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THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Foreign Affairs**

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President

**Catherine ASHTON**

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and  
Security Policy

# **P R E S S**

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## **Main results of the Council**

*The Council discussed the **Middle East Peace Process**. It adopted conclusions reiterating its readiness, when appropriate, to recognise a Palestinian state and affirming its readiness to contribute to a negotiated solution on all final status issues within the 12 months set by the Quartet. It also recalled its readiness to assist in the reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza.*

*The Council had an exchange of views on **Côte d'Ivoire** following the presidential election. It adopted conclusions stating its intention to adopt restrictive measures against those who are obstructing the process of peace and national reconciliation, and in particular those who are jeopardising the proper outcome of the electoral process.*

*The Council discussed **Sudan** ahead of the referendum on self-determination on 9 January on the basis of a briefing by EU Special Representative Rosalind Marsden. It adopted conclusions reiterating its commitment to assisting Sudan before and after the referendum in order to promote lasting peace, stability and prosperity for all Sudanese people.*

*During the **working dinner**, the High Representative briefed ministers on the meeting in Geneva with the **Iranian nuclear negotiator**.*

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<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.

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## **ITEMS DEBATED**

### **Sudan – *Conclusions***

The Council discussed Sudan following a briefing by Rosalind Marsden, EU Special Representative, on the options for contingency planning ahead of the referendum on self-determination for Southern Sudan on 9 January and in the period following it.

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council welcomes the completion of voter registration in Sudan as an important milestone in preparation for the Referendum on self-determination for Southern Sudan and full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Council congratulates the people of Southern Sudan, the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and UNMIS on the peaceful and orderly conduct of the registration process and urges both parties to give the Commission their full support and ensure that it can fulfil its duties.
  
2. The Council welcomes the commitment of both parties to hold a peaceful and timely Referendum reflecting the will of the people of Southern Sudan, and to respect its outcome. It reiterates its call on both parties to ensure that everyone can express their views freely and without fear of intimidation, whether campaigning for unity or secession. The Council calls on all parties to refrain from inflammatory rhetoric. It is essential that southerners in the North and northerners in the South are given strong reassurances that they will not be harassed regardless of the outcome of the Referendum. EU experts have been monitoring the voter registration process and a full scale Election Observation Mission will be deployed shortly. The Council also welcomes the efforts of the UN Secretary General's High Level Monitoring Panel.
  
3. The Council recognises that in recent weeks significant effort has gone into elaborating a framework for resolving outstanding issues relating to the future of Sudan and the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Council commends the efforts made by the parties and the AU High Level Implementation Panel chaired by President Mbeki in this regard and urges the parties to finalise the Framework Agreement and engage constructively to resolve key outstanding issues as soon as possible.
  
4. The Council is deeply concerned about the delay in resolving the issue of Abyei and calls on the parties to reach an early and equitable solution that maintains peace and stability in the area and reassures the communities that their rights will be respected.

5. Recalling its Conclusions of 22 November 2010, the Council reiterates the commitment of the EU, as a witness to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, to assist Sudan for the rest of the interim period and beyond in order to promote lasting peace, stability, and prosperity for all Sudanese people, regardless of the outcome of the Referendum.
6. In this context, the EU and its Member States are ready to step up engagement with the Government of Sudan and are prepared to establish a long-term dialogue on issues of common interest. Recognising the political and economic challenges ahead, regardless of the outcome of the Referendum, the EU also remains committed to providing assistance to the people in the North, according to needs.
7. The Council also underlines the importance it attaches to finding a lasting solution to Sudan's debt burden. It commits to examine closely possible EU support for an international debt relief effort through the IMF, the World Bank, and the Paris Club, consistent with political progress in Sudan.
8. The EU is committed to assist vulnerable populations in war-affected areas in Sudan, including in Darfur, the East, the Transitional Areas (Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile), and the South. Out of the €150 million already allocated for this purpose, the EU announced at the international donors' and investors' conference in Kuwait on 1-2 December 2010 that it plans to allocate € 24 million for Eastern Sudan. In the north-south border area, the EU is ready to support grass roots peace building initiatives, improved livelihoods for vulnerable nomadic population groups, and the strengthening of the cross border links to facilitate the free movement of people, goods, and services. This is in addition to the substantial support provided by EU Member States through their bilateral programmes.
9. The EU and its Member States are willing to increase their support to Southern Sudan, regardless of the outcome of the Referendum. The EU is ready to accelerate its efforts to support basic services and agricultural development. Stressing the importance of a strong commitment by the Government of Southern Sudan to address the huge challenges it faces, the EU is also prepared to engage with the Government of Southern Sudan and other partners in supporting effective institutional capacity building.
10. The Council supports the ongoing UN-led preparations to be ready to respond to possible additional humanitarian needs and other challenges that might arise in relation to the Referendum. The EU and its Member States are providing timely and substantial humanitarian funding for that purpose. In this context, the EU urges the parties to guarantee unimpeded access by humanitarian actors to all populations in need.

