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President

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Policy

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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

Energy diplomacy

The Council exchanged views on how EU foreign policy can support the EU's energy union and how to develop a common EU vision of energy diplomacy and the role it can play.

The energy union sets out to increase the EU's energy security while reducing the EU's carbon footprint and making the EU a leader in renewable energy.

The Council also had a first debate on an energy diplomacy action plan. Work on this plan will continue in the next weeks.

Asia

The Council held a strategic debate on EU relations with Asia. Ministers stressed the need to continue to strengthen relations at a multilateral level, including on security matters. The Council adopted conclusions on EU-ASEAN relations, notably emphasising the need to move the relationship to a strategic level.

A few days ahead of the EU-China Summit, ministers exchanged views on relations with China. They highlighted the importance of strengthening the work with China to further improve the framework of economic exchanges and cooperation and of continuing to promote human rights.

The importance of developing better connectivity in Asia was also highlighted. In particular, the need to ensure compatibility between European transport networks and future Asian networks was stressed.

The Council also adopted conclusions on forthcoming elections in Myanmar/Burma and on the revised EU strategy on Central Asia.

[Council conclusions on EU-ASEAN](#)

[Council conclusions on forthcoming elections in Myanmar/Burma](#)

[Council conclusions on the EU strategy for Central Asia](#)

EU-UN Cooperation

For lunch, ministers were joined by Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, for a debate on current preparations for key UN summits and EU-UN cooperation in tackling current crises.

2015 is an important year for the UN and for global sustainable development, with key UN conferences taking place in Addis Ababa (Financing for Development in July), New York (post-2015 summit in September) and Paris (Climate Change COP 21 in December).

The Council also adopted the EU priorities at the United Nations and the seventieth UN General Assembly September 2015 – September 2016, as set out [here](#).

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The Council discussed the political situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

After the debate, the High Representative stressed that foreign ministers encouraged the implementation of the agreement reached on 2 June, in particular the work on reforms, early elections and a transition that can bring back faith and trust in the institutions.

The General Affairs Council of 23 June 2015 is expected to adopt conclusions on the situation in the country.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Burundi

The Council approved the following conclusions on Burundi:

- "1. The political deadlock in Burundi and the deteriorating security and economic situation have serious consequences for the population and pose risks for the region as a whole. Faced with this critical situation, the EU welcomes the fact that the region has mobilised to find a solution. The decisions on the situation in Burundi adopted at the African Union (AU) summit of 13 June, as well as the conclusions of the East African Community (EAC) summit of 31 May 2015, establish an indispensable framework for enabling Burundi to overcome the crisis.
2. Recalling the Council conclusions of 16 March and 18 May 2015, the EU shares the view expressed by the AU, the EAC and the United Nations (UN) that only through dialogue and consensus, in compliance with the Arusha Agreement and the Burundian Constitution, can a lasting political solution be found in the interests of security and democracy for all Burundi's people. It calls on all Burundian stakeholders to resume dialogue on all areas of disagreement between the parties, and undertakes to support them in this.
3. The European Union calls for full compliance with the conditions identified by the AU and the EAC, which are vital for the credibility and smooth running of the electoral process in a way that is peaceful, inclusive and transparent, and does not infringe political freedoms, including freedom of expression. The EU calls for greater coordination, supports the mediation efforts made by the AU, the EAC and the UN, and is ready to support the implementation of the specific measures recently announced by the AU. Both the EAC and the AU have clearly declared that conditions conducive to the holding of elections are not currently in place. There is a strong likelihood that it will not be possible to put such conditions in place within the time frames provided for in the Burundian Constitution. The EU urges the Burundian Government to accept that this is an accurate reflection of the situation, and to respond to the decisions taken by the Peace and Security Council of the AU by taking specific steps as soon as possible.
4. Echoing the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the EU expresses its deep concern at the numbers of victims and cases of serious human rights violations reported since the beginning of the crisis, particularly those abuses attributed to the security forces and to members of the Imbonerakure. It asks that leaders bring to a halt to the actions that are at the root of this violence, and urges the Burundian authorities to ensure that these events are fully investigated, and that those responsible are brought to justice. The EU reiterates that there can be no impunity for those responsible for serious human rights violations, and that they must be held individually responsible and brought to account in a court of law. In this context, the EU considers that it is of particular importance that the human rights observers and military experts announced by the AU be deployed immediately.

5. The EU is determined to adopt, if necessary, targeted restrictive measures against those whose actions might have led or might lead to acts of violence and repression and serious human rights violations, and/or might hamper the search for a political solution within the framework proposed by the AU and the EAC. As a preventive measure, the Council requests that the High Representative initiate preparatory work to that end.
6. The EU recalls the obligations under the Cotonou Agreement in terms of respect for human rights, democratic values and the rule of law, and the possibility of instituting the consultation procedures provided for in the Agreement, including Article 96.
Depending on the reaction of the Burundian Government to the decisions taken by the Peace and Security Council of the AU and on future developments, the EU is prepared to institute those procedures, including in the area of cooperation, in order to ensure that Burundi respects those commitments.
The EU underlines that the obligations under the Cotonou Agreement also apply to all States which are party to it.
7. The EU is also deeply concerned about the continued outflow of refugees to neighbouring countries. It reiterates its support for the humanitarian organisations present in the region which are addressing the refugees' immediate needs. It congratulates the authorities of the host countries for their open and welcoming attitude towards those seeking refuge beyond their borders."

