



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESS RELEASE

3183rd Council meeting

Foreign Affairs

Brussels, 23 July 2012

President

Ms 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 developments in the EU's **southern neighbourhood**, focusing on **Syria** and **Libya**. It strongly condemned the ever-increasing use of force by the Syrian regime. Once more, the Council urged the Syrian regime to end the killing of civilians immediately, withdraw the Syrian army from besieged towns and cities and allow a peaceful transition. In response to the escalating violence, the Council strengthened the enforcement of the EU arms embargo against Syria and reinforced sanctions against the Syrian regime.*

*Regarding **Libya**, the Council welcomed the pluralistic and overall peaceful conduct of the elections for the National General Congress on 7 July. It warmly congratulated the Libyan people on this significant milestone in the ongoing transition. The Council also reiterated the EU's readiness to provide further assistance to Libya, in particular in the areas of security and border management.*

*The Council took stock of the situation in **Sudan and South Sudan**, one year after the independence of South Sudan. It reiterated its strong support for the full and unconditional implementation of the African Union roadmap for resolving the post-secession conflicts between the two states. This would open up a much more positive perspective for both countries.*

*The Council expressed its alarm at the deteriorating situation in **Mali** and the adverse impact of this on regional and international peace and stability. It invited the High Representative and the Commission to make proposals with a view to a gradual return to development cooperation and to providing support for the possible deployment of a well-prepared ECOWAS stabilisation force in Mali, under the mandate of the UN Security Council and in concertation with a government of national unity and the African Union.*

*The Council welcomed the progress achieved on the **Common Security and Defence Policy** (CSDP) since the Council conclusions of 1 December 2011, in particular the imminent launch of three new CSDP missions as well as the continued planning for EU support to border security in Libya. It also underlined the concrete impact of CSDP missions and operations on the ground.*

*Finally the Council was encouraged by the progress made in implementing the Global Political Agreement in **Zimbabwe**. It agreed that these steps justify the immediate suspension of the measures applied under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. This will allow the EU to work directly with the Government of National Unity to develop new assistance programmes.*

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 - 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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Member

Mr Günther OETTINGER

Member

.....

The Government of the Acceding State was represented as follows:

Croatia:

Ms Vesna PUSIĆ

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

ITEMS DEBATED

Southern neighbourhood

The Council discussed the situation in the EU's southern neighbourhood, focusing on Syria, Libya and Egypt.

- Syria

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU stands by the Syrian people at this critical juncture in their peaceful and courageous struggle for freedom, dignity, democracy and human rights. The EU is appalled by the horrific killings in the village of Tremseh on 12 July 2012. It strongly condemns the ever increasing use of force by the regime, including use of heavy artillery and shelling against populated areas in blatant violation of its obligations under the Annan Plan and UNSC resolutions 2042 and 2043. The EU calls for an immediate international independent investigation. The EU urges the Syrian regime to end immediately the killing of civilians, withdraw the Syrian army from besieged towns and cities and to allow for a peaceful transition for the sake of the country. International humanitarian law must be respected by all. The EU is deeply concerned about the recent intensification of violence, including in Damascus, which demonstrates the urgent need for a political transition that would meet the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people and bring back stability in Syria. The EU remains committed to the sovereignty, independence, national unity and territorial integrity of Syria.
2. The EU remains deeply concerned about the spill-over effects of the Syrian crisis in neighbouring countries in terms of security and stability. It calls on the Syrian regime to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of neighbouring countries. The regime's brutality has had tragic effects in Syria and serious repercussions in neighbouring countries.
3. The European Union recalls its full support to the Joint UN-League of Arab States Special Envoy Kofi Annan's mission and his six point Plan that must be implemented. It welcomes the outcome of the Action Group meeting in Geneva on 30 June 2012 and in particular the call for the establishment of a transitional governing body with full executive powers made up of opposition and government representatives and formed by mutual consent. The EU encourages Kofi Annan to continue working on the implementation of this transition plan, including with the Action Group, and urges all parties to support these efforts.

The EU also welcomes the outcome of the third meeting of the Group of Friends of Syrian people on 6 July in Paris that has gathered more than 100 countries and organisations and showed the growing consensus of the international community in favour of a democratic transition in Syria and looks forward to the convening of the next meeting of the Group.

