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Foreign Affairs

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President **Federica Mogherini**
High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security
Policy

P R E S S

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

ITEMS DEBATED

MEETING OF DEFENCE MINISTERS

State of play of military CSDP operations

The Council took stock of the state of play concerning military CSDP operations, in the presence of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

JOINT MEETING OF FOREIGN AND DEFENCE MINISTERS

Security challenges in the EU's neighbourhood

Over lunch, EU defence and foreign ministers exchanged views on the security situation in the EU's broader neighbourhood with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

Preparation for the June European Council

The Council discussed the preparations for the European Council on 25/26 June 2015, which will feature an item on the Common Security and Defence Policy on its agenda.

It also adopted conclusions on the Common Security and Defence Policy, as set out [here](#).

Strategic review

The Council debated ongoing work reviewing changes in the EU's strategic environment, including the preparation of a report by the High Representative to the European Council on 25/26 June 2015.

Follow-up to the European Council of 23 April

The Council took stock of the follow-up to the European Council of 23 April 2015, which focused on migration issues. It approved a crisis management concept for an EU naval operation to disrupt the business model of human smugglers in the Southern Central Mediterranean and adopted the legal basis for this operation. For more details, see [press release](#).

MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS

Middle East peace process

The Council exchanged views on the situation in the Middle East and on prospects for the peace process, following the formation of a new Israeli government and ahead of a visit of the High Representative to the region.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FOREIGN AFFAIRS****Burundi**

The Council adopted the following conclusions on Burundi:

- "1. The EU condemns the attempted coup in Burundi and also any act of violence or abuse of the constitutional order, whoever the perpetrators may be, and points out that the African Union has stated that it is vital for all Burundian stakeholders to settle their disputes by peaceful means.
2. The European Union (EU) expresses its deep concern at the situation in Burundi; in the wake of the attempted coup, the country is highly vulnerable and there is a risk that the divisions within Burundian society may be exacerbated.

The EU calls on all parties, the government, the security services and all political groups, including their youth movements, to refrain from any action which could exacerbate the tension in Burundi, to bear the higher interest of the country in mind and to seek arrangements compatible with the Arusha Agreements, which are the foundation on which peace and democracy have been built. It calls particularly on the Burundian military and security forces to show restraint, to maintain their neutrality and to protect the civilian population. It also calls for legal proceedings against the alleged perpetrators of the coup to respect the rights of defence and the rule of law.

3. It is now essential for the authorities, political forces and civil society to engage in an inclusive and transparent political dialogue. This dialogue must lead to a political process which abides by the terms laid down in the constitution and respects its institutions, and the fundamental principles of the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation of 2000, to ensure that the election process continues in a consensual fashion. The EU points to the need for further verification --in the course of the inclusive political dialogue-- to see that conditions are in place to ensure that the election process is credible, transparent and non-violent. It calls for respect for fundamental freedoms and in particular for the freedoms of opinion, of expression and of the press and of peaceful protest to be guaranteed.

4. In this respect, it agrees with and supports the conclusion of the Summit of the East African Community (EAC) that conditions conducive to the holding of elections are not in place, and that the elections should be postponed, within constitutional limits. The EU points out that its support for the election process and the actual presence of the EU Election Observation Mission are predicated on those conditions. Both the majority and the opposition must shoulder their responsibilities in order to ensure an environment conducive to the holding of elections. In this connection the EU stresses the importance of the Roadmap which the Government and all political players concluded in March 2013 to prepare for free and democratic elections in Burundi.
5. The EU fully supports the efforts of the United Nations (UN), in particular the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, Saïd Djinnit, the work done by the African Union (AU) under former Prime Minister Edem Kodjo, and the East African Community's initiatives to ease the way for dialogue between the parties and ensure a return to stability. It will follow discussions at the next EAC summit with interest.

The EU is ready to contribute to these efforts and calls on all stakeholders in Burundi to engage sincerely in this dialogue, at the appropriate level and in a spirit of compromise and reconciliation. The EU commends the AU in particular on its decision to deploy human rights observers in Burundi as quickly as possible in order to report on violations and to take steps to resolve conflicts at local level.

6. The EU also expresses its concern at the massive population displacements caused by these political tensions, and its concern at the deteriorating humanitarian situation, especially as regards vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. It sees this as a major risk to an already troubled region. It confirms its support for the efforts of humanitarian agencies in the region and for neighbouring countries in their efforts to accept refugees fleeing the insecurity and violence.
7. The EU recalls that its partnership with Burundi is governed by the Cotonou Agreement. It is important that each of the parties respect the terms of the Agreement and ensure that the obligations arising from the Agreement are met, particularly as regards respect for human rights. The provisions of the Agreement have made it possible to maintain enhanced political dialogue with the Burundian authorities over the past few months. Depending on future developments, the EU is ready to consider the adoption of possible measures, including on cooperation. It expresses its determination, where appropriate and with the support of the UN Security Council, to take all measures necessary against Burundian parties whose actions might lead to a perpetuation of the violence and hamper the search for a political solution. It stresses that there can be no impunity for those responsible for serious human rights violations, who must be held criminally responsible."

Relations with Uzbekistan

The Council adopted the EU position for the twelfth meeting of the EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Council in Brussels on 18 May 2015.

Relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council

The Council adopted the draft agenda for the EU-Gulf Cooperation Council Joint Council and ministerial meeting, to be held on 24 May 2015 in Doha.