11. With regard to Darfur, the Council appeals to the Government of Sudan and all the armed movements to commit to a cessation of hostilities, to engage fully in the Doha negotiations, and to demonstrate their willingness to make real compromises to secure a just, comprehensive and inclusive peace agreement with the support of the people of Darfur. The Council remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian and security situation on the ground, including the harassment and kidnapping of humanitarian aid workers and peace keepers. The Council calls for the immediate release of the Hungarian citizen who is still being held hostage.

12. The Council also calls for immediate unhindered access to all populations in need, in particular in Eastern Jebel Mara. The EU is ready to engage with the Government of Sudan on the issue of the voluntary return of IDPs strictly in accordance with humanitarian principles.

13. The Council recalls the obligation of the Government of Sudan to cooperate with the International Criminal Court pursuant to UNSC Resolution 1593."

**Somalia**

The Council had a broad political discussion on the situation in Somalia, following the formation of a new cabinet in Mogadishu after months of political crisis. It reviewed the various aspects of the EU's comprehensive engagement in support of the Transitional Federal Government, including the EU Training Mission, which has successfully completed half its mandate, as well as the anti-piracy operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta.

### **Côte d'Ivoire - *Conclusions***

The Council exchanged views on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire following the recent presidential election. It adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council emphasises the importance of the presidential election held on 31 October and 28 November for the return of Côte d'Ivoire to peace and stability.
2. The Council congratulates the Ivorian people on their participation in very large numbers in the two rounds of the election, which demonstrates their attachment to democracy and their desire for reconciliation, peace and stability. It is imperative that the sovereign wish expressed by the Ivorian people be respected.
3. The Council expresses its full support for the action of the United Nations in Côte d'Ivoire, and takes note of the conclusions of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the context of his certification mandate. It congratulates Mr Alassan Ouattara on his election as President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. The Council calls for calm and responsibility, so that there can be a peaceful handover of power.
4. The Council welcomes the rapid mobilisation and supports the firm and clear decisions in favour of democracy taken by the African Union and ECOWAS, as set out in the United Nations Security Council press statement of 8 December 2010.
5. The Council has considered how to react to the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. It has decided to adopt without delay targeted restrictive measures against those who are obstructing the process of peace and national reconciliation, and in particular who are jeopardising the proper outcome of the electoral process. Those measures will include a visa ban and an assets freeze. They will particularly target those leading figures who have refused to place themselves under the authority of the democratically elected President, of whom an initial list should be adopted rapidly. The European Union has also decided to take measures in support of the democratically elected authorities. To this end, the Council invites the High Representative, with the support of the Commission, to make proposals to this effect.
6. The Council calls on all Ivorian leaders, both civilian and military, to work for a peaceful and rapid solution to the crisis and to ensure the security of the whole population, both Ivorians and foreigners. All those who use violence to oppose the democratic choice of the Ivorian people will be held responsible for their actions."

**Afghanistan**

Following the discussion by development ministers of 9 December on the EU-Afghanistan strategy, the Council exchanged views on the political situation in Afghanistan after the elections. It underlined the EU's commitment and the need for long-term engagement, expressing appreciation for the work of EU Special Representative Vygaudas Ušackas. It looked at the specific areas where the EU can apply its strengths, with the justice sector, human and notably women's rights, civil-service reform, electoral reform and police reform - with EUPOL Afghanistan playing an important role - as the main priorities.