The EU underlines that those whose presence would undermine the transition should be excluded and that President Assad, in this regard, has no place in the future of Syria.

4. The EU deeply regrets that the UNSC has not been able to agree to a UNSC resolution which would have endorsed the communiqué of the Action Group and foreseen measures to enforce compliance with the Annan Plan under Article 41 of the UN Charter. The EU regrets that the UNSC has thus failed to uphold its responsibilities and to back the Joint Special Envoy's efforts. The EU calls for united action by all members of the UNSC, including Russia and China, to add more robust and effective pressure and ensure that there will be serious consequences for continued non compliance with its previous decisions.
5. The EU welcomes the decision to renew the mandate of UNSMIS for a final period of 30 days, taking into account the UN Secretary-General's recommendations to reconfigure the Mission and taking into consideration the operational implications of the increasingly dangerous security situation in Syria. The EU recalls that the Syrian authorities are responsible for ensuring the security and safety of the mission. The EU is ready to provide the needed support to guarantee the success of the supervision mission.
6. The EU remains deeply concerned about the human rights situation and breaches of international humanitarian law in Syria. The systematic and widespread human rights violations and abuses committed by the regime demonstrates its outright contempt for human rights. The EU is also concerned about recent reports of alleged use of cluster munitions against civilians. The EU reaffirms its support to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria and its investigations into alleged violations of international human rights law with a view to hold to account those responsible for such violations, including for those that may amount to crimes against humanity. The EU recalls that all those responsible for widespread, systematic and gross human rights violations must be held accountable. The EU welcomes the adoption of the UN Human Rights Council resolution adopted on 6 July on the human rights situation in Syria.

7. Recalling that the main responsibility for the current crisis lies with the Syrian authorities, the EU warns against further militarisation of the conflict and sectarian violence which can only bring further suffering to Syria and risks having a tragic impact on the region.

In this regard, the EU expresses concern about the protection of civilians, in particular vulnerable groups and religious communities. The EU is also concerned about the influx of weapons into Syria. Therefore, the EU calls on all States to refrain from delivering arms to the country. The EU is seriously concerned about the potential use of chemical weapons in Syria.

8. The EU welcomes the National Pact and the Common Political Vision for the transition in Syria issued following the Syrian opposition conference held under the auspices of the Arab League in Cairo on 2-3 July and encourages all groups to continue engaging in this process. The EU continues to urge all opposition groups to put aside their differences and to agree on a set of shared principles and start working towards an inclusive, orderly and peaceful transition in Syria. The EU urges all opposition groups to continue support to Annan's efforts and to be ready to provide leadership and engage with the transition plan designed by the Action Group for Syria on 30 June. All Syrians must have a place in the new Syria and enjoy equal rights, regardless of their origin, affiliations, religion, beliefs or gender.

9. The EU takes positive note of the start of the implementation of the humanitarian response plan in Syria which was confirmed by the fourth Syrian Humanitarian Forum on 16 July. However, in view of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country, the EU calls on all parties to allow full and safe access for humanitarian workers since the humanitarian efforts need to be scaled-up further, to respect international humanitarian law, including the respect and protection of civilians, and to facilitate the implementation of humanitarian pauses

to allow for the safe delivery of humanitarian aid. The EU stands ready to offer additional support including financial to help neighbouring countries, including Lebanon and Jordan, to host the increasing number of Syrian refugees fleeing violence in Syria. The EU will increase its humanitarian assistance to the Syrians, including internally displaced persons and refugees, and calls upon all countries to do likewise.

10. The EU approved today the designation of new persons and entities to be subject to restrictive measures, in particular members of the Army and the intelligence and security services directly involved in the repression of the civilian population. The EU also agreed on measures to strengthen the enforcement of its arms embargo. The EU will continue its policy of imposing additional measures targeting the regime, not the civilian population, as long as repression continues. The EU will also continue to urge the international community to join its efforts, in taking steps to apply and enforce restrictive measures on the Syrian regime and its supporters. In this context, the EU welcomes the third meeting of the International Group on Sanctions which was held in Doha on 19 July. It calls on all Syrians to dissociate themselves from the repressive policy of the regime in order to facilitate a political transition. In this regards, the EU welcomes recent high profile defections.
11. The EU recalls that as soon as a genuine democratic transition begins, it is ready to develop a new and ambitious partnership with Syria across all areas of mutual interest, including by mobilizing assistance, strengthening trade and economic relations and supporting transitional justice and the political transition."

