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President

Federica Mogherini

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security
Policy

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/press>

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¹ • 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

Africa

The Council held a discussion on EU relations with Africa, covering peace, prosperity and partnership with regional African organisations.

Following the debate, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy highlighted the opportunities Africa offered to its people and to its partners around the world. The Council discussed the need to move from a donor-recipient relationship to a full political partnership with Africa and its regional organisations. Africa and Europe share common interests – not only bilaterally, but also on a global level – such as climate change negotiations and the post-2015 agenda.

The EU has two top priorities in Africa: to promote a peaceful continent through the prevention of conflict and terrorism and to generate prosperity through an acceleration of sustainable growth and development. Partnership with Africa is essential in achieving those objectives.

– *Burundi*

The Council adopted the following conclusions on the political situation in Burundi ahead of the elections:

- "1. The European Union (EU) welcomes the progress made in Burundi since the signature of the Arusha Peace Agreements. These accords have allowed Burundi to set out on the path of development, stability and democracy, and to participate in peacekeeping missions on the African continent. The EU has played an active role in supporting this process. It intends to continue to do so by working closely with its partners, particularly the AU, the ICGLR, and the United Nations, whose electoral observation mission (MENUB) must be able to play its full role.
2. The upcoming electoral cycle in Burundi, which will run from May to August 2015, is key to consolidating the progress made and helping build a stronger future. The country cannot afford to miss this opportunity and run the risk of undoing its progress. By adopting the electoral code, the roadmap towards the 2015 elections and the code of conduct, Burundi's political parties and actors have together mapped out the way forward. They must now comply with those provisions in full. The EU commends the efforts of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) and encourages it to perform its role with complete impartiality and independence. It calls on CENI and the relevant Burundian institutions to ensure that the corrective measures regarding voter registration agreed at the review meeting on 22 December 2014 are implemented, and to re-engage in a dialogue with political parties and actors throughout the electoral process.

3. In light of the tensions and intimidation which have marked the pre-electoral period, the EU calls on the authorities to step up their efforts to ensure that the process is inclusive, peaceful and transparent. Both the opposition and the majority parties have a responsibility in this respect, but it is up to the authorities to guarantee the exercise of civil and political rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of the press and judicial independence, in accordance with Burundi's laws and international commitments. In this respect, the EU expresses its concern over the numerous legal proceedings initiated against the leaders of opposition parties and civil society representatives involved in defending human rights. These arrests and convictions risk discrediting the entire electoral process and the justice system.
4. The EU attaches great importance to safeguarding the achievements of the Arusha Agreement, which is the foundation on which peace and democracy are being established in Burundi following the period of civil war. There are currently calls in Burundi for the Arusha Agreement to be honoured, particularly as regards the possibility of a third presidential term. These calls cannot be disregarded. The EU urges the Burundian authorities to address this issue wisely and in a spirit of reconciliation in order to rapidly find a broadly-supported solution so as to calm tensions and prevent the situation from deteriorating.
5. Having been invited to do so by the Burundian authorities, the EU has decided to deploy an electoral observation mission from April 2015 in order to guarantee an ongoing and thorough assessment of the electoral process, in close contact with other observation missions. The EU's support for the electoral process, through both the presence of this observation mission and the provision of financial assistance, is conceivable only if the election is inclusive, transparent, and open to all political parties and actors in a fair manner.
6. The EU invites all those involved to take steps to maintain peace and reduce tensions. It deplores the violent events which took place in the Cibitoke province from 30 December 2014 to 3 January 2015 and expresses its concern over allegations of summary executions carried out by members of the security forces and of the youth wing of the CNDD-FDD party. The EU welcomes the establishment of a judicial inquiry commission, which must be able to carry out its work without hindrance and with complete independence. The EU also looks forward to receiving the results of the ongoing inquiry into the killing of three Italian nuns in September 2014 in Bujumbura, which must be conducted in an impartial and transparent manner."