### **Middle East Peace Process - Conclusions**

The Council discussed the latest developments in the Middle East and stated its readiness to support the economic recovery and development of Gaza with infrastructure, equipment and training measures related to the Gaza crossing points. It adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU believes that urgent progress is needed towards a two state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We want to see the State of Israel and a sovereign, independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security. The legitimacy of the State of Israel and the right of Palestinians to achieve statehood must never be called into question.
2. The EU notes with regret that Israel has not extended the moratorium as requested by the EU, the US and the Quartet. Our views on settlements, including in East Jerusalem, are clear: they are illegal under international law and an obstacle to peace. We reiterate our views on the status of Jerusalem and repeat our call for all parties to refrain from provocative unilateral actions and violence.
3. The EU affirms its readiness to contribute to a negotiated solution on all final status issues within the 12 months set by the Quartet. To this end, the EU will continue to work closely with the parties and reaffirms its support to the US efforts in order to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. The EU stresses the importance of intensified coordination within the Quartet as well as of close cooperation with Arab partners, building on the Arab Peace Initiative. The EU underlines the urgency of finding a negotiated solution and urges the parties to refrain from actions that undermine the prospects of peace. The EU remains committed to contribute substantially to post-conflict arrangements.
4. Council Conclusions of December 2009 set out the EU's views on the key parameters, principles and issues. We reiterate those Conclusions. The EU will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties. This could include agreed territorial swaps. A way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. The EU calls for an agreed, just, fair and realistic solution to the refugee question. A negotiated settlement must allow the two States to live side by side in peace and security.

5. The EU commends the work of the Palestinian Authority in building the institutions of the future State of Palestine and reiterates its full support for their endeavours in this regard and the Fayyad plan. Recalling the Berlin Declaration, the Council reiterates its readiness, when appropriate, to recognize a Palestinian state. We welcome the World Bank's assessment that "if the Palestinian Authority maintains its current performance in institution building and delivery of public services, it is well positioned for the establishment of a State at any point in the near future". The EU remains ready to develop further its bilateral relations with Israel within the framework defined at the Association Council of June 2009 and by its conclusions of December 2009. Within the framework of these conclusions, the EU is also ready to develop further its bilateral relations with the Palestinian Authority.
6. The EU recalls that peace in the Middle East should be comprehensive and reiterates the importance of negotiations on the Israel-Syria and Israel-Lebanon tracks. Peace should lead to the full integration of Israel in its regional environment, along the lines set out in the Arab Peace Initiative.
7. Recalling the Council Conclusions of June 2010, the EU remains extremely concerned by the prevailing situation in Gaza. The EU reiterates its call for the immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza. Despite some progress following the decision of the Israeli government of 20 June 2010 to ease the closure, changes on the ground have been limited and insufficient so far. Further efforts and complementary measures are needed to achieve a fundamental change of policy that allows for the reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza as well as improve the daily lives of the population while addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. The Council calls on those holding the abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit to release him without delay. The Council calls for a complete stop of rocket attacks at Israel and all other forms of violence.
8. Palestinian exports are an essential component of Gaza's recovery. In this respect, the EU welcomes the recent announcement by the Israeli government concerning new measures to facilitate exports out of Gaza. We encourage a swift implementation by Israel and are ready to work with Israel towards achieving pre-2007 levels of exports in 2011 to produce real change on the ground. Increased and accelerated imports of construction materials are another crucial component of Gaza's recovery and also for building schools and health centres.

9. The EU recalls its readiness to assist in the reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza in close partnership with the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government, in line with UNSC Resolution 1860 and on the basis of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access. As parts of a comprehensive EU approach, including CSDP missions, the EU is ready to extend its support to improvements to the crossings infrastructure, to purchase and install the necessary equipment and also to train Palestinian border and crossings management personnel to operate the crossings."

**Western Balkans**

The Council took stock of the EU's relations with the Western Balkans and the latest developments in the region ahead of the General Affairs Council's adoption of its conclusions on the enlargement package on 14 December. It focused chiefly on Kosovo and Serbia, touching briefly on the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, pending a more detailed discussion at the January Council. Following the meeting, the High Representative welcomed the orderly conduct of the elections in Kosovo and looked forward to working with the new government and president on the EU agenda. She hoped that the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina would begin soon and that both sides would engage constructively.

**Iran**

The High Representative briefed ministers over dinner on the talks that she conducted on behalf of the E3 +3 countries (France, Germany, UK, China, Russia and the US) with the Iranian nuclear negotiator in Geneva on 6 and 7 December.

## **Strategic partners and priorities for 2011**

Over dinner, the High Representative and ministers continued their discussion from the previous Council on the EU's relations with its strategic partners, ahead of the High Representative's presentation at the European Council on 16 December and on the basis of discussion papers on China, Russia and the US. They also discussed foreign policy priorities for 2011.

### **Republic of Moldova**

The Council held a brief exchange of views on the situation in the Republic of Moldova after the elections and the opportunity for closer engagement and cooperation between the EU and the Republic of Moldova.

### **OSCE Summit**

The Council assessed the outcome of the OSCE summit in Astana on 1 and 2 December. It was also briefed by the Lithuanian minister on his government's programme for Lithuania's forthcoming OSCE Presidency in 2011.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

### **Religious minorities**

Under other business, the Austrian and the Italian ministers raised the issue of religious minorities in the world, proposing that the European External Action Service should closely monitor and report annually on their situation. The High Representative proposed including such a report in the annual human rights review.

