

Joint statement following the EU-Egypt Association Council

Joint statement by Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Sameh Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt following the 7th session of the EU-Egypt Association Council

After seven years since the Sixth session of the Association Council (AC) of the European Union and the Arab Republic of Egypt, the seventh session took place in Brussels on 25 July 2017. Both sides took this decision in recognition of the great importance of their partnership in addressing their political, economic social, security and cultural interests and in confronting their common challenges in the region.

The seventh session was co-chaired by HE Sameh Shoukry, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in the presence of Johannes Hahn, the Commissioner of European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations.

The session confirmed the broader engagement of the EU-Egypt relations based on the resumption of the bilateral Association Agreement structure in 2015 and on the joint priorities identified in light of the revised European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) as well as the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, which will guide our dialogue and cooperation for the next three years.

The Association Council welcomed the adoption of the jointly negotiated EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities that pave the way for a reinforced and mutually beneficial bilateral partnership and towards a stronger strategic engagement in areas of common interest, to address common challenges, to promote joint interests and to guarantee long-term stability on both sides of the Mediterranean. This partnership will include support to Egypt's sustainable economic and social development, good governance, the rule of law, human rights, migration, security, counterterrorism, and cooperation in foreign policy through intensified consultations on regional and international issues.

The Association Council welcomed the solid and accumulated EU assistance to Egypt which amounts to over EUR 1.3 billion, of ongoing grants to support Egypt's economic, social and political development to improve the future prospects of its people and contribute to stabilization and long-term prosperity. This work is carried out in parallel with efforts to help in particular youth and women.

The EU reiterated its support to Egypt's efforts to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth, notably through the implementation of the IMF supported reform programme. Restoring macroeconomic stability, fostering sustainable economic growth and the same time mitigating the social impact of the reforms are all key priorities.

The EU and Egypt remained committed to combat terrorism which threatens the social fabric of nations across both sides of the Mediterranean. Combating these threats represents a common goal of the EU and Egypt who can cooperate through a comprehensive approach that will address the root causes of terrorism with due respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in order to enable both sides to successfully counter and prevent radicalization and enhance socio-economic development.

The Association Council acknowledged Egypt's contribution in hosting refugees and migrants and working to prevent and combat irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling of human beings, including identifying and assisting victims of trafficking. It welcomes the adoption of a new anti-smuggling law that represents a key transformation in legislation through criminalization of smugglers. The EU and Egypt will strengthen their cooperation on migration.

The Association Council provided an opportunity to identify areas where the EU and Egypt could enhance cooperation. In this regard, the EU and Egypt expressed their commitment to cooperate in diversification of energy sources, with a particular focus on renewable energy sources, energy efficiency actions and energy governance, where the EU could provide technical assistance to establish a regional energy hub in Egypt. Strengthening the energy dialogue is underway between the EU and Egypt and will

contribute to the joint research, sharing experience and best practice, technology transfers, as well as sub-regional cooperation.

The Association Council welcomed the commitment undertaken by both sides, faced with the common challenge of climate change, via ratification of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The EU reiterated its willingness to support Egypt in this area.

The Association Council also noted the importance of student staff and researcher exchanges and welcomed Egypt's active participation in EU programs such as ERASMUS+. In this regard, Egypt and the EU highlighted their interest in intensifying cooperation in the field of research and innovation, mainly through Horizon2020 projects and programs. Research and innovation has a key role in tackling issues of shared concern in the Mediterranean area. In particular, the Association Council welcomed the upcoming initialing of the international agreement between Egypt and the EU governing the participation of Egypt in the Partnership on Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA). PRIMA is expected to mobilize joint research and innovation in two fields of strategic importance for the Mediterranean area: water provision and food production.

Egypt and the EU expressed their commitment to enhancing democracy, fundamental freedoms and human rights as constitutional rights of all their citizens in line with their international obligations, and agreed that human rights are a common value and constitute a cornerstone of a democratic, stable and prosperous state.

The EU and Egypt agreed that civil society is an important and potent contributor to the implementation of their Partnership Priorities and to transparent, participatory governance and can support the sustainable development process underway in Egypt. They will work with civil society in contributing effectively in the economic, political and social development process in compliance with the Egyptian constitution and national legislation.

The EU and Egypt have a shared interest in reinforcing cooperation in foreign policy at the bilateral, regional and international levels. In line with the Partnership Priorities, Egypt and the EU expressed their readiness for greater cooperation and a common understanding of a range of issues, including in the multilateral sphere. The Association Council noted the importance of the partnership between the EU and Egypt for the stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Africa. Further cooperation between the EU and Egypt, including within regional fora, will aim to contribute to the resolution of conflicts, to building peace and to tackling political and economic challenges in these regions.

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