



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



10657/07 (Presse 138)

## **PRESS RELEASE**

2809th Council meeting

### **General Affairs and External Relations**

### **External Relations**

Luxembourg, 18 June 2007

President      **Mr Frank-Walter STEINMEIER**  
Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany

\* Some external relations items were adopted without debate at the 2808th meeting on General Affairs (10654/07).

# **P R E S S**

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10657/07 (Presse 138)

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**EN**

## Main results of the Council

*On the **Middle East**, the Council expressed its deep concern regarding the extremely serious events in Gaza and condemned in the strongest possible terms the violent coup perpetrated by Hamas militias. It called for the restoration of Palestinian national unity and the unity of Palestinian territory. It expressed its full support for President Abbas and his decisions to declare a state of emergency and to install an emergency government for the Palestinian Territories under Prime Minister Fayyad. The EU will do its utmost to ensure the provision of emergency and humanitarian assistance to the population of Gaza.*

*The Council decided that the EU will resume normal relations with the Palestinian Authority immediately. With this objective, the EU will develop the conditions for urgent practical and financial assistance including direct financial support to the government; support for the Palestinian Civilian Police through the resumption of the EUPOL COPPS mission; the resumption of the activities of the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) Rafah; and intensive efforts to build the institutions of the future Palestinian state.*

*On **Kosovo**, the Council confirmed its support for UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari and reiterated its view that his comprehensive proposal submitted by the UN Secretary General to the Security Council on 26 March 2007 provides the basis for the settlement of the Kosovo issue by a new Resolution of the UN Security Council. It expressed its support for intensified efforts to ensure that the Security Council can adopt such a resolution in a timely manner, also as a basis for a future EU and international presence.*

*The Council decided that while equally maintaining its intensive dialogue with **Cuba**'s civil society and the peaceful opposition, the EU would be ready to resume a comprehensive and open political dialogue with the Cuban authorities on all topics of mutual interest. In the context of this dialogue, the EU will outline to the Cuban government its views on democracy, universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. For sounding out on this, a Cuban delegation will be invited to Brussels.*

*The Council welcomed **Sudan**'s acceptance on 12 June of the AU/UN hybrid operation in Sudan/Darfur, called for a speedy transition to this operation and reiterated its readiness to consider further measures, notably in the UN framework, against any party which obstructs its implementation. The Council will continue to look at how best to reinforce and develop its engagement in pursuit of its objectives regarding Sudan/Darfur.*

*The Council approved a strategy for a new partnership for the EU with **Central Asia**, with a view to its submission to the 21-22 June European Council.*

*The Council decided that the EU will introduce, in the framework of a cross-regional alliance, an **anti-death penalty** resolution at the 62nd United Nations General Assembly.*

*The Council appointed Miroslav Lajcak as the new EU Special Representative in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** as of 1 July.*

**CONTENTS**<sup>1</sup>

<b>PARTICIPANTS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
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**ITEMS DEBATED**

WORLD TRADE NEGOTIATIONS – DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA .....	6
CUBA - <i>Council conclusions</i> .....	7
CENTRAL ASIA - STRATEGY FOR A NEW PARTNERSHIP .....	8
EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY - <i>Council conclusions</i> .....	9
ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY .....	11
SUDAN - <i>Council conclusions</i> .....	12
WESTERN BALKANS - <i>Council conclusions</i> .....	14
IRAN - <i>Council conclusions</i> .....	16
LIBYA .....	17
MIDDLE EAST .....	18
Middle East Peace Process - <i>Council conclusions</i> .....	18
Lebanon - <i>Council conclusions</i> .....	19
RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB LEAGUE .....	21

**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

*See press release 10654/07.*

<sup>1</sup>

- 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.

## **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

### **Bulgaria:**

Mr Ivailo KALFIN  
Mr Todor CHUROV  
Ms Evgenia Marinova KOLDANOVA  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Czech Republic:**

Mr Alexandr VONDRA  
Mr Karel SCHWARZENBERG  
Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for European  
Affairs  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Denmark:**

Mr Per Stig MØLLER  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Germany:**

Mr Frank-Walter STEINMEIER  
Mr Günter GLOSER  
Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### **Estonia:**

Mr Urmas PAET  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Ireland:**

Mr Dermot AHERN  
Mr Dirk ROCHE  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local  
Government

### **Greece:**

Ms Dora BAKOYANNI  
Mr Ioannis VALINAKIS  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

