



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



12515/1/05 REV 1 (en,pt,fi)
(Presse 242)

PRESS RELEASE

2679th Council Meeting

General Affairs and External Relations

External Relations

Luxembourg, 3 October 2005

President **Mr Jack STRAW**
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
of the United Kingdom

* Some external relations items were adopted without debate at the 2678th meeting on General Affairs (12514/05).

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B - 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 285 8239 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 285 8026
press.office@consilium.eu.int <http://ue.eu.int/Newsroom>

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Main Results of the Council

*The Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations with **Serbia and Montenegro** for an association and stabilisation agreement at the earliest opportunity. The decision marks the first important step towards the establishment of contractual relations between the EU and Serbia and Montenegro.*

*Against the background of the **Uzbek** authorities' refusal to allow an independent international inquiry into the events in Andijan in May and in the light of the excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force by the Uzbek security forces during these events, the Council decided to impose a series of measures including an embargo on exports to Uzbekistan of arms, military equipment and other equipment that might be used for internal repression and restrictions on admission to the European Union aimed at those individuals directly responsible for the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force in Andijan.*

*The Council welcomed the resolution adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors on 24 September and urged **Iran** to seize the opportunity offered by the resolution by implementing all the measures requested by the IAEA Board, including reinstating a full suspension of all fuel cycle activities.*

*In its General Affairs session (press release 12514/05 Presse241), the Council also noted agreement to respond positively to a request from Presidents Voronin and Yuschenko for the EU to establish a Border Mission on the **Moldova/Ukraine** border, including the Transnistrian segment.*

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OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

Please see General Affairs press release: 12514/05 Presse 241.

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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.
 - The documents whose references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site <http://ue.eu.int>.
 - 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 abovementioned Council Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

PARTICIPANTS

The Governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Karel DE GUCHT
Mr Didier DONFUT

Minister for Foreign Affairs
State Secretary for European Affairs, attached to the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Czech Republic:

Mr Cyril SVOBODA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Denmark:

Mr Per Stig MØLLER

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Germany:

Mr Joschka FISCHER

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Federal
Chancellor

Estonia:

Mr Urmas PAET

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Greece:

Mr Petros MOLYVIATIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr Alberto NAVARRO GONZÁLEZ

State Secretary for the European Union

France:

Mr Philippe DOUSTE-BLAZY
Ms Catherine COLONNA

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister with responsibility for European Affairs

Ireland:

Mr Dermot AHERN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Italy:

Mr Gianfranco FINI

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr George IACOVOU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Artis PABRIKS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Antanas VALIONIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister with responsibility for
Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Mr Nicolas SCHMIT

Minister with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and
Immigration

Hungary:

Mr Ferenc SOMOGYI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Richard CACHIA-CARUANA

Permanent Representative

Netherlands:

Mr Bernard BOT

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Austria:

Ms Ursula PLASSNIK

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

Poland:

Mr Adam Daniel ROTFELD

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr Diogo FREITAS DO AMARAL
Mr Fernando DE OLIVEIRA NEVES

Minister for Foreign Affairs
State Secretary for European Affairs

Slovenia:

Mr Dimitrij RUPEL

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Eduard KUKAN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Sweden:

Ms Laila FREIVALDS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr Jack STRAW
Mr Douglas ALEXANDER

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Minister of State for Europe

Commission:

Ms Benita FERRERO-WALDNER
Mr Olli REHN

Member
Member

General Secretariat of the Council:

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

The Governments of the Acceding States were represented as follows:

Bulgaria:

Ms Meglena KUNEVA

Minister for European Affairs

Romania:

Mr Mihai-Razvan UNGUREANU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

ITEMS DEBATED**MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS - Council conclusions**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council welcomed the successful conclusion of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank. It commended Israel's armed forces and police for the smooth and professional way in which settlers were evacuated and the Palestinian Authority and people for maintaining a peaceful environment during the evacuation.
1. The Council welcomed the Quartet meeting in New York on 20 September, and fully endorsed the statement made by the Quartet at that meeting.
2. The Council welcomed disengagement as a significant step towards implementing the Roadmap. It praised the positive steps on both sides but emphasised that more remains to be done. It called for renewed action in parallel by both parties to fulfil their obligations under the Roadmap, and commitments made at Sharm el Sheikh. The Council urged contacts and co-ordination between the parties to be intensified at all levels.
3. The Council expressed its concern at the renewed violence in Israel and the Occupied Territories. The Council condemned the violence perpetrated by Palestinian militants and encouraged the Palestinian Authority to continue to take firm action against those responsible and to take all necessary steps to take full control of security in the Gaza Strip. The Council emphasised that terrorist attacks damage the interests of the Palestinians and that they have dire humanitarian consequences. While recognising Israel's right to protect its citizens against terrorist attacks, the Council called on Israel to act with restraint and to refrain from all extra-judicial killings, which are contrary to international law.
4. The Council emphasised the importance of Palestinian security sector reform and of the co-ordination of international efforts in this regard. It urged the Palestinian Authority to take sustained action against individuals involved in terrorism and terrorist groups. The Council emphasised the EU's commitment to continued and enhanced support to Palestinian civil policing through the EU Co-ordination Office for Palestinian Police Support. The Council welcomed the agreement between Israel and Egypt on security arrangements along the Gaza/Egypt border.

