, we ask the EU to support a process of political dialogue for the formation of a transitional and "break with the past" government supported by a large majority of Haitian society and willing to take over the leadership of the country on the basis of justice, equity and inclusion, and which is able to organise credible elections.

2. **Allocate the necessary resources to a true EU sanctions policy against individuals who support gangs, arms, munitions and drug trafficking, as well as corruption in Haiti.**

The CoEH takes note of the willingness expressed by the EU in the autonomous framework of restrictive measures approved on 28 July 2023 to support international sanctions to combat the trafficking of arms and munitions which plunges Haiti into mourning, as well as the corruption which leads to the misappropriation of resources which should be used to improve the living conditions of the population. The CoEH calls on the EU to help identify all those involved in these crimes, whatever their nationality - European, Haitian, American and others - and to inform the public, in a fully transparent manner, of the charges against these people and forward their files to the Haitian justice system for follow-up.

3. **Demonstrate transparency on the priorities of its action in Haiti and on the payments made over the last two years to the Haitian government and to the funds dedicated to civil society actors in Haiti.**

The CoEH is asking the EU to provide Haitian civil society and European citizens with transparent information on the aid currently granted to the government of Mr Ariel Henry and the mechanisms for controlling this aid in a context where all the country's institutions are dysfunctional and there is suspicion that this government is colluding with armed groups. We want to make sure that the resources of European citizens are not used to fuel the operations of armed groups and the chaos we are currently witnessing in Haiti. At the same time, we support any aid that helps to establish dignified living conditions for the population, that promotes the fundamental values of the EU and that supports strategies that can help to resolve the Haitian crisis once and for all.

For the COEH,



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Ornella Braceschi
President Collectif Haïti de France/Steering Committee Member