– *Ebola*

The Council adopted the following conclusions on Ebola:

- "1. The Council endorses the Statement of the Co-chairs of the Ebola – "From Emergency to Recovery" Brussels Conference of 3 March 2015. Recalling its conclusions from October and November 2014 and recognising the leading role played by the European Union (EU) and its Member States as prime donors in the international community's crisis response, the Council reiterates its firm commitment to ending the Ebola epidemic by getting down to zero and sustaining zero cases through continued and appropriate emergency aid and support to recovery plans. It renews the tribute paid to the heroism and sacrifice of all those national and international responders who have helped tackle the epidemic on the ground and recognises the contribution made by EU diplomatic missions in the affected countries.
2. The Council underlines the importance of disbursing the remaining emergency and recovery funding pledged to date in a timely and coordinated fashion and in particular to cover an immediate US\$400 million funding gap for the actions of the United Nations (UN) agencies and the additional support required for early recovery priorities and regional preparedness. The Council invites the Commission and the Member States to contribute towards these requirements, including through the rapid disbursement of the remainder of the €1.3 billion pledged by the EU and its Member States but not yet fully committed. It also calls for continued cooperation and coordination among actors involved in the ongoing response and recovery to ensure optimal and efficient use of resources.
3. The Council notes the upcoming World Bank Group-IMF Spring Meetings, the follow-up of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Executive Board Special Session on Ebola to be discussed at the upcoming WHO Assembly, the UN Secretary General-hosted meeting in May and the upcoming African Union (AU) meeting foreseen in June. The EU and its Member States, in close cooperation with the affected countries will continue to contribute towards the priorities for longer term recovery. This should include the rebuilding of sustainable social and healthcare systems, also in order to restore the confidence of the populations, as well as peacebuilding and state building. The UN Peacebuilding Commission and the New Deal will continue to provide important platforms for international coordination and for developing a coherent strategy linking development, security and political aspects, including the post-Ebola recovery.
4. The Council underlines the importance of the Co-chairs' commitments to improve local and national governance, transparency and accountability, to provide for more inclusive and effective results in service delivery for citizens, including access for all to health and education, and to address the particular burden placed on women and girls as a result of the crisis.

5. The Council notes the lessons learnt and the commitment of Co-chairs and partners to strengthen local, national, regional and global preparedness, including disease surveillance and disaster early warning mechanisms, in order to prevent, detect and contain future outbreaks. The Council recalls its invitation to the Commission, together with the Member States, to explore the establishment of a reserve pool of health experts on a voluntary basis for rapid and targeted deployment, through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. International efforts, in cooperation with the pharmaceutical industry, to boost research and development with the aim of developing and approving vaccines, treatments and rapid tests should continue.
6. The Council notes the scope for the EU and its Member States to keep playing a leading role in supporting co-operation in the affected region to end Ebola and ensure it does not resurge, including through the Mano River Union, ECOWAS, the AU and the UN system, in particular the WHO. The Council invites the EU Ebola coordinator to continue to work with the European External Action Service and the Commission services, together with Member States, to explore options in this regard."

– *Gulf of Guinea*

The Council adopted the following conclusions on the Gulf of Guinea action plan:

- "1. The Council adopts today the annexed Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020 that outlines the European Union's support to the efforts of the region and its coastal states to address the many challenges of maritime security and organised crime. As with the Strategy, adopted on 17 March 2014, this Action Plan reasserts the importance which the European Union attaches to continuing the close cooperation with partners across Western and Central Africa, in taking all appropriate measures to combat maritime crime, including piracy and armed robbery at sea, illegal fishing, smuggling of migrants and trafficking of human beings, drugs, and arms, and to address the underlying causes to foster long-term security and stability in the region.
2. The Council underlines that the Action Plan aims at providing support both at the regional and national levels, to the ongoing efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), as well as to the Signatory States to the Code of Conduct concerning the repression of piracy, armed robbery against ships, and illicit maritime activity in West and Central Africa, adopted at the June 2013 Heads of State Summit in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The implementation of the Action Plan is intended to reinforce intra-regional cooperation as well as to increase the level of coordination among the EU and its Member States, and international partners. The Council stands ready to assist West and Central African coastal states to achieve long lasting prosperity through an integrated and cross-sectoral approach, linking the importance of good governance, rule of law, and the development of the maritime domain to enable greater trade cooperation, and job creation for the countries in the region.
3. The Council invites the HR and the Commission, in close consultation with Member States, to start implementing the Gulf of Guinea Action Plan, taking into account the EU Maritime Security Strategy and its Action Plan, and in close cooperation with the region itself, and key international partners. In this regard, it looks forward to the appointment of an EU Senior Coordinator for the Gulf of Guinea. The Council will revert to the matter as appropriate."