In response to the ever increasing use of violence in Syria, the Council strengthened the enforcement of the EU arms embargo against Syria and reinforced sanctions against the Syrian regime. For details, see press release [12776/12](#).

- Libya

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU welcomes the pluralistic and overall peaceful conduct of Libyan elections for the National General Congress on 7 July 2012 and has taken note of the announcement of the preliminary results made on 17 July. The EU commends the Libyan authorities, notably the High National Election Commission, for their preparation and management. The EU warmly congratulates the Libyan people for this significant milestone in the ongoing transition and believes that these historic elections should lay the foundation for the future democratic development of Libya.

2. The EU salutes the important work undertaken by the Libyan National Transitional Council under the chairmanship of Mr. Abdul Jalil and by the interim government led by Prime Minister Mr. Al Keib, often under extremely difficult circumstances. The EU looks forward to working with the future Libyan government to be appointed following the establishment of the General National Congress, and hopes that the appointment process will retain the momentum of transition and enable the new Libyan Government to start work as soon as possible.
3. Libya will shortly embark on a process of elaborating a new Constitution. This will be a critical document in shaping the future Libyan state. It is therefore important that the drafting process is inclusive and transparent and that the new Constitution, reflects the aspirations of the Libyan people for dignity and justice by ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and men, including protection of minorities, and democratic values.
4. At the same time the EU stresses the fundamental importance of respecting the rule of law and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and men during the process of transition. It calls again on the authorities to address and investigate reports of torture and illegal detention and to bring those responsible to justice. The EU urges the Libyan central Government to accelerate the process of bringing all places of detention under its full control.
5. The EU recognizes the serious security challenges Libya is facing. The EU reiterates its readiness to provide further assistance, including through CSDP if appropriate, in the areas of security and border management, in close partnership with Libya's new democratic authorities and in coordination with UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the rest of the international community. Establishing secure and stable borders is key to ensuring well-managed migration. The EU stresses the importance of post-conflict disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and reiterates its concern regarding the proliferation of all arms and related material of all types in line with the UNSCR 2017 (2011). It stresses the need for a response based on close coordination with international partners and countries in the region, and it recalls the relevance of the EU Sahel Strategy in this regard.

6. The EU reiterates its determination to further strengthen its engagement with Libya, a key neighbour for Europe with whom the EU wishes to establish long-term and mutually beneficial relations, including in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and regional initiatives such as the Union for the Mediterranean. The EU further supports enhancing synergies with other regional initiatives such as the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Forum. It will continue to provide strong support for Libya across a range of sectors, as already set out in the FAC Conclusions of 10 October 2011, in the interests of securing a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future for its people. The EU is also fully supportive of stepped up efforts on regional integration across the Maghreb, including through the Arab Maghreb Union, and stands ready to support this process."

- Egypt

The High Representative briefed ministers on her recent trip to Egypt.

Sudan and South Sudan

The Council took stock of developments in Sudan and South Sudan. It adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU reiterates its strong support for the AU Roadmap for Sudan and South Sudan and UN Security Council Resolution 2046 (2012) and urges the Parties to implement the Roadmap/UNSCR 2046 fully and unconditionally within the given timeframe.
2. This Roadmap has already led to some positive results, including a significant reduction in hostilities along the border, the withdrawal of Sudanese and South Sudanese forces from Abyei - with the exception of the Sudanese oil police - and the resumption of talks between the parties under the auspices of the AU High Level Implementation Panel. It is imperative that the Parties now take the remaining steps set out in the Roadmap/UNSCR to resolve all outstanding issues by the 2 August deadline set by UNSCR 2046. In this context, the EU welcomes the meeting of the Presidents of Sudan and South Sudan on 14 July.
3. Sudan and South Sudan stand at an important crossroads. Full implementation of the Roadmap/UNSCR would open up a much more positive perspective for both countries, in terms of good neighbourly relations between Sudan and South Sudan and improved relations with the rest of the international community, including the European Union, allowing it to consider further support. Non-compliance, on the other hand, would have negative consequences, including possible appropriate measures under Article 41 of the UN Charter. The EU calls on the Governments of both Sudan and South Sudan to rise to the occasion and demonstrate the leadership necessary to build a strong and mutually beneficial relationship between their two countries.
4. The EU is deeply concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. The EU urges the Government of Sudan to implement the provisions on Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile in the Roadmap/UNSCR and, in particular, permit immediate unhindered humanitarian access for international humanitarian agencies to the affected civilian populations in these areas.