### **Spain:**

Mr Miguel Ángel MORATINOS  
Mr Alberto NAVARRO GONZÁLEZ  
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation  
State Secretary for the European Union

### **France:**

Mr Bernard KOUCHNER  
Mr Jean-Pierre JOUYET  
Minister of Foreign and European Affairs  
Minister of State for European Affairs

### **Italy:**

Mr Massimo D'ALEMA  
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Cyprus:**

Mr Yiorgos LILLIKAS  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Latvia:**

Mr Artis PABRIKS  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Lithuania:**

Mr Petras VAITIEKŪNAS  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Luxembourg:**

Mr Jean ASSELBORN  
Mr Nicolas SCHMIT  
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister with responsibility for  
Foreign Affairs and Immigration  
Minister with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and  
Immigration

### **Hungary:**

Ms Kinga GÖNCZ  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Malta:**

Mr Michael FREUDO  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Netherlands:**

Mr Maxime VERHAGEN  
Mr Franciscus TIMMERMANS

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for European Affairs

**Austria:**

Ms Ursula PLASSNIK

Federal Minister for European and International Affairs

**Poland:**

Ms Anna Elzbieta FOTYGA  
Ms Ewa OŚNIECKA-TAMECKA

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
State Secretary, Office of the Committee for European  
Integration

**Portugal:**

Mr Luís AMADO  
Mr Manuel LOBO ANTUNES

Ministro de Estado, Minister for Foreign Affairs  
State Secretary for European Affairs, attached to the  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Romania:**

Mr Adrian CIOROIANU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Slovenia:**

Mr Dimitrij RUPEL

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Slovakia:**

Mr Ján KUBIŠ  
Ms Oľga ALGAYEROVÁ

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Finland:**

Mr Ilkka KANERVA  
Mr Paavo VÄRYNEN  
Ms Astrid THORS

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for Foreign Trade and Development  
Minister for Migration and European Affairs

**Sweden:**

Mr Carl BILDT  
Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM

Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for European Affairs

**United Kingdom:**

Ms Margaret BECKETT

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

**Commission:**

Mr Olli REHN  
Ms Benita FERRERO-WALDNER  
Mr Peter MANDELSON

Member  
Member  
Member

**General Secretariat of the Council:**

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

**ITEMS DEBATED****WORLD TRADE NEGOTIATIONS – DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

The Council took stock of latest developments in the current round of trade negotiations under the World Trade Organisation's Doha Development Agenda, on the basis of a briefing by Commissioner Peter Mandelson.

The Council will meet for an extraordinary meeting in Luxembourg on 25 June in order to review the outcome of a ministerial meeting of the G4 (EU, United States, Brazil and India) to be held in Potsdam from 19 to 23 June.

**CUBA - Council conclusions**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Although the political, economic and social system in Cuba remains essentially unchanged, the Council has registered the first temporary transfer of power in 48 years from Fidel Castro to a collective leadership led by his brother Raúl Castro which constitutes a new situation. The Council urges the Cuban Government to undertake the necessary political and economic reforms for improving the daily life of the Cuban people.
2. The EU is following political developments in Cuba, including the human rights situation, very closely. The Council deplors that the human rights situation has not fundamentally changed, despite a decrease in the number of political prisoners and acts of harassment. The Cuban Government continues to deny its citizens internationally recognized civil, political and economic rights and freedoms. The EU once again urges the Cuban Government, also in Cuba's capacity as a member of the Human Rights Council, to release unconditionally all political prisoners, and reaffirms that this issue constitutes a key priority in its policy towards Cuba. The EU also reiterates its call on the Cuban Government to grant freedom of information and expression and invites the Cuban Government to cooperate on this matter.
3. All those peacefully committed to freedom, democracy and respect for universal human rights may be assured of the solidarity and continued support of the EU. The EU will continue to pursue its dialogue with Cuba's civil society and to offer to all sectors of society practical support towards peaceful change in Cuba. In this context, the Council stresses the EU's worldwide policy of support to Human Rights Defenders according to the respective EU Guidelines.
4. The EU recognizes the right of the Cuban citizens to decide independently about their future and remains ready to contribute positively to the future development of all sectors of Cuban society, including through development cooperation instruments.
5. While equally maintaining its intensive dialogue with civil society and the peaceful opposition, the EU would be ready to resume a comprehensive and open political dialogue with the Cuban authorities on all topics of mutual interest. This dialogue should include the whole range of potential fields of co-operation, including in the political, human rights, economic, scientific and cultural spheres. It should take place on a reciprocal and non-discriminatory basis. In the context of this dialogue, the EU will outline to the Cuban Government its views on democracy, universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. For sounding out this, a Cuban delegation will be invited to Brussels."

