Council of the European Union

EN

16928/14

(OR. en)

PRESSE 651
PR CO 73

PRESS RELEASE

3361st Council meeting

Foreign Affairs

Brussels, 15 December 2014

President **Federica Mogherini**
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

Syria and Iraq

The Foreign Affairs Council focussed on the situation in Syria, Iraq and the threat from ISIL. The discussion will feed into the preparation of comprehensive EU regional strategy.

Ministers exchanged views on the crisis in Syria with the UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura. The EU is fully committed to supporting his efforts to achieve a strategic de-escalation of violence as a basis for a broader political process. The EU stands ready to provide concrete support for the development of his proposal to build on local freezes of hostility in Aleppo and elsewhere.

The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, said: "All the EU member states and the European Union as such are, in one way or another, involved in the fight against Da'esh. All of us are very much working on the support of the Iraqi government." She added that she would travel to Bagdad and Erbil next week.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Council agreed a renewed approach to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), without changing the EU accession conditions, including the implementation of the Sejdic-Finci ruling. It invited the High Representative and Commissioner Hahn to engage with the BiH leadership to secure its irrevocable written commitment to undertake reforms for EU accession. Once this commitment has been agreed by the BiH presidency, signed by the BiH political leaders and endorsed by the BiH parliament, the Council will decide on the entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, added: "Yes, there can be a new start for the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are ready to engage. We are ready to reciprocate in the moment when this commitment will be adopted by the parliament. This could be a turning point in the way of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards the European Union."

CONTENTS[1]

PARTICIPANTS **5**

ITEMS DEBATED

Syria 7

Iraq 10

Western Balkans 10

Ukraine 11

Ebola 11

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

– Central African Republic 12

– Southern Mediterranean investment initiative 15

– South Sudan 16

– EU action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction 17

– Action against proliferation of small arms in the Sahel region 17

– EU action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction 17

– EU - Ukraine relations 18

– Relations with Serbia 18

– Relations with Morocco 18

[1]
- 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.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

– Chairman of the EU military committee 18

– Amendment of the small arms and light weapons article in agreements 18

– EUCAP SAHEL Mali 20

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Mr Martin LIDEGAARD	Minister for Foreign Affairs
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Mr Frank-Walter STEINMEIER	Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs
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Mr Keit PENTUS-ROSIMANNUS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
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Mr Evangelos VENIZELOS	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
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Mr László SZABÓ	Parliamentary State Secretary and Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
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Mr Bert KOENDERS	Minister for Foreign Affairs
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Mr Sebastian KURZ	Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs
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Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Sweden:	
Ms Margot WALLSTRÖM	Minister for Foreign Affairs
United Kingdom:	
Mr Philip HAMMOND	Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Foreign Secretary)
Commission:	
Mr Johannes HAHN	Member

ITEMS DEBATED

Syria

The Council held an in-depth discussion on the situation in Syria, following an informal session with the UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, on 14 December. It adopted the following conclusions:

"1. Recalling the Council conclusions of 20 October, the EU expresses grave concern regarding the continued deterioration of the humanitarian and security situation in Syria. The EU condemns unreservedly the atrocities and human rights violations and abuses perpetrated by the Assad regime as well as ISIL / Da'esh, Jabhat al-Nusra and other terrorist groups. The EU will continue to encourage all efforts to reach a political solution by mutual consent in order to maintain the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity as well as the multi-ethnic and multi-religious character of Syria. A lasting solution to the conflict can only be achieved through a Syrian-led political process leading to a transition.

The EU is committed to fully support the UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura's efforts to achieve a strategic de-escalation of violence as a basis for a broader sustainable political process. The EU stands ready to support concretely the development of his proposals, in particular the proposal to build on local freezes of hostility in compliance with international humanitarian law in Aleppo and elsewhere.

2. Reduction of violence will not be achieved without effective monitoring, preferably anchored in the United Nations Security Council. The EU recalls that cases of forced surrender imposed by the Assad regime through starvation sieges were labelled fallaciously as local ceasefires in the past. It expresses serious concern regarding the intensified military action by the Assad regime against areas held by the opposition, which threaten the UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura's initiative. The EU will seek ways to provide practical support to his efforts notably by contributing to the revival of local governance and administration, to the restoration of basic services and to the return to normalcy in areas of reduced violence, in particular in Aleppo, as conditions allow.

3. The EU recalls that the overall objective remains a Syrian-led process leading to a transition that meets the aspirations of all the Syrian people, based on the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 and in line with relevant UNSC Resolutions. The EU calls on all Syrian parties to show clear and concrete commitment to this process, and to ensure the involvement of civil society and women. The EU is ready to engage with all regional and international actors with influence over the Syrian parties and calls on them to use their influence constructively towards this end.