5. The EU calls on the Government of Sudan and SPLM/North to resume talks without further delay in order to reach a negotiated political settlement to the conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile on the basis of the 28 June 2011 Framework Agreement and with a view to an inclusive national dialogue that meets the needs and aspirations of all Sudanese citizens within an open and democratic framework.
6. The EU supports the promotion by the AU of a holistic approach to the quest for peace, justice and reconciliation and to prioritise democratisation in both Sudan and South Sudan, as a sine qua non for stability and equitable governance."

Mali / Sahel

The Council discussed the situation in the Sahel region, and more specifically in Mali. It adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The European Union (EU) is alarmed at the deteriorating situation in Mali and its adverse impact on regional and international peace and stability.
2. The EU is concerned at the emergence in northern Mali of a base controlled by violent national and international terrorist groups and extremists acting in concert with international criminal networks, including drug traffickers. It strongly condemns the atrocities committed against the population in the northern regions of Mali and calls on armed groups to put an end to them immediately. It is concerned by reports of an increase in human rights violations and forced civilian displacement. The EU condemns the heinous acts of profanation, damage and destruction of world heritage sites in Mali. It firmly condemns abductions. Any individuals or groups who have committed crimes must be brought to justice.
3. The EU is concerned at the continuing deterioration in the humanitarian situation. The insecurity in the north of Mali, which is affecting neighbouring countries already suffering from the food crisis, is continuing to cause further population displacement and limiting the level of assistance. The EU reminds armed groups of their obligation to guarantee the safety of all humanitarian actors and afford free and unhindered access to the regions in the north of the country. The EU will continue to supply humanitarian aid for those most affected by the conflict, in conjunction, in particular, with the EU Partnership for Resilience in Sahel (AGIR).

4. The EU is concerned at the slow progress of political transition in Bamako. It is regrettable that the task of setting up an inclusive government of political and civil society groups is so difficult, that the CNRDRE¹ has not been dissolved in practice, and that the army and security forces are unable to fulfil their basic duties of defending territorial integrity and protecting democratic institutions and people. Rapid progress is needed to ensure an effective return to constitutional rule in Mali and stability in the north of the country. The EU condemns the attacks on journalists in Mali. It condemns attempts at intimidation and restates the importance it attaches to a free and pluralist press. It is ready to adopt targeted sanctions against those who continue to threaten the democratic transition process, peace, security and stability in Mali.
5. The EU supports the conclusions of the Ouagadougou summit of 7 July 2012 between Malian stakeholders, the Regional Contact Group and the African Union (AU), in particular the call to the Interim President to form a Government of National Unity by 31 July 2012 and the drawing up of a road map. It urges the President to work closely with ECOWAS in order to determine the arrangements it could make to protect the political transition process and the institutions of state and to help Mali reconstitute armed forces able to safeguard legality and the rule of law throughout the whole of Malian territory.
6. The EU fully supports United Nations Security Council Resolution 2056 and its follow-up together with the ECOWAS initiatives, which place a new Government of National Unity, including political figures and civil society in Mali, at the heart of any solution.
7. The EU remains fully mobilised and continues to work in close coordination with the UN, the AU, ECOWAS and the other regional and international partners concerned. It calls on Mali's neighbours to play an active and complementary part in the mediation activity of ECOWAS and the AU with the object of ensuring a lasting regional solution.
8. The EU and its Member States pledge to continue in all areas to implement the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel (the Sahel Strategy) in Niger and Mauritania, countries which must be protected from involvement. To this end, the Council welcomes the launch on 1 August 2012 of the CSDP "EUCAP SAHEL Niger" mission, which will assist in training and advising internal security forces in Niger and reinforcing regional coordination with Mali and Mauritania in the security field.