**CENTRAL ASIA - STRATEGY FOR A NEW PARTNERSHIP**

The Council approved a strategy for a new partnership with Central Asia (Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), and agreed to submit it to the European Council at its meeting on 21 and 22 June (10113/07).

The strategy identifies the EU's strategic interests in the region, as regards both bilateral and regional cooperation, and suggests avenues for a partnership in areas such as: youth and education; human rights, the rule of law, governance and democratisation; economic development, trade and investment; energy and transport links; environmental sustainability and water; combating common threats and challenges.



## **EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY - Council conclusions**

The Council held an exchange of views and adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council welcomed the significant progress that has been made in strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), a core priority within the EU's external action, under the mandate agreed by the European Council of December 2006. It endorsed the Presidency's Progress Report which takes stock of the substantial accomplishments to date and looks forward to the future development of the strengthened ENP.

The Council reaffirmed the crucial importance of the ENP to consolidate a ring of prosperity, stability and security based on human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the EU's neighbourhood. Continuous efforts should be made so that all partner countries truly embrace a strengthened ENP.

The Council recalled the key principles of the ENP:

- ENP is a strategy based on partnership and joint ownership to promote modernisation and reform.
- ENP is a single, inclusive, balanced and coherent policy framework.
- Performance-driven differentiation and tailor-made assistance remain essential for EU relations with the neighbouring countries.
- ENP remains distinct from the question of EU membership and does not prejudice any possible future developments of partner countries' relationship with the EU.

The Council welcomed the work achieved so far in deepening the ENP's economic, financial, thematic, regional and civil society dimensions. It underlined that deeper economic integration is an essential building block of the strengthened ENP, to be achieved in particular by the progressive adoption of deep and comprehensive free trade agreements. The opening of negotiations on such agreements will be preceded by the accession of our partner countries to the WTO. It particularly welcomed the opening of negotiations on an Enhanced Agreement with Ukraine, certain aspects of which could serve as a model for other ENP partners in the future.

The Council welcomed the Commission's ongoing work to establish a Governance Facility, with objective and transparent allocation criteria, to better encourage partners' reforms, and took note of the ongoing work to set up a Neighbourhood Investment Fund, which should be fully compatible with FEMIP. It underlined the importance of the progress made on the opening of Community agencies and programmes to partner countries.

The Council underlined the importance of the extension of the Global Approach to Migration to the neighbouring Eastern and South-Eastern regions and considered that further initiatives could be explored to facilitate mobility for certain categories of people from ENP countries to the EU, in particular for participation in ENP-related events.

The Council equally welcomed the decision to invite Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia on a case by case basis to align with EU declarations, demarches and positions on CFSP issues. A similar possibility should be pursued for the EU's Mediterranean partners.

The Council welcomed the adoption and the beginning of implementation of the Egypt and Lebanon ENP Action Plans, which will allow the strengthening of relations with these two countries.

The Council welcomed that work on a strengthened and coherent EU engagement towards the Black Sea area has started and recalled the Council Conclusions of 14 May 2007 on the Black Sea Synergy Initiative. In developing this initiative, the EU can build on the experience gained in the context of the Barcelona Process and consider the lessons learnt in the Northern Dimension and build upon synergies with other regional cooperation processes.

The Council underlined that the efforts to develop the strengthened ENP as a core foreign policy should continue dynamically and invited the incoming Presidencies and the Commission to take forward this work in the relevant bodies."

## **ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY**

The Council decided that the EU will introduce, in the framework of a cross-regional alliance, a resolution against the death penalty at the 62nd United Nations General Assembly.

The EU actively promotes abolition of the death penalty on the basis of guidelines established in 1998.