### **Black Sea**

Under other business, the Romanian minister put forward a proposal for a paper to be drawn up on the Black Sea area.

## **OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

### **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

#### **Zone free of mass destruction weapons**

The Council adopted a decision in support of a process of confidence-building leading to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East in support of the implementation of the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

#### **Weapons of mass destruction - *Progress report - Conclusions***

The Council endorsed a six-monthly progress report on the implementation of the EU Strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction covering activities during the second half of 2010.

On 9 December 2003 the European Council adopted an EU strategy against the proliferation of WMD, which provides for a six-monthly debate in the Council on the implementation of the strategy.

The Council adopted conclusions set out in doc. 16670/10

#### **Combating illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms**

The Council endorsed a report on the efforts undertaken by the EU during the second half of 2010 to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in accordance with the strategy on this matter, adopted by the European Council in December 2005 (EU SALW strategy). This strategy includes continuous monitoring by means of regular six-monthly reports on its implementation.

#### **Arms exports control system - Annual report**

The Council took note of the twelfth report on the common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment.

Common position 2008/944/CFSP defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment provides in article 8 that a report has to be submitted to the Council yearly.

#### **Democracy support in the EU's external relations - 2010 progress report – *Conclusions***

The Council adopted conclusions welcoming the report by the Commission and Council Secretariat on the progress in implementing the Council conclusions of November 2009 on democracy support

in the EU's external relations. It endorsed the proposed list of countries for more specific follow-up with pilot projects.

The Council adopted the following conclusions :

1. The Council welcomes the Report on the implementation of the Council Conclusions on Democracy Support in the EU's External Relations, adopted in November 2009. The Council takes note of progress achieved in implementing the Council Conclusions, endorses the list of proposed countries for pilot implementation of the Agenda for Action and welcomes further efforts in order to continue to strengthen the coherence, coordination and effectiveness of democracy support in the external relations of the EU.
2. The Council invites the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission, in co-operation with Member States, to commence implementing the Agenda for Action, starting with the proposed pilot countries. As a first step, a course of action and a timetable for implementation should be drawn up in partnership with the proposed pilot countries.
3. The Council asks the High Representative and the Commission to regularly inform relevant Council formations on progress achieved in the pilot countries and to prepare a comprehensive report on the implementation of the Agenda for Action in all regions once the ongoing evaluations in the field of democracy support-related co-operation have been finalised by early 2012.

#### List of proposed pilot countries

Republic of Moldova – for Eastern Neighbourhood  
 Kyrgyzstan – Central Asia  
 Lebanon – for Southern Neighbourhood  
 Ghana, Benin, Solomon Islands and Central African Republic – for ACP  
 Bolivia – for Latin America  
 Mongolia, Philippines, Indonesia and Maldives – in Asia

The Council adopted the progress report set out in 17611/10

#### **Financial instrument for promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide**

The Council adopted its position at first reading on a Commission proposal to amend Regulation 1889/2006 on establishing a financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights world-wide.

The purpose of the amendment proposed by the Commission is to ensure the consistency of the EU financial instruments for external action and to allow minimal but necessary flexibility in their implementation. The Council accepts the Commission's proposed amendment and some technical amendments tabled by the European Parliament for the purpose of clarity and accuracy.

## **COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY**

### **Mainstreaming human rights and gender issues into CSDP operations and missions**

The Council approved the recommendations contained in a report on lessons learnt and best practices as regards mainstreaming human rights and gender issues into military operations and civilian missions in the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

The recommendations include, among other things, taking account of these issues in mission planning and evaluation, ensuring adequate training, improving the gender balance of the staff deployed, increasing communication on human rights and gender issues, and promoting active participation of women in negotiations and political work.

### **EU civilian and military capability development beyond 2010**

The Council endorsed a document on EU civilian and military capability development beyond 2010.

### **Civilian Headline Goal 2010**

The Council took note of the final report on the Civilian Headline Goal 2010.

The Civilian Headline Goal 2010 was the strategic EU platform for planning and reporting on civilian capability development under the Common Security and Defence Policy. It succeeded the Civilian Headline Goal 2008, aligning the time horizon of the civilian capability development process with that of the military Headline Goal 2010.

### **Deployment of civilian personnel to CSDP missions**

The Council approved a second report on member states' progress in facilitating the deployment of civilian personnel to CSDP missions.