¹ CNRDRE: le Comité national pour le redressement de la démocratie et la restauration de l'Etat (National Committee for the Recovery of Democracy and the Restoration of the State).

9. In order to continue implementation of the Sahel Strategy in Mali, the Council invites the HR/VP and the Commission to make concrete proposals with a view to:
- a gradual return to development cooperation, including support for the electoral process, duly adapted to the changed environment when the crisis is over, together with encouragement for the implementation, by a Government of National Unity, of a consensual road map as soon as the conditions are in place;
 - providing support for the possible deployment of a well-prepared ECOWAS stabilisation force in Mali, under the mandate of the United Nations Security Council and in concertation with a Government of National Unity and the AU;
 - contributing, with the agreement of the Government of National Unity and in coordination with it and with other partners, in particular the United Nations, the AU and ECOWAS, to the restructuring of Mali's security and defence forces, under civilian control in line with the Sahel Strategy. For this purpose the Council requests that options be prepared, including within the CSDP, for the next meeting of the Council;
 - supporting ECOWAS's mediation activity together with the AU, the UN, countries in the area and other international players;
 - in cooperation with the Member States, reviewing all action relating to governance, security, development and conflict settlement envisaged in the Sahel Strategy for the north of Mali with a view to its rapid implementation, in order to provide effective back-up for the negotiating process in the north and the mediation efforts, as well as taking into account the needs of the populations concerned."

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Council took stock of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, notably following recent violence in north Kivu.

Common Security and Defence Policy

The Council discussed a report on the implementation of the Council conclusions of 1 December 2011 on the Common Security and Defence Policy.

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council, recalling its December 2011 Conclusions, welcomes the progress on CSDP that has been achieved since then, as set out in the report by the High Representative. The Council in particular looks forward to the imminent launch of three new CSDP missions, EUCAP Nestor in the Horn of Africa, EUCAP SAHEL Niger, and EUAVSEC South Sudan as well as the continued planning for EU support to border security in Libya. The Council also underlines its full commitment to the success of ongoing CSDP missions and operations.
2. The Council underlines the concrete impact of CSDP missions and operations on the ground. Operational engagement of the Union through CSDP is a very tangible expression of the EU's commitment to contribute to promote and preserve peace and stability, strengthening the EU's overall ability to respond to security challenges with civil and military crisis management instruments.
3. The Council emphasizes that the focus and impact of such operational engagement is enhanced when it is embedded in an overarching strategy, such as the strategic frameworks for the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region. This allows for a comprehensive approach that makes full use of the role of the High Representative who is also one of the Vice Presidents of the European Commission, and that mobilises the different tools at the EU's disposal in close interaction with the Member States to achieve the EU's objectives, in close cooperation with other international actors and making optimal use of scarce resources. The Council looks forward to the development of a joint communication on the comprehensive approach by the European Commission and the High Representative. The Council underlines the importance of CSDP as an essential element for such a comprehensive approach. In this context, the Council notes the ongoing revision of crisis management procedures aimed at accelerating and improving the effectiveness of CSDP planning, decision-making, execution and evaluation, keeping Member States involved throughout the process. The Council looks forward to concrete proposals on this revision by the end of the year. Furthermore, existing financial rules and procedures could be examined in order to better reflect the operational needs of CSDP.

4. The Council welcomes the activation of the EU Operations Centre in support of the CSDP missions and operations in the Horn of Africa, namely Operation Atalanta, EUTM Somalia, and EUCAP Nestor, with a view to increasing efficiency, coherence and synergies. It looks forward to its first review in September 2012.
5. In line with the December conclusions on CSDP, the Council recalls the need for improvements to enable earlier and more effective advanced planning.
6. The Council reiterates the importance of adequate resourcing of CSDP missions and operations as well as EEAS crisis management structures, in order for them to be able to deliver on their mandate. In this context, the Council renews its commitment to support sustainable military and civilian capability development by the Member States, to address capability gaps and ensure that in the future also the required capabilities will be available.

