



Brussels, 23 July 2010

## BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>

### ***FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL***

Monday, 26 July in Brussels

***EU Foreign ministers will meet at 11.30 on Monday morning to discuss external relations issues, focusing in particular on the Western Balkans, Gaza and the Middle East Peace Process, Iran and Sudan.***

*The working lunch will be devoted to the latest in a series of discussions on the EU's relations with its strategic partners, focusing this time on **India** and **Brazil**.*

*The Council is also expected to adopt conclusions on other issues, including **Kyrgyzstan** and **European Neighbourhood Policy**. Ministers will also briefly address the issue of **Cuba in the light of recent developments**.*

*High Representative Catherine Ashton will hold a press conference at the end of the Council meeting (at approximately 17.00).*

#### **Meetings on the sidelines of the Council**

##### **Tuesday, 27 July 2010**

– EU- former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Stabilization and Association Council, to be followed by a press conference at approximately 17.45

***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>***

---

<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office

## **SESSION ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

### ***Gaza / Middle East Peace Process***

The High Representative will brief the Council on her recent trip to the Middle East and in particular on her visit to Gaza in the wake of the incident involving the aid flotilla. The Council is expected to underline the urgent need for a lasting solution to the situation in Gaza and call for the immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza. It will discuss the possible role the EU could play in contributing to improved access. The Council is expected to reiterate its call for the proximity talks to lead as soon as possible to the resumption of direct peace talks.

### ***Iran***

The Council will continue its discussion on the Iranian nuclear programme and the EU measures to be adopted in pursuit of UN Security Council Resolution 1929/2010 imposing a fourth round of sanctions.

On 17 June, the European Council, while affirming once again the EU's commitment to work for a diplomatic solution to the issue of Iran's nuclear programme, considered that new restrictive measures had become inevitable in the light of the situation. It invited the Foreign Affairs Council to adopt measures implementing those contained in UN Security Council Resolution 1929 (2010) as well as accompanying measures, with a view to supporting the resolution of all outstanding concerns regarding Iran's development of sensitive technologies in support of its nuclear and missile programmes, through negotiation.

The Council is expected to adopt a package of restrictive measures to be imposed on Iran in the areas of trade, financial services, energy and transport and also a regulation extending the list of entities and individuals subject to an assets freeze.

### ***Sudan***

The Council will hold a broad strategic discussion on the European Union's relations with Sudan, following the general elections in April and ahead of the referendum on South Sudan's self-determination in January. The discussion will take place against the backdrop of the recent decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue a second arrest warrant for President Bashir on a charge of genocide in Darfur, in addition to the arrest warrant issued in March 2009 for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Council will state its continuing full support for the ICC.

The Council is expected to recognise the enormous challenges facing Sudan over the coming months, while noting that opportunities exist for lasting peace and security for the Sudanese people. It will underline the need for full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and to prepare for the post-referendum period and will state the EU's readiness to provide support. The Council is also expected to express concern at the pattern of increasing political repression in all areas of Sudan and at the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Darfur. It will call on all parties to end hostilities in Darfur.

The Council will adopt conclusions on Sudan.

### *Western Balkans*

The Council will discuss the Western Balkans, recalling the EU's unequivocal commitment to the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries in line with the Thessaloniki Agenda.

It will hold an exchange of views on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and discuss the need to recreate momentum for change in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the elections in October, with a stronger EU presence using the EU perspective for BiH as a driver for change.

The Council will also discuss the situation in Kosovo and Kosovo's future path towards EU integration, following the publication of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on 22 July. It will discuss the way forward and stress that the opinion opens a new phase and that the focus should now be on the future. It will also reiterate the readiness of the EU to facilitate a process of dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. This dialogue would be to promote cooperation, achieve progress on the path to Europe and improve the lives of the people.

### *Strategic partnerships - India and Brazil*

Over lunch, the Council will continue its series of discussions on the EU's relations with its strategic partners in preparation for the debate at the European Council in September, focussing this time on Brazil and India.

### *Other items on the agenda*

The Council is also expected to adopt conclusions on a number of other other issues, including **Kyrgyzstan** and **European Neighbourhood Policy**. Ministers will also briefly address the issue of **Cuba** in the light of recent developments, but will return to this point again in September. It will also briefly discuss **Georgia**, following the recent visit of the High Representative.

---