[Gulf of Guinea action plan](#)

– *Mali*

The Council adopted the following conclusions on Mali:

- "1. The Council strongly condemns the recent terrorist attacks perpetrated in Bamako, Gao and Kidal and expresses its condolences to the families of the victims that in this occasion included a Belgian employee of the European Union Delegation to Mali, a French national and Malian and Chadian citizens. Such acts are unacceptable irrespective of where they take place or who the perpetrators or the victims are. The European Union (EU) stands united with the rest of the international community in condemning all terrorist acts, as well as other violent acts and violations of human rights which continue to take place in Mali; it reaffirms its support to the Malian authorities to put an end to the scourge of terrorism and bring those responsible to justice. The protection of the population, especially women and children, suffering enormously by such acts, has to be ensured.
2. The recent proliferation of violent attacks and terrorist activities in Mali and neighbouring countries reinforces the need to reach a swift conclusion and signature by all parties of the agreement reached on 1 March in the Algiers peace negotiations, and to establish conditions that will allow all communities in Mali to unite in fighting terrorism and live together in peace and security.
3. The EU congratulates Algeria and others in the mediation team on the tremendous efforts they have put into concluding these negotiations and confirms it is ready to fulfil its role in the Follow-up Committee, that should be established and made operational swiftly and have the capacity and political will to effectively monitor and support the implementation of the peace agreement. It underlines the importance of continuing the close coordination of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Sahel, with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).
4. The Council considers the draft peace agreement as a unique window of opportunity for a political solution to the crisis. The text initialled in Algiers represents the best possible compromise, which paves the way for a lasting peace in Mali, provided that all parties stand by their commitments. The EU strongly urges all remaining parties to initial the agreement with minimal delay. It also reiterates its commitment to supporting all efforts to this end and to assisting Mali in the implementation of the peace agreement by using all appropriate means and instruments at its disposal. In the context of the comprehensive approach, the EU is committed to continue to use its relevant instruments, including the CSDP Missions EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali, the EUSR for the Sahel and the recently signed National Indicative Programme for Mali.

5. The Council stresses the need for effective follow up mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the agreement, in configuration with parallel reconciliation efforts at local level. In this context, it encourages the Malian government to speed up the effective establishment of the Commission on Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation and enable it to start its work as soon as possible, so that the rights of victims of human rights violations can be fully recognised.
6. The Council recalls its conclusions of 9 February and underlines the important role played by the United Nations peace keeping mission, MINUSMA in consolidating peace, security and stability. In this respect, it reiterates its full support for MINUSMA in the implementation of its mandate and its efforts to protect civilians, as well as the continuous cooperation of its two CSDP Missions."

Libya

The Council discussed the situation in Libya as well as preparations for EU support for a possible positive outcome of the peace talks. It adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU welcomes the resumption of the UN – facilitated political dialogue in Rabat and calls on all Libyan parties to participate constructively to ensure the rapid formation of a Government of National Unity able to take forward the democratic transition and restart the reconstruction of the country. The EU underlines that the dialogue needs to make a decisive breakthrough now as a failure to come to a political agreement would jeopardise Libya's unity and the goals of the February Revolution, including respect for the rule of law and human rights, freedom and democracy.
2. Libya is now at a crossroads. The EU therefore urges all parties to live up to their responsibility to participate constructively to the dialogue, to fully implement a cease-fire and to abstain from actions that may derail the dialogue process. The EU commends those Libyans who have so far actively and constructively participated in these talks in supporting the work towards a political agreement. The EU reaffirms that there is no military solution to this conflict; only a political solution can provide a sustainable way forward and contribute to peace and stability in Libya. The EU calls for an immediate cessation of the ongoing violence and condemns all violations of human rights.
3. The EU reaffirms its full support to the work of the United Nations, and in particular commends the efforts by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General and the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), which has been instrumental in bringing the parties to the negotiating table. The EU emphasizes the importance of an inclusive and balanced process taking into account the UNSCR1325.
4. At this critical juncture in the dialogue process, the EU calls on all regional actors and neighbours of Libya to use their influence on all domestic Libya actors to ensure a successful outcome of the negotiations and democratic transition in Libya, to support the implementation of the agreements and to refrain from actions that can exacerbate current divisions. All relevant UNSC Resolutions should be respected. The EU looks forward to cooperating with regional actors and neighbours of Libya in order to contribute to peace and stability of Libya.

