



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 26.04.1999

COM(1999) 204 final

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

**ON THE OPENING OF CONSULTATIONS WITH NIGER PURSUANT TO
ARTICLE 366a OF THE LOME CONVENTION**

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The President of Niger, Mr Ibrahim Bare Mainassara, was assassinated by his presidential guard on Friday, 9 April at Niamey airport. Though described by the Prime Minister as a "tragic accident", it is clear that the assassination was a classic military coup, meticulously prepared and carried out in cold blood.

On 11 April the National Armed Forces adopted measures:

- suspending the Constitution;
- dissolving the National Assembly, the Government and the Supreme Court;
- annulling the result of the local elections of 7 February;
- and setting up a Council of National Reconciliation with full powers for a transitional period of nine months.

The Council of Reconciliation consists entirely of members of the military. Its first decision was to appoint Major Wanké as Head of State.

Wanké, the head of the presidential guard, was also involved in the 1996 coup d'état which brought the late President Bare to power.

The coup d'état was immediately condemned by Niger's neighbours and the United Nations. The German presidency drew up a statement on behalf of the European Union condemning the coup and demanding a swift return to democracy.

The coup d'état came in the wake of the political turmoil caused by the recent proclamation by the Supreme Court of the results of the February local elections. The proclamation called for some election results to be annulled as a result of irregularities in the counting of votes.

According to our information, a government is in the process of being formed with the involvement of the various political parties under Prime Minister Mayaki.

In the light of the above and pursuant to Articles 5 and 366a of the Lomé Convention, the Commission proposes that the Council:

invite the ACP State to hold consultations with a view to assessing the situation in detail and, if necessary, remedying it in accordance with the terms of the attached letters.

The aim of the consultations is to underline the importance attached by the European Union to respecting the essential elements referred to in Article 5 of the Lomé Convention and to find out Niger's intentions regarding compliance with them.

In the meantime no new funding will be approved in favour of Niger other than for humanitarian projects directly benefiting the poorest sections of the population.

Brussels,
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DRAFT

Sir,

In its statement of 14 April, the European Union roundly condemned the recent coup d'état in Niger, during which President Bare Mainassara lost his life. The European Union deplores the suspension of the Constitution, and the dissolution of the elected Parliament and of the Government, and calls upon the military leadership to set a timetable for a return to democracy.

Pursuant to Article 366a of the Lomé Convention and the common provisions contained in paragraph 2 of the Joint Declaration on Article 366a, I have the honour of inviting the ACP State to hold consultations with a view to assessing the situation in detail and, if necessary, remedying it.

I propose that the consultations be held in on at the premises of the Council of the European Union.

Please accept, Mr President, the assurance of my highest consideration.

For the Council

for the Commission

Copy to: H.E. the Ambassador of Zimbabwe

President of the ACP Committee of Ambassadors

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... Brussels