**SUDAN - Council conclusions**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. As the crisis in Darfur continues, the humanitarian and security situation remains distressing. The Council is particularly alarmed by the continuation of violence and condemns the renewed bombings of civilians by the Sudanese Air Force in clear violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1591, as well as the attacks by rebel factions on AMIS personnel. The Council reiterates its call upon all conflict parties to abide by the existing ceasefire agreements, to respect the neutral role of AMIS and to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access throughout Darfur. The EU welcomes the first steps taken towards implementation of the Joint Communiqué on Facilitation of Humanitarian Activities in Darfur agreed by the Government of Sudan and the UN. As member of the High Committee charged with monitoring its implementation, the EU will continue to urge further progress. The EU for its part will undertake to identify options for improving humanitarian access. It stands ready to consider further measures, notably in the UN framework, to ensure humanitarian deliveries and protection of civilians.
2. Emphasising its continued commitment to a peaceful resolution of the crisis, the Council recalls that it is the primary responsibility of the Sudanese parties to end the suffering of the people of Darfur by finding a sustainable political solution to the root causes of the conflict. In line with Resolution 1591, the Council will consider any party failing to constructively engage in this process as an obstacle to peace and will promote appropriate further measures against them, notably in the UN framework. Those violating the human rights of civilians must be held responsible. In this context, the Council reiterates its support for the International Criminal Court in its efforts to end impunity for atrocities committed in Darfur. Following the Court's decision to issue arrest warrants against two individuals, the Council urges the Government of Sudan to comply with the requests for their extradition.
3. Stressing the need for an inclusive political solution to the conflict in Darfur, the EU reaffirms its full support for the joint AU/UN initiative to revitalise the political track. It welcomes the consensus reached in Tripoli on 29 April by all relevant regional and international actors that their efforts shall be co-ordinated under the leadership of the AU and UN Special Envoys. The Council further welcomes the proposal by the Special Envoys for a Road Map towards negotiations as well as the first steps taken by them to increase capacity of the Joint Mediation Support Team. In this regard, the EU welcomes the positive contribution by the SPLM to reinvigorate the political process. The EU calls upon all rebel movements to step up their efforts to formulate a common platform for negotiations and encourages regional actors to ensure greater coordination of their initiatives with the AU and UN Special Envoys.

4. The Council welcomes the forthcoming international meeting on Sudan in Paris with a view to further strengthening international support for the AU/UN initiative and the participation of key international and regional stakeholders in the meeting.
5. The EU recognises that sustainable peace across Sudan, including Darfur and the Eastern part of the country, cannot be achieved without the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). It underlines that a failure in the North/South peace process could jeopardize the situation in Darfur as well. The Council urges the parties to intensify their efforts to speed up its implementation and calls upon all other political forces to constructively engage in this process. Of particular importance will be the full redeployment of armed forces by July 2007 in accordance with the CPA, and an acceleration of the preparations for national elections.
6. The EU reiterates its continued support for AMIS and stresses the need to strengthen the mission in the period of transition to the AU/UN hybrid mission. In this context, the Council welcomes recent decisions, including by the ACP-EU Council of Ministers, securing the continuation of much-needed EU financial support for AMIS through the replenishment of the African Peace Facility. As a first step, a sum of 40 million euros will be released in June 2007. The Council also welcomes the announcements of voluntary contributions by Member States. In view of the pressing need for additional funds to cover all AMIS expenses, the Council encourages AMIS partners to continue their support and urges other international partners to also contribute to the mission.
7. The Council emphasises the need to further strengthen and expand the peacekeeping mission in Darfur, and in this context welcomes Sudan's acceptance on 12 June of the AU/UN hybrid operation as described in the joint AU/UN report of 5 June 2007. The Council is further encouraged by the constructive discussions on this issue during the UNSC visit to Sudan on 17 June and expects the Sudanese Government to swiftly take action to effectively facilitate the deployment of the UN Heavy Support Package to AMIS, and, subsequently, the hybrid operation. It calls upon the AU and the UN to ensure a speedy transition to the hybrid operation and reiterates its readiness to consider further measures, notably in the UN framework, against any party which obstructs its implementation.
8. The Council expresses its continued deep concern about the impact of the Darfur crisis on the humanitarian and security situation in neighbouring countries. It however notes as a positive development the recent high-level contacts in Saudi Arabia between the governments of Sudan and Chad aimed at improving their bilateral relations, and encourages both countries to continue and intensify these efforts. The Council supports endeavours by the UN to prepare the deployment of a multidimensional UN presence in Eastern Chad and North-Eastern Central African Republic and looks forward to the report of the UN fact-finding mission to Eastern Chad as the basis for further discussions.
9. The Council will continue to look at how best to reinforce and develop its engagement in pursuit of the objectives set out in these conclusions and invites the General Secretariat of the Council, the Commission and the relevant bodies of the Council to work in this regard with a view to possible decisions."

