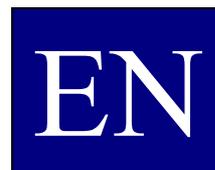




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



17218/09 (Presse 371)

PRESS RELEASE

2985th Council meeting

Foreign affairs

Brussels, 8 December 2009

President

Mr Carl BILDT
Minister for Foreign affairs of Sweden

- * Some external relations items were adopted without debate at the 2984th meeting on General affairs (17217/09).

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17218/09 (Presse 371)

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Main results of the Council

*The Council adopted conclusions on the **Middle East peace process**. It called for the urgent resumption of negotiations that will lead, within an agreed time-frame, to a two-state solution with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.*

It recalled that the European Union would not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties.

*The Council also discussed **Iran**, in particular the nuclear dossier, the situation regarding human rights and the EU's relations with Iran as well as the situation in **Afghanistan** and it agreed to forward draft declarations on these countries to the European Council.*

*The Council also decided to allow for the EU naval force **Atalanta** to contribute to the monitoring of fishing activities off the Somali coast.*

*Finally, the Council adopted conclusions on the **Horn of Africa and Iraq**.*

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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.
- 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.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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PARTICIPANTS

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

Belgium:

Mr Steven VANACKERE

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Institutional Reforms
State Secretary for European Affairs

Mr Olivier CHASTEL

Bulgaria:

Ms Rumiana JELEVA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Czech Republic:

Mr Jan KOHOUT

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Juraj CHMIEL

Minister for European Affairs

Denmark:

Mr Per Stig MØLLER

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Ulrik VESTERGAARD KNUDSEN

State Secretary

Germany:

Mr Guido WESTERWELLE

Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Werner HOYER

Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Estonia:

Mr Urmas PAET

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ireland:

Micheál MARTIN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Dick ROCHE

Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach and
at the Department of Foreign Affairs with special
responsibility for European Affairs

Greece:

Mr Dimitris DROUTSAS

Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr Miguel Ángel MORATINOS

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Mr Diego LÓPEZ GARRIDO

State Secretary for the European Union

France:

Mr Bernard KOUCHNER

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

Mr Pierre LELLOUCHE

State Secretary with responsibility for European Affairs

Italy:

Mr Franco FRATTINI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr Marcos KYPRIANOU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Māris RIEKSTIŅŠ

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Vygaudas UŠACKAS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and
Immigration

Hungary:

Mr Péter BALÁZS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Tonio BORG

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Maxime VERHAGEN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Frans TIMMERMANS

Minister for European Affairs

Austria:

Mr Michael SPINDELEGGER

Federal Minister for European and International Affairs

Poland:

Mr Radosław SIKORSKI

Mr Mikołaj DOWGIELEWICZ

Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary, Office of the Committee for European Integration

Portugal:

Mr Luis AMADO

Mr Pedro LOURTIE

State Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Secretary of State for European Affairs

Romania:

Mr Bogdan MAZURU

State Secretary for European Affairs

Slovenia:

Mr Samuel ŽBOGAR

Mr Mitja GASPARI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister without Portfolio, responsible for Growth and European Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Miroslav LAJČÁK

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Alexander STUBB

Ms Astrid THORS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Migration and European Affairs

Sweden:

Mr Carl BILDT

Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM

Mr Frank BELFRAGE

Ms Maria ÅSENIUS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister for European Affairs

State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

State Secretary to Minister for EU Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr David MILIBAND

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Commission:

Mr Olli REHN

Member

General Secretariat of the Council:

Mr Pierre de BOISSIEU

Secretary-General

High Representative:

Ms Catherine ASHTON

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

ITEMS DEBATED

WESTERN BALKANS

The Council discussed the situation in the Western Balkans, in particular the mandate and future of the EU's operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR Althea).

It decided to return to this issue at the next Foreign affairs Council meeting, in January 2010.

IRAN

The Council discussed Iran, in particular the nuclear dossier, the situation regarding human rights and the EU's relations with Iran.

It finalised a draft declaration and agreed to forward it to the European Council.

The draft declaration focuses on Iran's nuclear programme and violations of human rights in Iran.

AFGHANISTAN

The Council discussed the situation in Afghanistan and agreed to submit a draft declaration to the European Council.

The draft declaration states the EU's readiness to support President Hamid Karzai in the implementation of his commitments and highlights the need to maintain a comprehensive approach to the challenges in Afghanistan, building on a combination of political, civilian/development and military instruments.

MIDDLE EAST - Council conclusions

The Council discussed the situation in the Middle East, and in particular the current impasse in the peace process.

