



Brussels, 19 March 2010

BACKGROUND¹
FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL
Monday, 22 March 2010, in Brussels

*The Foreign Affairs Council, chaired by High Representative Catherine Ashton, will begin at 10.00 on Monday, 22 March. The Council will discuss its continuing support for **Haiti** following the earthquake in January. It will prepare the Union's position for the International Conference on Haiti in New York at the end of March and mandate the High Representative to represent the Union at the conference. The council will also be briefed by Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Response, on the EU's response to the earthquake in **Chile**. The Council is expected to appoint the Union's new single representative in **Afghanistan** and discuss the situation in Afghanistan in his presence. **Over lunch**, the Council will discuss the **Middle East Peace Process** in the presence of International Quartet envoy Tony Blair.*

The Council will be followed by a press conference at approximately 15.00.

Meetings on the sidelines of the Council

Tuesday, 23 March

- EU-Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) ministerial political dialogue

NB: these meetings will be chaired by the Spanish Presidency at the request of the High Representative

Press conferences and public events can be followed by video streaming:

<http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>

Video coverage of the event will be available for preview and download in broadcast quality (MPEG4) on <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office

Haiti

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions mandating the High Representative to represent the Union at the International Donors' Conference - Towards a New Future for Haiti in New York on 31 March and present a common EU position. The Council on Monday will express the EU's continued support to Haiti - building on its swift initial response to the earthquake - with humanitarian aid, contingency measures for the coming rainy and hurricane season and long-term reconstruction and sustainable development aid.

The common EU position for the New York Conference will provide an overview of the EU's collective effort in providing humanitarian, civil protection and other emergency assistance since the earthquake, including military assets, and police support, with a common aggregated figure for the overall EU commitment to the reconstruction of Haiti. The EU will support a long-term plan, under the leadership of the Government of Haiti, for lasting inclusive economic growth and development in Haiti over the next ten years, with a joint EU approach linking relief to rehabilitation and development. It will enhance EU coordination on the ground with an EU House in Haiti.

Chile

The Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Response, Kristalina Georgieva, will brief the Council on the EU's response to the earthquake in **Chile** and her visit there.

Afghanistan

The Council will discuss developments in Afghanistan and EU efforts on the ground on the basis of the EU's 2009 Action Plan for Enhanced Engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan in the presence of the EU's new single representative for Afghanistan, Vygaudas Usackas, who will be formally appointed on Monday as Special Representative of the EU and will take office on 1 April. The Council will adopt conclusions stating that EU efforts will be spearheaded under the leadership of Mr Usackas, who will guide the implementation of the Action Plan, in close cooperation with the Member States' representatives in Kabul.

Follow-up to Gymnich

Ministers are expected to discuss the follow-up to their informal meeting (Gymnich) in Cordoba on 5 and 6 March, notably as regards work of the future European External Action Service. This work is expected to be discussed by Ministers jointly between the Foreign Affairs and the General Affairs sessions.

Middle East Peace Process

Over lunch, the Council will discuss the Middle East Peace Process in the presence of International Quartet Envoy, Tony Blair. The High Representative will report on her visit to the Middle East and the International Quartet meeting in Moscow.

Any other business

Under any other business, the Council will discuss Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Libya.