It reiterates the need for a long-term, structured approach to the pooling and sharing of military capabilities and welcomes the EDA's work in this regard in view of the changing strategic environment, the constraints on the defence budgets, and taking into account the need to continue promoting synergies with wider EU policies. It also looks forward to the development of a more systematic approach to the provision of EU Battlegroups. The Council will revert to these issues in November.

Furthermore, the Council welcomes the approved multi-annual work plan on civilian capabilities which aims at helping CSDP civilian missions to be staffed with highly qualified personnel as well as promptly receiving needed services and equipment. To this effect, in 2012-13, concrete action will focus on, inter alia, finalization and implementation of the Goalkeeper, strengthening ties between the CSDP and Freedom, Security and Justice (FSJ) actors, enhancement of civilian rapid deployment parameters, incorporation of lessons learned and best practices as well as fostering national strategies. The Council encourages the European Commission and the EEAS to take work forward on the possible establishment of a Shared Services Centre and looks forward to the launch of the warehouse facility.

7. The Council notes with satisfaction ongoing work on developing further cooperation with partner countries in view of their participation in and support to CSDP missions and operations. Further development of CSDP cooperation in particular with partner countries in the Southern and Eastern neighbourhood will contribute to enhancing regional security and stability. The Council also encourages further cooperation with regional and multilateral organisations, in particular with the UN, NATO and AU, and welcomes the ongoing work aimed at strengthening EU cooperation with the UN on crisis management.

8. The Council stresses the need for further dynamic progress on CSDP, decides to remain actively seized of all matters relating to CSDP and looks forward to review progress on the basis of concrete steps. The Council encourages the High Representative to take forward work on CSDP, in close cooperation with Member States, with a view to the next FAC discussion by the end of this year. Furthermore, the Council looks forward to the European Council discussion in the course of 2013, on defence issues as foreseen by the President of the European Council."

Eastern Partnership

The Council made preparations for the ministerial meeting with the EU's Eastern Partners, which took place after the Council meeting.

China

The High Representative briefed ministers on the third EU-China *high-level strategic dialogue*, held on 9 and 10 July in Beijing.

Energy and Foreign Policy

During lunch, ministers exchanged views on how EU foreign policy can support the EU's external energy policy, in the presence of Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FOREIGN AFFAIRS****Process for ending the transition in Somalia**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Recalling its Conclusions of 14 May 2012, the Council urges the Somali leadership and all other stakeholders to implement their commitments to end the current transition on 20 August 2012 and to demonstrate they are acting in the interests of the Somali people as a whole. The EU welcomes the agreement of the Somali Roadmap Signatories made in Nairobi on 22 June 2012 on the final draft Provisional Constitution that will be handed over to the National Constituent Assembly (NCA), but is concerned that continuous readjustment of timelines and missed deadlines risk undermining the transparency and legitimacy of the political process initiated by the Garowe Principles. An extension of the mandate of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) will not be accepted and efforts to obstruct genuine reform in Somalia will be met with appropriate action.
2. In line with the commitments made by the Roadmap Signatories, the EU urges the Traditional Elders to swiftly select the members of the New Federal Parliament (NFP), with the assistance of the Technical Selection Committee, and underlines the need for an effective legislature that will have an independent role of oversight of the Executive. The EU calls for the immediate convening of the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) in order to vote on the adoption of the draft Provisional Constitution, until such time that Somalis can express themselves in a referendum. It calls for the completion of the process with the election of the President and of the Speaker/Deputies by the NFP, and urges the Somali leadership to act in full transparency and provide public information during the remainder of this period. The EU underlines the importance of meeting the commitment of 30 per cent representation of women in the new Federal Institutions.
3. The EU underlines the urgency for the New Federal Institutions to identify and tackle key pending issues, including in the Provisional Constitution. It also calls on them to achieve progress in outreach and reconciliation, transparency and accountability, effective governance and the rule of law, justice and human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the country, including in newly accessible areas. It therefore invites the new Government to set out its priorities in a work plan within sixty days of its formation, as agreed at the Rome ICG meeting on 2-3 July 2012. Based on assessment of progress made towards implementing this work plan, the EU will determine its support to the New Federal institutions."