Lebanon

The Council approved the following conclusions on Lebanon:

- "1. The EU recalls the Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU marking the passage of one year since former President Michel Sleiman of Lebanon left office issued on 25 May and the Presidential Statement adopted by the UNSC on 19 March.
2. The EU strongly reiterates its call on all political forces to take decisive action to elect a new President and put Lebanon's stability and national interest ahead of partisan politics. The EU restates its call to all Members of the Parliament to uphold Lebanon's longstanding democratic tradition and to convene to elect a President without further delay in line with the Constitution. It is of utmost importance that all parties uphold the Constitution, fully implement the Taef Agreement, and the National Pact. This protracted Presidential vacuum increasingly poses severe risks for the country as a whole.
3. The deepening crisis has further undermined the functioning of the institutions. The EU reiterates its support for the efforts of Prime Minister Tammam Salam to govern under difficult circumstances and calls on all the parties to enable the government to function properly, including appointments to major public offices. It recalls the importance of the continuity of the institutions, in particular in the security and military sector. Lebanese political forces have a major responsibility in this regard. The EU welcomes recent steps to foster dialogue and conciliation and encourages all political parties to step up efforts in that regard.

The EU urges the Parliament to meet for urgent legislative matters, including the implementation of international aid. This institutional stalemate has a negative impact also on the country's economy> It is increasingly difficult for donors to operate in Lebanon in such conditions.

4. The institutional impasse increasingly affects Lebanon's ability to address the security, economic and social challenges resulting from the conflict in Syria. As the security situation continues to deteriorate particularly at the Eastern border, the costs of the institutional stalemate are growing by the day. The EU and its Member States fully support the efforts of all Lebanese security institutions, notably the Lebanese Armed Forces, to maintain stability and respond to complex security threats. That is why the EU and its Member States have stepped up their assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces and to the security sector and will remain actively engaged in this respect. The EU also confirms its willingness to support Lebanon in its fight against terrorism and its efforts to counter radicalisation and violent extremism.
5. The EU reiterates its commitment to the sovereignty, stability, territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon. The EU is concerned about the incursions, cross-border fire, as well as, abductions, and trafficking in human beings, arms and artefacts across its borders. The EU reiterates its call for a renewed commitment to the dissociation policy from all regional conflicts by all political parties in line with the Baabda Declaration.
6. The EU stresses the importance of Lebanon's continued commitment to the full implementation of its international obligations, including UNSC Resolutions 1559, 1680, 1701, 1757. The EU reiterates its support to the role of UNIFIL in supporting peace and stability in South Lebanon.
7. The EU is fully aware of the extraordinary challenges that the refugee crisis is posing on the stability Lebanon. The EU commends the Lebanese authorities and population for their efforts to host, assist and protect the refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria. The EU takes note of Lebanon's border policy introduced in January 2015 and other recent decisions and, at the same time, underscores the importance of upholding human rights and humanitarian principles, as well as the principle of non-refoulement in line with the Berlin Communiqué of 28 October 2014. As the largest donor in the country, the EU is committed to support Lebanon in addressing the growing needs of all vulnerable communities and refugees, including the Palestinian refugees. The implementation and coordination of international assistance requires effective decision-making by the government.
8. The EU encourages Lebanon to advance on key economic and social reforms, including the adoption of the national budget, effective implementation of strategic sectorial policies to address the economic and social needs of the population, thus contributing to job creation and economic stability and growth in the country. The strengthening of the civil society should also be part of these reforms.
9. The EU supports Lebanon in addressing its extraordinary challenges. The EU reaffirms its strong partnership with Lebanon anchored in our common values of democracy, pluralism, rule of law and respect for human rights. The EU highlights the importance of upholding Lebanon's freedom and diversity as a model of moderation in the entire region."

Russia: extension of economic sanctions

The Council extended the EU economic sanctions, which respond to Russia's destabilising role in Eastern Ukraine, until 31 January 2016.

For more details, see [press release](#).

EU annual report on human rights and democracy in the world

The Council approved the EU annual report on human rights and democracy in the world in 2014. The report gathers information on EU initiatives to promote respect for human rights across the world. The EU focused on promoting key priorities such as freedom of expression offline and online, women's rights, work against torture, abolition of the death penalty, LGTBI rights, support for human rights defenders, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, children's rights, and support for democratic reforms and values. In 2014, the EU held formal human rights dialogues and consultations with 37 partner countries including, for the first time, a human rights dialogue with Myanmar/Burma.

For more details, see the [press release](#), and the full [text of the report](#).

Humanitarian assistance

The Council adopted conclusions on common principles for multi-purpose cash-based assistance to respond to humanitarian needs. These 10 principles provide a strategic framework for the use of cash-based assistance and will contribute to more effective, efficient and innovative humanitarian assistance.

Read the full text of the [conclusions](#).

Bosnia and Herzegovina: extension of the mandate of the EU Special Representative

The Council extended the mandate of Mr Lars-Gunnar Wigemark as European Union Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina for a further four months, i.e. until 31 October 2015.

The EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina offers advice and facilitates the political process, notably in the areas of the rule of law and security sector reform. He also contributes to the further development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Syria - restrictive measures

The Council amended the EU restrictive measures against the Syrian regime. It withdrew a deceased person from the list of those subject to a travel ban and an EU asset freeze over their responsibility for the repression of the civilian population and human rights violations.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

EUNAVFOR Med

The Council launched the EU naval operation to disrupt human smuggling in the Mediterranean.

For more details, see [press release](#).