5. The Council expressed its grave concern about the ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the continuing construction of the separation barrier in occupied Palestinian territory. These activities form an obstacle to peace and threaten to make any solution based on the coexistence of two states physically impossible. The Council urged Israel to stop settlement expansion and to remove unauthorised outposts. The Council reiterated that, while recognising Israel's right to protect its citizens, the construction of the separation barrier in the occupied Palestinian territory is contrary to international law. The Council remained particularly concerned by the settlement building and the construction of the separation barrier in and around East Jerusalem, which is having a detrimental effect on the lives of Palestinians and jeopardises a final status agreement on Jerusalem.

6. The EU stands ready to help the Quartet Special Envoy for disengagement, James Wolfensohn, resolve outstanding issues on disengagement, particularly concerning the economic viability of Gaza and confidence-building at Gaza's southern border. The Council emphasised the importance of reaching an agreement on access to Gaza for people and goods through land borders, a port and airport. The Council welcomed the Commission's recently announced package for increased support for infrastructure and for the Palestinian economy. The Council further welcomed the Commission's intention to submit proposals on EU/Palestinian co-operation beyond disengagement, focussing on institution-building and economic recovery, including support to the private sector, in particular SMEs. The Council underlined the importance of the whole international community playing a part in supporting the Palestinian Authority in taking effective control of Gaza and facilitating sustainable growth."

IRAN - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council welcomes and fully supports the Resolution adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors on 24 September.

The Council notes that the Resolution gives Iran the opportunity, through its actions, to influence the international community's next steps. It urges Iran to take this opportunity by implementing all the measures requested by the IAEA Board, including reinstating a full suspension of all fuel cycle activities.

The Council reaffirms the EU's support for a diplomatic solution to international concerns over Iran's nuclear programme, which should include an agreement on long-term arrangements. Such a solution would help create the climate for a better relationship with Europe and the international community as a whole. The EU's preferred approach remains the resumption of negotiations within the framework agreed in Paris last November. The EU urges Iran to take the steps necessary to make this possible."

WESTERN BALKANS

– *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The Council expressed its deep disappointment at the decision by the National Assembly of Republika Srpska to reject the latest proposal for police reform which met the EU principles, and regretted that it would not now be possible for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to start negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU by the 10th Anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The Council reaffirmed that the European Union stands ready to open SAA negotiations with BiH as soon as possible, once the necessary conditions have been met. The Council expressed the hope that this might still be possible before the end of the year, but emphasised that a pre-requisite for this was agreement on police reform that respected the three EU principles.

The Council urged all parties involved in negotiations on police reform, in particular those representing Republika Srpska, to make renewed efforts to reach an agreement in line with EU requirements. It emphasised that the establishment of an efficient police force - free from political interference, with policing areas based on technical and professional criteria, and with exclusive state-level competence for policing - was a vital element of BiH's broader efforts to meet EU standards on the rule of law, respect for human rights and the protection of minorities.

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

The Council commended the substantial progress made by Serbia and Montenegro, which had allowed the Commission to recommend the opening of negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement. On this basis, and mindful of the forthcoming anniversary of the democratic uprising in October 2000, the Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations at the earliest opportunity.

The opening of negotiations marks the first important step towards the establishment of contractual relations between the EU and Serbia and Montenegro. It demonstrates the EU's commitment to the full implementation of the Thessaloniki agenda, which emphasised that the future of the Western Balkans lies in the EU.

The Council recalled that the speed with which Serbia and Montenegro moves closer to the EU will depend on how quickly it adopts and implements the necessary reforms and conforms to the Copenhagen criteria and requirements of the Stabilisation and Association process. The Council judged that the pace and conclusion of negotiations would depend in particular on Serbia and Montenegro's progress in developing its legislative framework and administrative capacity, the effective implementation of the constitutional charter, and full co-operation with the ICTY. The Council and Commission will jointly review Serbia and Montenegro's performance in these areas before negotiations conclude.

Recalling UN Security Council resolutions 1503 and 1534, the Council emphasised its expectation that Serbia and Montenegro will now take decisive action to ensure that all fugitive indictees, notably Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, are finally brought to justice. Full cooperation with the ICTY is essential to achieve lasting reconciliation in the region and lift a fundamental obstacle to EU integration.

