

Mariya Gabriel: Without political will, there will be no lasting solution to the LRA conflict

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Brussels, 2 October 2013 - Mariya Gabriel hosted today in the European Parliament a conference on "The Lord's Resistance Army conflict: where State security and human security meet," co-organized with the European Network for central Africa. Exchanges between the participants in the roundtable were rich and showed a convergence of analysis of the situation and a convergence of orientations for a lasting solution.

Mariya Gabriel opened the discussion by noting that the variety and quality of the panelists at the table reflected the strong commitment to the region of central Africa: "The partnership and coordination among international actors, in close cooperation with local communities, are key elements to find and implement solutions. And I am glad that we could gather today every party that can participate in this aim: the EU, the UN, the African Union and the representatives of civil society. "

The floor was then given to the panelists. Rosalind Marsden, the EU Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan recalled EU's contribution through various means including funding to Uganda for the reintegration of former rebels, humanitarian aid to countries in the Great Lakes region, funding and technical support for negotiations and diplomatic activities, and the participation of Member States through bilateral frameworks. The EU also co-chairs the International Working Group on the LRA. The Special Representative welcomed the efforts of the African Union to take the leadership of the various regional and international actors for a "historically neglected" region.

Abou Moussa, head of the UN regional office in central Africa has focused on the political will: "The success of the regional strategy developed in June 2012 depends on the willingness of all stakeholders." He also stressed the challenge of the aftermaths of the LRA conflict: the consequences of this conflict will last longer than the phenomenon itself.

Panelists' interventions aroused the interest and reactions in the room, especially on the part of participants from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Uganda. In conclusion of the conference and the debate, Mariya Gabriel reiterated the continuous commitment of the European Union to the countries of the region and especially to the people, and summarized the discussions by highlighting four guidelines: a holistic approach taking into account the context of the fragility of the region, the political will with a strong leadership of the States affected, the protection of civilians, and finally concerning funding, the need to focus on children: "We should not neglect the elements of the present that will determine the future, in order that we have no other 'Little Konys'. "