Lebanon

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU reiterates its strong and continued commitment to Lebanon's unity, stability, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.
2. The EU welcomes and supports the efforts of the Lebanese government to overcome divisions and promote national unity and peace. It welcomes in particular the President's initiative to revive the National Dialogue, and its progress achieved so far, notably the Baabda Declaration. The EU supports the intention to advance the dialogue on a continuous and inclusive basis, and encourages all political leaders to participate in order to find sustainable and constructive solutions to the main issues of national unity.
3. The EU calls on all Lebanese to refrain from violent actions, promote calm, and work toward defusing tensions. The EU welcomes the steps taken by the Lebanese authorities toward this aim and encourages further efforts to maintain security, notably by making clear that proliferation of arms, criminal activities and any form of violence are unacceptable.
4. The EU commends the Lebanese authorities for their efforts to support those fleeing the violence in Syria, and encourages the government of Lebanon to continue meeting its responsibilities in this respect. The EU reaffirms its readiness to continue providing assistance to Lebanon in coping with this burden.
5. The EU strongly condemns the recent incursions and other security incidents along the border with Syria, leading to the killing, injury and abduction of civilians at the hands of Syrian forces. Any violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity are unacceptable and in breach of UNSC Resolutions 1559 and 1680.
6. The EU stresses the importance of the Lebanese government's continued commitment to the full implementation of Lebanon's international obligations, including UNSC resolutions 1559, 1680, 1701 and 1757. The EU welcomes the fact that the Lebanese government has paid its contribution to the 2012 budget of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, thus honouring its commitments, and trusts that Lebanon will continue to fully cooperate with the Tribunal.

7. The EU stresses the importance of strong, independent, impartial and democratic public institutions for Lebanon's future, and supports the efforts of the Lebanese government in this regard. The support for such institutions from within the Lebanese society and by its leaders has been essential and needs to continue. This includes Lebanon's security forces, and particularly the Lebanese Armed Forces, which have to safeguard the rule of law and ensure security for all citizens against external and internal threats, and on the basis of respect of human rights. The EU is committed to continuing its support for Lebanon's security forces in fulfilling this role.
8. The EU encourages the Lebanese authorities to continue advancing on key governance issues of immediate importance, including the adoption of the budget, nominations to public offices, electoral reform with a view to legislative elections in 2013, and effective implementation of strategic sectoral policies, in order to address the economic and social needs of the population, thus contributing to stability in the country.
9. The EU reaffirms the importance it attaches to strengthening its partnership with Lebanon in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy."

Zimbabwe

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU is encouraged by the progress that is being made in implementing the Global Political Agreement (GPA) by the Government of National Unity (GNU) in Zimbabwe. It welcomes the constructive dialogue that has been established in the process of EU re-engagement with all parties in the GNU, including through the meeting in May this year between High Representative Ashton and the members of the Zimbabwe Ministerial Re-engagement Committee. The EU welcomes the continued commitment of SADC to support the implementation of the GPA, as expressed at the recent extraordinary SADC Summit in Luanda.
2. The steps taken by the GNU to improve the freedom and prosperity of the Zimbabwean people justify the immediate suspension of the measures hitherto applied under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. This will allow the EU to work directly with the GNU to develop new assistance programmes for the benefit of the people of Zimbabwe that would come on stream under the next European Development Fund.

3. The EU welcomes the recent visit to Zimbabwe of the UN HCHR at the invitation of the GNU. It recognises the improvement that has been achieved in the human rights situation although significant areas of concern remain.
4. As indicated in February this year and consistent with its incremental approach, the EU will further adjust its policy to recognise progress as it is made by the Zimbabwean parties along the SADC roadmap. The EU agrees that a peaceful and credible constitutional referendum would represent an important milestone in the preparation of democratic elections that would justify a suspension of the majority of all EU targeted restrictive measures against individuals and entities.
5. The EU reaffirms its partnership with the people of Zimbabwe. It calls on all parties to seize the momentum to complete implementation of the GPA in preparation for elections next year."

Biological and toxin weapons convention

The Council decided to grant EUR 1.7 million in support to the biological and toxin weapons convention (BTWC) for projects promoting the universality of the BTWC and supporting its implementation and effectiveness. This decision gives practical application to some elements of the [*EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction*](#).

Projects include regional workshops to raise awareness about implementation of the BTWC and to identify needs and requirements for national implementation; extended programmes to assist national implementation; and development of enabling tools and activities to strengthen national implementation of the BTWC.