**WESTERN BALKANS - Council conclusions**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

**"SERBIA**

1. The Council welcomed the fact that the new government in Belgrade had shown clear commitment and had undertaken concrete and effective action for full co-operation with the ICTY, and that this had enabled the Commission to resume negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with Serbia.
2. The Council encouraged the Serbian authorities to build on this positive dynamic, to vigorously pursue the necessary reforms to bring Serbia closer to the European Union and to continue its efforts to ensure that all remaining fugitive ICTY indictees are brought to justice. The Council recalled that the pace and conclusion of the negotiations on the SAA would in particular depend on Serbia's progress in developing the necessary legislative framework and administrative capacity to implement its obligations under the Agreement, and on full co-operation with ICTY. The Council and the Commission will jointly review Serbia's performance in these areas before the decision to sign is taken by the Council.
3. The Council reaffirmed that Serbia's future lies within the European Union and that the Union stands ready to work with Serbia towards this goal.

**SERBIA/KOSOVO**

4. The Council confirmed its support to UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari and reiterated its view that his comprehensive proposal submitted by the UN Secretary General to the Security Council on March 26, 2007, provides the basis for the settlement of the Kosovo issue by a new Resolution of the United Nations Security Council. The Council expressed its support for intensified efforts to ensure that the Security Council can adopt such a resolution in a timely manner, also as a basis for a future EU and international presence.
5. The Council underlined the necessity of rapidly finding a solution to the Kosovo Status issue, which is essential as a basis for a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo committed to the rule of law as well as for maintaining and reinforcing regional stability.
6. The Council reaffirmed its conviction that resolving the pending status of Kosovo constitutes a sui generis case that does not set any precedent.

7. The Council underlined that the EU stands ready to play a significant role in the implementation of the status settlement. Preparations for a future EU and international presence in Kosovo are being intensified in coordination with other international actors.

#### VISA FACILITATION AND READMISSION AGREEMENTS

8. The Council welcomed the initialling of the agreements on visa facilitation and readmission with Albania<sup>1</sup>, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The conclusion of such agreements will promote people-to-people contacts between the EU and the Western Balkan countries and will increase the opportunities for travelling, especially for the younger generation.
9. Recalling the Thessaloniki Agenda, the Council also acknowledged the importance the people of the Western Balkans attach to the perspective of visa-free movement. In this respect, it welcomed the efforts of the Commission to take these issues forward in concrete terms. Furthermore, the Council underlined the desirability of promoting people-to-people contacts by also making available more scholarships for the students of the region.
10. Therefore the Council looks forward to a prompt conclusion of all necessary procedures to ensure that the agreements enter into force as soon as possible. "

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<sup>1</sup> The EC/Albania readmission agreement entered into force on 1 May 2006.

**IRAN - Council conclusions**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council deplores the fact that Iran has still not complied with its international obligations as reiterated in United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1747. Iran has instead continued to drive forward its nuclear programme as well as further restricting its cooperation with the IAEA, thus creating further doubts as to the exclusively peaceful nature of its programme. Whilst reaffirming its commitment to finding a diplomatic solution that addresses the international community's concerns, the Council also reasserts its full support for the UNSC and its resolve, as expressed in Resolution 1747, to adopt further appropriate measures under Article 41 Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter should Iran continue not to comply with its international obligations.

The Council again urges Iran to respond positively to the proposals put forward by the Foreign Ministers of China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, with the support of the High Representative of the European Union, in their Statement of 24 March 2007. The Council also reaffirms its support for the exploratory efforts of the High Representative of the EU, Javier Solana with Dr. Ali Larijani and strongly urges Iran to engage constructively in these consultations and to create the necessary conditions for negotiations to resume."



**LIBYA**

Ministers, over lunch, discussed developments regarding the five Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian doctor condemned to death in Libya in connection with the infection by HIV/AIDS of children in a hospital at Benghazi in 1999. They were briefed on discussions held during a joint trip to Tripoli by the Presidency and the Commission.

The Council will continue to follow the issue closely, in the hope of obtaining an expeditious conclusion that will lead to the release of the medical workers.