It adopted the following conclusions:

- “1. The Council of the European Union is seriously concerned about the lack of progress in the Middle East peace process. The European Union calls for the urgent resumption of negotiations that will lead, within an agreed time-frame, to a two-state solution with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. A comprehensive peace, which is a fundamental interest of the parties in the region and the EU, must be achieved on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the Madrid principles including land for peace, the Roadmap, the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative.
2. The Council reconfirms its support for the United States' efforts to resume negotiations on all final status issues, including borders, Jerusalem, refugees, security and water, respecting previous agreements and understandings. The European Union will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties. The Council reiterates the EU's readiness to contribute substantially to post-conflict arrangements, aimed at ensuring the sustainability of peace agreements, and will continue the work undertaken on EU contributions on state-building, regional issues, refugees, security and Jerusalem. The Council underlines the need for a reinvigorated Quartet engagement and notes the crucial importance of an active Arab contribution building on the Arab Peace Initiative.
3. The EU stands ready to further develop its bilateral relations with the Palestinian Authority reflecting shared interests, including in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Recalling the Berlin declaration, the Council also reiterates its support for negotiations leading to Palestinian statehood, all efforts and steps to that end and its readiness, when appropriate, to recognise a Palestinian state. It will continue to assist Palestinian state-building, including through its CSDP missions and within the Quartet. The EU fully supports the implementation of the Palestinian Authority's Government Plan "Palestine, Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State" as an important contribution to this end and will work for enhanced international support for this plan.
4. Recalling the EU's position as expressed at the Association Council in June 2009, the Council reaffirms its readiness to further develop its bilateral relations with Israel within the framework of the ENP. The EU reiterates its commitment towards the security of Israel and its full integration into the region, which is best guaranteed through peace between Israel and its neighbours.

5. Encouraging further concrete confidence building measures, the Council takes positive note of the recent decision of the Government of Israel on a partial and temporary settlement freeze as a first step in the right direction and hopes that it will contribute towards a resumption of meaningful negotiations.
6. Developments on the ground play a crucial part in creating the context for successful negotiations. The Council reiterates that settlements, the separation barrier where built on occupied land, demolition of homes and evictions are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible. The Council urges the government of Israel to immediately end all settlement activities, in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank and including natural growth, and to dismantle all outposts erected since March 2001.
7. The EU welcomes Israel's steps to ease restrictions of movement in the West Bank which have made a contribution to economic growth. The Council calls for further and sustained improvements of movement and access, noting that many check points and road blocks remain in place. The Council also calls on the Palestinian Authority to build on its efforts to improve law and order.
8. The Council is deeply concerned about the situation in East Jerusalem. In view of recent incidents, it calls on all parties to refrain from provocative actions. The Council recalls that it has never recognised the annexation of East Jerusalem. If there is to be a genuine peace, a way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. The Council calls for the reopening of Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem in accordance with the Roadmap. It also calls on the Israeli government to cease all discriminatory treatment of Palestinians in East Jerusalem.
9. Gravely concerned about the situation in Gaza, the Council urges the full implementation of UNSCR 1860 and the full respect of international humanitarian law. In this context, the continued policy of closure is unacceptable and politically counterproductive. It has devastated the private sector economy and damaged the natural environment, notably water and other natural resources. The EU again reiterates its calls for an immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza. In this context, the Council calls for the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access. While extremists stand to gain from the current situation, the civilian population, half of which are under the age of 18, suffers. Fully recognising Israel's legitimate security needs, the Council continues to call for a complete stop to all violence and arms smuggling into Gaza. The Council calls on those holding the abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit to release him without delay.

10. The Council calls on all Palestinians to promote reconciliation behind President Mahmoud Abbas, support for the mediation efforts by Egypt and the Arab League and the prevention of a permanent division between the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza. The Council would welcome the organisation of free and fair Palestinian elections when conditions permit.
11. A comprehensive peace must include a settlement between Israel and Syria and Israel and Lebanon. Concerning the Syrian track, the EU welcomes recent statements by Israel and Syria confirming their willingness to advance towards peace and supports all efforts aimed at the reactivation of the talks between the two countries.
12. The EU recalls that a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict requires a regional approach and will continue its work on this in line with the June 2009 Council Conclusions using all its instruments to this effect. The EU also calls on all regional actors to take confidence building measures in order to stimulate mutual trust and encourages Arab countries to be forthcoming, both politically and financially, in assisting the Palestinian Authority and to Palestinian refugees through UNRWA.”

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FOREIGN AFFAIRS****Arctic issues - *Council conclusions***

The Council adopted conclusions set out in document *16857/09*.

South Caucasus - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted conclusions set out in document *16862/09*.

Promoting compliance with international humanitarian law - *Council conclusions*

The Council approved EU guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law ([16841/09](#)).

It adopted conclusions set out in document [16842/09](#).

Human rights and democratisation in third countries - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted conclusions set out in document [16795/2/09](#) REV 2.

Relations with Latin America - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted conclusions set out in document *17032/09*.

Weapons of mass destruction - Progress reports

The Council endorsed a six-monthly progress report on implementation of the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, covering activities during the second half of 2009.

The report focuses on priority areas such as:

- multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation fora and support to the multilateral treaty system;
- continued political and financial support to international organisations through concrete projects, including assistance programmes to third countries;
- enhanced cooperation with international partners; and
- addressing proliferation world-wide crises.

The Council also endorsed a progress report on implementation, during the second half of 2009, of the EU strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and ammunition. The strategy contains an action plan which calls for continuous monitoring by means of regular reports on its implementation.