For more details, see the [*BTWC website*](#).

Relations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The Council adopted a common position with a view to the ninth meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Council between the EU and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to be held on 24 July in Brussels.

Relations with Israel

The Council adopted the EU position for the eleventh meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council, to be held on 24 July in Brussels.

United Nations General Assembly

The Council approved the EU's priorities for the 67th session of the UN General Assembly, as set out in [11424/12](#).

Cooperation with the Council of Europe

The Council agreed to the EU priorities for cooperation with the Council of Europe in 2012-2013, as set out in [12412/12](#).

Relations with Jordan

The Council authorised the signature of an additional protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. This protocol sets out a framework for the participation of Jordan in EU programmes. It will be provisionally applied from the date of its signature. The Council also requested the consent of the European Parliament for the conclusion of this protocol.

A Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction

The Council allocated EUR 352 000 from the EU budget to support the process towards the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Activities will include a follow-up event related to the 2008 and 2011 Union seminars, the preparation of background papers and a dedicated webpage.

Fight against ballistic missile proliferation

The Council allocated EUR 930 000 from the EU budget to fund activities in support of the Hague code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation and, more generally, for a range of activities to fight against the proliferation of ballistic missiles. Planned actions comprise outreach activities towards states not subscribing to the code of conduct as well as seminars to raise awareness on ballistic missile proliferation and related research.

EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The Council approved the six-monthly progress report on the implementation of the EU Strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, covering the first half of 2012.

Preventing illicit trade in small arms and light weapons

The Council approved an EU working paper on the outcome of the 2012 review conference on the UN programme of action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. This is to serve as a basis for the EU position to be taken at the forthcoming second review conference on the UN programme of action on small arms and light weapons, to be held from 27 August to 7 September 2012. With this working paper, the EU shows its continued strong commitment to the UN programme of action and its comprehensive approach towards fighting the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Cooperation with the Organisation for joint armament cooperation

The Council approved an administrative arrangement between the European Defence Agency and the organisation for joint armament cooperation (OCCAR) establishing their cooperation. At the same time, the Council authorised the signature and conclusion of an agreement between OCCAR and the EU on the protection of classified information.

Status of mission agreements

The Council authorised the EU High Representative to open negotiations for agreements on the status of several new EU CSDP missions in their host countries:

- the EU mission on regional maritime capacity building in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP NESTOR);
- the EU CSDP mission in Niger (EUCAP SAHEL Niger); and
- the EU aviation security CSDP mission in South Sudan (EUAVSEC - South Sudan).

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Reallocation of funds within the 10th European Development Fund

The Council adopted the EU position within the ACP-EU Committee of Ambassadors in favour of a decision to transfer EUR 195 million from the unallocated resources of the 10th European Development Fund to the envelope for Intra-ACP cooperation. This will allow financing of actions based on the existing priorities of both the EU and the ACP states, including a replenishment of the African peace facility amounting to EUR 100 million. The African peace facility enables the EU to support the efforts of the African Union and regional organisations to address security challenges across Africa.

Financial contributions to the European Development Fund

The Council adopted a decision on the financial contributions by the member states to finance the European Development Fund in 2012. For more information, see [12344/12](#).

Food assistance convention

The Council authorised the signing on behalf of the EU of the food assistance convention, as the latter would help to achieve the humanitarian aid objectives referred to in article 214(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Financial assistance to Spain

The Council adopted a decision adjusting economic policy guidelines for Spain, in line with the memorandum of understanding approved on 20 July, which sets out conditions for financial assistance under the European Financial Stability Facility.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EU-Ukraine - Issuance of visas

The Council took a decision on the signature of an amended agreement between the European Union and Ukraine on the facilitation of the issuance of visas ([11044/12](#)).

The amendments concern among other things the waiving of the visa fees for certain groups of Ukrainian citizens as well as the rules and fees applicable if a member state cooperates with an external service provider with a view to issuing a visa. Other changes allow, for example, for the issuing of multiple-entry visas. These can be valid for up to five years for a number of categories of persons or for one year for certain other categories.

The original EU-Ukraine visa facilitation agreement entered into force on 1 January 2008.