Horn of Africa and Red Sea: Council adopts conclusions

On 25 June 2018, the Council discussed and adopted conclusions on the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea.

Developments in the Gulf region have triggered renewed geopolitical competition on both shores of the Red Sea. Combined with the absence of an adequate system of cooperation and conflict prevention and management mechanisms, these developments, not least the conflict in Yemen, are having a negative impact on security in and around the Red Sea. This could jeopardise EU interests by impacting freedom of navigation and further destabilising the Horn of Africa.

Against this background, foreign ministers discussed how to strengthen EU engagement in order to encourage an inclusive regional dialogue on issues such as economic integration and peace and security, including maritime security. At stake are the preservation of the security of the Bab el Mandeb/Gulf of Aden maritime route - through which a significant proportion of trade to and from Europe passes -, the harnessing of irregular migration flows; the containment of terrorist threats and the prevention of instability in the EU’s wider neighbourhood.

In its conclusions, the Council underlined the geopolitical and strategic importance of the Red Sea region for global trade, the regional economy and overall stability. It expressed the EU’s readiness to engage with all the relevant actors and to contribute to reviving ties and building a community of shared interests, commerce, investment and security.

As the peace, security and development of this wider region would benefit from more cooperation rather than competition, the EU encouraged the creation of an organised and inclusive regional forum for dialogue and cooperation around the Red Sea as a matter of urgency. The Council also reaffirmed that the EU will continue to work towards reinforcing inter- and intra-regional cooperation with partners across the Horn of Africa, using all available instruments.

Background

The EU is strongly engaged in the Horn of Africa, through political dialogue, its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions (EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta, EUCAP Somalia, EUTM Somalia), and development cooperation. Through regional and bilateral programmes and the Trust Fund for Africa, the EU is providing over €3 billion to the Horn of Africa (2014-2020). The EU has a Special Representative to the Horn of Africa, Alexander Rondos, whose mandate is to contribute to regional and international efforts to achieve lasting peace, security and development in the region and to enhance the quality, intensity and impact of the EU’s wide-ranging engagement in the Horn of Africa.

- Council conclusions on the Horn of Africa/Red Sea

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