5. The security and political dimensions reinforce each other. Political and security vacuum, current political divisions and mutual mistrust between the main political stakeholders are helping terrorist groups such as Da'esh to consolidate their presence in Libya, undermining Libya's security and posing serious challenges to its neighbours, the wider region and Europe. The EU is seriously concerned at the increased activity of terrorist and extremist groups and condemns all acts of terrorism. The EU is ready to step up its engagement on counter-terrorism with Libya. It will offer support to neighbouring countries in order to enhance counter-terrorism capacity in full compliance with human rights and rule of law, strengthen border security, disrupt the smuggling of weapons and the flow of foreign fighters. The EU offers support to civil society in Libya to prevent radicalisation and will mainstream counter-terrorism aspects into existing capacity building projects where appropriate. The formation of a National Unity Government would enable the EU to offer its full support to Libya to enhance counter-terrorism capacity in full compliance with human rights and rule of law.
6. The EU condemns actions against Libya's national assets, financial institutions and natural resources, which risk depriving the Libyan people of the benefits of the sustainable development of their country.
7. The EU acknowledges the importance of different agreed parallel tracks of the UN mediation efforts which contribute to the creation of conditions conducive to the finalisation of a political agreement and in this regard welcomes the recent meeting of political parties held in Algiers.
8. The EU will continue carrying out Confidence Building Measures. In this regard, it recalls the support that it is providing to initiatives such as the recent meeting with the Libyan business community and the intention to quickly convene, under the auspices of UNSMIL, a meeting with Libyan mayors and local leaders. EU support continues in other sectors such as reconciliation, civil society, migration and promotion of human rights.
9. The EU calls on all parties in Libya to ensure unhindered humanitarian access and security of humanitarian aid workers in order to facilitate the assistance and protection of civilians in need. The EU calls for further efforts to address the worsening humanitarian situation. The EU stresses the need for a common and coordinated humanitarian action under UN leadership.

10. As soon as there is an agreement on a Government of National Unity and related security arrangements, the EU stands ready to enhance its support to Libya and contribute to the successful implementation of the agreements through the ongoing support to key Libyan institutions and in key areas, including rule of law, economic cooperation and DDR, making full use of all its instruments. In this regard, the Council invites the High Representative to present as soon as possible proposals on possible CSDP activities in support of the security arrangements, in close coordination with the UN, Libya, key partners and regional actors, as part of a wider set of policy options in the context of an updated Political Framework for Crisis Approach, to be developed by the High Representative and the Commission.

The Council also calls on the High Representative and the Commission to develop a comprehensive strategy for Libya, taking into account the regional context.

11. Cooperation with Libya's neighbours and regional bodies such as the League of Arab States and African Union has been, and will continue to be, of crucial interest to the EU and the success of Libya's transition process. The EU will continue to work with these partners to promote political dialogue in Libya and address other issues of common interest and concern, including human smuggling and trafficking and terrorism. Further consideration should also be given to countering illegal arms trafficking.
12. The EU has put in place a legal framework which will allow it to introduce, if necessary and in full coordination with the UNSRSG, restrictive measures against spoilers of the dialogue process in line with UNSCR 2174 which allows for the listing of individuals who threaten the peace, stability or security in Libya, or who undermine its political transition.
13. The EU cannot accept the continuing tragic loss of life at sea of migrants departing from Libya. The irregular movement of people across Libya and through its borders has a dramatic effect on the lives of too many people, and destabilises countries on both shores of the Mediterranean. The challenges posed must be addressed in a comprehensive manner.
14. The EU remains strongly committed to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya."