Climate change and security - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted conclusions on climate change and international security, endorsing a progress report (16645/09) as a follow-up to a joint paper submitted to the European Council in March 2008 by the High Representative and the Commission.

The Council recognised the possible international security implications of climate change and stressed that an ambitious and comprehensive new international agreement on climate change would be an important factor in preventing and reducing them. It also welcomed progress on enhancing EU capacities for early warning, analysis and response to climate-induced international security issues.

The conclusions are set out in document (16774/09)

Horn of Africa - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions (16876/09):

- “1. The Council attaches importance to the EU’s relationships with the countries of the Horn of Africa, underlines the potential of the region and reiterates the EU’s commitment to further deepening these relations. It declares the EU’s readiness to support the region in meeting its challenges, in close cooperation with the countries concerned as well as with regional and international partners. The Council recalls that the challenges being faced by countries in the region are of different character, but closely interlinked and therefore require a regional approach.
2. The Council remains concerned about the human suffering and the slow pace of development caused by unresolved conflicts in the Horn of Africa and the threat these conflicts pose to regional security. Some of the crucial challenges that need to be addressed within a strategic framework are the human rights situation, protection of civilians in armed conflict, poor governance, environmental degradation, insecure livelihoods and marginalisation of populations.
3. The fragile situation in the Horn of Africa has consequences for the neighbouring countries and the international community as a whole, including the EU. Efforts by the countries in the region to resolve outstanding disputes with full respect for international law and to strengthen their engagement for a peaceful, democratic and sustainable development are crucial. These must be accompanied by concerted and strategic international support.
4. The EU has today adopted a policy on the Horn of Africa, which focuses on mediation efforts and dialogue in support of conflict prevention and resolution, the implementation of peace agreements, elections and political processes for democratic transformation as well as on economic integration, climate change and sustainable development. Crisis management activities, including the fight against piracy, are also proof of the EU’s commitment to the region.
5. This policy, together with the Commission communication on the Horn of Africa from 2006, lays the basis for a comprehensive EU strategy for relations with the Horn of Africa, encompassing all EU instruments.”

Iraq - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions (16892/09):

- “1. The Council reiterates its support for Iraq’s democratic development and encourages rapid implementation of the Election Law approved by the relevant stakeholders so that elections can take place in early 2010. The Council stresses the importance of holding these elections according to this timetable and in a peaceful, democratically organised and orderly manner. These elections are an important opportunity for further consolidation of democratic institutions as well as enhancing security in the country. Recalling earlier Council conclusions, the EU remains committed to providing support to the elections, including by sending an enlarged team of electoral experts as well as through the engagement of EU diplomatic missions.

2. The Council welcomes the successful finalisation of negotiations on the text of a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Iraq on November 13. Once applied, the Agreement will lay a solid foundation for further developing relations between the

EU and Iraq in a wide range of fields, including commitments designed to facilitate and promote trade and investment vital for sustainable growth and cooperation to improve living conditions for all Iraqis. The Council also welcomes that the Agreement will establish a formalised political dialogue. Equally, the EU reaffirms its commitment to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on energy in order to further enhance the relationship between the EU and Iraq.

3. Reiterating the GAERC Conclusions from June 2009, the Council continues to support the work of UNAMI in all its fields, especially on the challenges linked to disputed internal boundaries. The Council calls on all parties to engage in the necessary compromises.

4. The Council reiterates its continued concern for the human rights situation in Iraq and underlines that Iraq has an obligation to ensure that human rights are respected. In this context, the EU reiterates its call on the Government of Iraq to suspend the application of the death penalty as a step towards its abolition. The EU stands ready to support Iraqi efforts in the field of human rights.

5. The Council welcomes the Government of Iraq’s forward-looking approach to sustainable development, including through the formulation of comprehensive development plans, and reiterates the EU’s continued support to the reform process as well as to Iraq’s efforts towards economic growth and social progress.”

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

EU military operation against piracy off the Somali coast - Fishing activities

The Council adopted a decision amending joint action 2008/851/CFSP on the EU military operation against piracy off the Somali coast, in order to allow for the EU naval force to contribute to the monitoring of fishing activities in the area ([16450/09](#)).

EU police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Council adopted a decision extending the EU police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina as from 1 January 2010 until 31 December 2011 ([14983/09](#)).

Under joint action 2007/749/CFSP, the police mission was due to expire on 31 December 2009.

For more information on the mission: <http://www.eupm.org/>

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Centre for the development of enterprise for 2010

The Council agreed to a draft decision of the ACP-EC Committee of Ambassadors concerning the work programme and budget for 2010 of the Centre for the Development of Enterprise ([16776/09](#)).

Ratification of the revised Cotonou Agreement

The Council approved a draft letter to be sent to the ACP group of states outlining the implications of non-ratification of the revised ACP-EU (Cotonou) partnership agreement.

The grace period for ratifying the revised Cotonou agreement expired on 30 June 2009. Three ACP states (Equatorial Guinea, South Africa and Sudan) did not meet this deadline.