**MIDDLE EAST****Middle East Peace Process - *Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council expresses its deep concern regarding the extremely serious events in Gaza. The Council condemns in the strongest possible terms the violent coup perpetrated by Hamas militias, in particular attacks against and the destruction of the legitimate security services of the Palestinian Authority, the summary execution of many of its members, the attacks against hospitals and the cruel treatment of captives. The Council deeply deplors the loss of human life, including civilians and humanitarian workers. The Council calls for the immediate cessation of all violence and hostilities, including in the West Bank, and for the restoration of law and order. All those responsible for criminal acts in violation of the standards safeguarded by international humanitarian law and of fundamental human rights must be held accountable.
2. The Council supports the Arab League's call for restoring Palestinian National unity and the unity of Palestinian territory. The Council also supports ongoing efforts by the Egyptian government to mediate a cease-fire. It appeals to all the countries of the region to join these efforts and to help stop the supply of weapons to the militias.
3. In calling for an urgent political solution of the crisis, the EU expresses its full support for President Abbas and his decisions taken within his mandate to declare a state of emergency and to install an emergency government for the Palestinian Territories under Prime Minister Fayyad, underlining the importance of the Palestinian basic law. All Palestinian parties should abide by his decisions. It recalls that reconciliation and national unity behind the programme of peace articulated by President Abbas is the only way to achieve Palestinian national goals.
4. Gravely concerned by the critical humanitarian situation in Gaza, the EU will do its utmost to ensure the provision of emergency and humanitarian assistance to the population of Gaza, whom it will not abandon. Unimpeded access to humanitarian aid deliveries must be guaranteed. The extension of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) for a further three months until September 2007 will also contribute to the emergency relief. The EU calls on Israel to facilitate the provision of humanitarian help.
5. The Council reiterates its call on Israel for the immediate release of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues.

6. The EU will resume normal relations with the Palestinian Authority immediately. With this objective, the EU will develop the conditions for urgent practical and financial assistance including:
  - direct financial support to the government;
  - support to the Palestinian Civilian Police through the resumption of EUPOL COPPS;
  - the resumption of the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) Rafah;
  - intensive efforts to build the institutions of the future Palestinian state.
  
7. In the current circumstances it becomes all the more urgent to take forward a credible peace process which can give the Palestinian people the perspective of an independent, democratic and viable state living side by side with Israel, and bring peace and stability to the Middle East. "

### **Lebanon - Council conclusions**

The Council adopted the following conclusions on Lebanon:

- "1. The Council condemns in the strongest possible terms the assassination of Member of Parliament Walid Eido, his son and others on 13 June. It recalls that MP Eido and other personalities targeted since 2004 had distinguished themselves by their struggle for an independent, sovereign and stable Lebanon, free of foreign interference. The Council supports the efforts by the Lebanese Government and the security forces to bring the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of these ruthless acts to justice and to ensure security and stability throughout Lebanon. It urges all actors in Lebanon to unite in the face of attempts to destabilize the country.
  
2. The Council remains determined to reinforce Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence and reaffirms its support for the legitimate and democratic government of Prime Minister Siniora.

3. The Council strongly condemns the attacks on Lebanese security forces by terrorist groups operating from the Palestinian refugee camps at Nahr el Bared and Ain el Hilweh, and the recent bomb attacks. It deplores the loss of life and human suffering caused by the terrorist violence, including the killing of two Lebanese Red Cross workers on 11 June. The Council is deeply concerned about the humanitarian consequences of the outbreak of violence at Nahr el Bared. It calls on all sides to seek to improve this situation, to respect humanitarian principles and to protect civilians, including by allowing unrestricted access by humanitarian workers. The EU and its Member States will continue to provide humanitarian aid to the civilian population affected by the fighting.
4. The Council reiterates the need for disbanding and disarming all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias as called for by UNSC Resolution 1559. There should be no weapons in Lebanon without the consent of its Government and no authority other than that of its Government.
5. The Council reaffirms its commitment to the full and speedy implementation of Resolution 1701 and all other relevant resolutions of the Security Council.
6. The Council welcomes the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1757 which brings into force the agreement on the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. The Council calls on all states and all parties to fully cooperate with the Special Tribunal.
7. The Council reiterates its call on all political forces in Lebanon to search for a solution to the current political deadlock and to develop the widest possible consensus for the forthcoming election of the President of the Republic. Dialogue and full respect for the democratic institutions of the country should be the guiding principles of the political process, in the interest of all Lebanese people. The Council calls on all Lebanese actors to reach an intra-Lebanese agreement and urges all parties in the region to refrain from destabilizing the country."

## **RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB LEAGUE**

The Council discussed the strengthening of ties and developing dialogue with the Arab League, notably on the basis of an intervention by the Maltese delegation.

In the margins of the Council's meeting on 14 and 15 May, ministers met for the first time with an Arab League delegation. The two sides agreed to work together in supporting efforts towards a settlement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as enhancing cooperation between themselves.

The Presidency called on the relevant Council bodies to take the matter forward. The incoming Portuguese presidency will further explore the possibilities with a view to holding a further meeting.

**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

***See press release 10654/07.***

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