The Council encouraged the authorities of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro and its republics to build on the dynamic provided by the opening of negotiations to pursue with commitment their shared reform agenda, and thereby realise the country's full potential. The Council underlined that a stable and prosperous Serbia and Montenegro is vital to the future of the region. The Council reaffirmed the EU's continuing readiness to support Serbia and Montenegro in achieving its ambitions of moving closer to the EU."

– *Serbia and Montenegro - Stabilisation and association process*

The Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to negotiate a stabilisation and association agreement with Serbia and Montenegro.

EU-RUSSIA SUMMIT PREPARATION

The Council agreed to a compromise negotiated with the Russian Federation on draft agreements on readmission and visa facilitation to be approved at the EU-Russia summit in London on 4 October.

The summit will be the 15th to be held under the EU-Russia partnership and co-operation agreement. The agenda will cover EU-Russia relations, including implementation of the four EU-Russia common spaces (economic space; space of freedom, security and justice; space of external security; space of research and education, including cultural aspects) as well as international and regional issues.

UZBEKISTAN - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council remains profoundly concerned about the situation in Uzbekistan and strongly condemns the Uzbek authorities' refusal to allow an independent international inquiry into the events in Andijan in May.
2. The Council is particularly concerned at the conclusions of the ODIHR and OHCHR reports on the events in Andijan, and the credible eyewitness accounts as reported by NGOs and the media, which contradict the Uzbek authorities' version of events. The Council is also alarmed about reports of the detention and harassment of those, including human rights defenders, journalists and others, who have questioned the authorities' version of events in Andijan on 12-13 May, and calls on the Uzbek government to discontinue such practices. For these reasons, the Council continues to place primary importance on a credible and transparent independent international inquiry.
3. The Council recalls its earlier Conclusions concerning Uzbekistan and notes a report of the EUSR for Central Asia Ján Kubiš following his visit to Uzbekistan on 8-10 September.
4. In light of the excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force by the Uzbek security forces during the Andijan events, the Council has decided to impose an embargo on exports to Uzbekistan of arms, military equipment and other equipment that might be used for internal repression.
5. The Council has also decided to implement restrictions on admission to the European Union aimed at those individuals directly responsible for the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force in Andijan. To this end, the Council requests the relevant Council bodies to embark on the necessary preparations. The Council will keep the implementation of these restrictions under close review according to developments.
6. The Council further recalls its undertaking in its 18 July Conclusions to review the EU-Uzbekistan Partnership and Co-operation Agreement in the event of continued Uzbek refusal to allow an international independent inquiry. The Council has accordingly decided to immediately suspend *sine die* all scheduled technical meetings under the PCA. Furthermore, the Council supports the Commission's re-orientation and proposed reduction of its TACIS programme in order to support increased focus on the needs of the population, democracy and human rights, as well as to foster closer links with Uzbek civil society.

7. The Council also recalls its earlier decision that all bilateral ministerial contacts of the EU and its Member States with President Karimov and his government should include strong messages on the importance of respect for democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Uzbekistan.
8. In order to pursue the international community's efforts for an independent inquiry, the Council requests EU Member States in the OSCE and the UN to support invoking respective mechanisms and procedures, and calls on like-minded countries to co-operate to this end with EU Member States. The Council urges the Uzbek authorities to lend their full co-operation to this process.
9. The Council requests relevant Council bodies to follow closely the situation in Uzbekistan, in particular:
 - i) the conduct and outcome of the ongoing trials of those accused of precipitating and participating in the disturbances in Andijan. In this regard, the Council takes note of the decision by the Uzbek government to allow OSCE observers to attend these trials. The EU also notes with utmost concern reports from independent organisations alleging unfair trials based on confessions extracted under duress of fifteen persons tried for subversive activities in connection with the events in Andijan;
 - ii) the situation regarding the detention and harassment of those who have questioned the Uzbek authorities' version of events in Andijan;
 - iii) Uzbek co-operation with any independent, international Rapporteur appointed to investigate the disturbances in Andijan;
 - iv) the outcome of any independent, international inquiry.
10. The Council has decided to implement these measures for an initial period of one year. In the meantime, the Council will review the measures it has implemented in the light of any significant changes to the current situation, in particular with regard to the elements in paragraph 9 above and any that demonstrate the willingness of the Uzbek authorities to adhere to the principles of respect for human rights, rule of law and fundamental freedoms.
11. The Council invites the EUSR for Central Asia to continue his contacts with Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries, and expresses its continued readiness to develop relations with the countries of the Central Asian region on the basis of a mutual commitment to common values, particularly in the field of human rights."

OTHER BUSINESS

– *ASEM*

Ministers briefly discussed the Asia Europe Meeting process and reaffirmed the importance the EU attaches to its relations with Asia. Ministers looked forward to fruitful ASEM meetings in 2006.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

Please see General Affairs press release: 12514/05 Presse 241.