Migration

Over lunch, ministers explored how EU foreign policy could contribute to comprehensively tackling Europe's migration challenges. The debate will feed into the preparation of more concrete proposals for decision at one of the next Foreign Affairs Councils.

Eastern Partnership

The Council discussed preparations for the fourth Eastern Partnership summit that will take place in Riga on 21-22 May 2015. The summit, chaired by European Council President Donald Tusk, will bring EU Heads of State or Government together with those of Eastern partner countries.

A meeting between EU foreign ministers and their counterparts from the Eastern Partnership countries is scheduled to take place in the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council on 20 April 2015.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL/Da'esh threat

The Council adopted conclusions on the EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL/Da'esh threat.

[Full text of the EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL/Da'esh threat, including Council conclusions](#)

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Council adopted the following conclusions on Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- "1. The Council welcomes, in the context of its conclusions of 15 December 2014, the adoption of the Written Commitment by BiH Presidency on 29 January, its signature by leaders of political parties and subsequent endorsement in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament on 23 February 2015 during the visit of HR Mogherini to Sarajevo.
2. Having regard to the commitments thus undertaken by Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in accordance with its conclusions of 15 December 2014, the Council notes that the necessary conditions contained therein have been met and agrees to proceed with the conclusion and entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina.
3. The Council calls on Bosnia and Herzegovina leadership to fully uphold its commitments and obligations, including those relating to the adaptation of the forthcoming SAA, and to remain engaged with the European Union under the renewed approach and maintain the positive momentum by developing an initial agenda for reforms in consultation with the European Union. This reform agenda, to be developed and implemented also in consultation with civil society, should include reforms under the Copenhagen criteria and agreed functionality issues (including the EU coordination mechanism). Meaningful progress on the implementation of agenda for reforms, including the "Compact for Growth and Jobs", will be necessary for a membership application to be considered by the European Union."

Relations with Ukraine

The Council approved the EU position for the EU-Ukraine Association Council: the EU will agree with the adoption of the EU-Ukraine Association Agenda by the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council.

Relations with the Republic of Moldova

The Council established the EU position for the first meeting of the EU-Moldova Association Council, to take place on 16 March 2015 in Brussels.

Relations with Tunisia

The Council adopted the EU position for the 11th meeting of the EU-Tunisia Association Council, to be held on 17 March 2015 in Brussels.

The Council authorised the European Union to approve the implementation of the EU-Tunisia Action Plan at the EU-Tunisia Association Council. That action plan reflects the special partnership which binds the parties. Its three priority sectors are socio-economic reforms, strengthening fundamental elements of democracy, and sustainable regional and local development.

EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa

The Council extended the mandates of two EU Special Representatives until 31 October 2015:

- EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa, Mr Alexander Rondos. A budget of €1.77 million was allocated to him for the period between 1 March 2015 and 31 October 2015.
- EU Special Representative for the Sahel, Mr Michel Reveyrand-de Menthon. A budget of €900 000 has been set aside for his activities during the period from 1 March 2015 to 31 October 2015.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Cooperation between UN and EU in crisis management

The Council authorised the opening of negotiations for an agreement on cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union in crisis management operations.

EU training mission in Somalia

The Council extended the mandate of the EU military mission to contribute to the training of Somali security forces (EUTM Somalia). For more details, see [press release](#).

EU military advisory mission in the Central African Republic

The Council launched the EU military advisory mission in the Central African Republic (EUMAM RCA). The mission's aim is to support the Central African authorities in preparing to reform the security sector, especially with respect to the management of the armed forces of the Central African Republic (CAR). For more details, see [press release](#).

At the same time, the Council approved an agreement between the EU and the Central African Republic on the status of EUMAM RCA in the Central African Republic.