4. The EU recalls that the moderate opposition, including the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (SOC), is a vital element of both a future political settlement and in fighting the extremist groups on the ground in Syria. The EU encourages both internal and external opposition groups to unite behind a common strategy in order to present an alternative to the Syrian people. It will seek ways to enhance its political and practical support to the moderate opposition including in opposition held areas such as Aleppo.

5. The EU condemns the continued widespread and systematic violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law perpetrated in Syria, in particular by the Assad regime and terrorist groups, as reported by the Commission of Inquiry. This includes indiscriminate bombings with barrel bombs by the regime forces and atrocities committed by ISIL / Da'esh. The EU welcomes the adoption of the UN General Assembly Third Committee resolution condemning human rights violations in Syria. It underlines its concern regarding cases of forced disappearances and calls for the immediate release of the victims. The EU will spare no effort to ensure that all perpetrators of such violations and abuses are held accountable for their crimes which may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. The EU reiterates its call to the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

6. The EU will continue its policy of imposing and enforcing sanctions targeting the regime and its supporters as long as repression continues.

7. The EU urges the Assad regime to fully implement the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118 and the Chemical Weapons Convention and to take the necessary measures to eliminate its chemical weapons program completely and irreversibly. This includes the destruction of the remaining production facilities and the provision of evidence to support the assurances that Syria has fully abandoned its chemical weapons program. The EU remains extremely concerned by the gaps and discrepancies in the Assad regime’s declarations to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The EU condemns the use of chlorine gas as a chemical weapon by the Assad regime and it will continue its support to the investigations of the OPCW's Fact Finding Mission. The EU recalls that, in line with the Convention on Chemical Weapons, it is the primary responsibility of the Assad regime to bear the costs related to the verification and the destruction of its chemical program.

8. The EU urges all parties to comply with international humanitarian law as regards protection and access to humanitarian aid and to provide humanitarian aid to all people in need, including in hard-to-reach areas. The EU condemns the continued impediments in the delivery of aid for which the Assad regime bears the primary responsibility. The EU urges all parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, to fully and immediately implement all the provisions of UNSC Resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014). The EU fully supports the renewal of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2165 in order to foster effective cross-border and cross line assistance and ensure access to vulnerable people regardless of their location.

9. The EU and its Member States continue to play a leading role in the provision of humanitarian aid in response to the crisis, having mobilised so far €3 billion for relief and recovery assistance to those most in need in Syria and in neighbouring countries, including host communities. The EU will sustain its efforts to provide humanitarian aid to the people affected by the crisis and to build their resilience through recovery assistance and basic services in Syria and the neighbouring countries alike. The EU expresses serious concern about the severe lack of funding for the UN Appeals 2014, which resulted in a temporary suspension of World Food Program assistance to Syrian refugees. Therefore, it calls on the international community to step up its funding and assistance in view of the winter and in response to the forthcoming 2015 appeals.

10. The Council welcomes the establishment of the European Union Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis that will act in coordination and complementarity with ongoing assistance including the existing Syria Recovery Trust Fund.

11. The EU commends the considerable efforts of Lebanon and Jordan as well as Turkey sheltering refugees from Syria. It will spare no effort to continue to help them provide assistance to refugees and vulnerable host communities and comply with existing refugee laws, conventions and humanitarian principles as regards protection and access to humanitarian aid. In this context, it welcomes the Berlin declaration "Solidarity with the refugees and their hosts" of the Conference on the Syria Refugee Situation of 28 October 2014.

12. The EU remains fully aware of the immense security challenges that the crisis in Syria poses to Lebanon and Jordan in particular. The EU underlines the importance of the ongoing EU and member States' support, and it reiterates its commitment to seek ways to further enhance this support to both countries to meet those challenges."

Iraq

The Council exchanged views on the situation in Iraq. The discussion will feed into the preparation of a comprehensive EU regional strategy on Syria and Iraq and the ISIL / Da'esh threat.

The EU has pledged its full support for efforts by Prime Minister Haider al Abadi's government to pursue inclusive policies and national reconciliation. It is committed to comprehensively tackling the threat posed by terrorism and to addressing the underlying dynamics, which have given ISIL a foothold.

Western Balkans

The High Representative and Neighbourhood Commissioner Hahn briefed the Council about their recent trip to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. The Council reiterates its unequivocal commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU perspective. The Council also reaffirms its unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign and united country.

2. The Council welcomes the Compact for Growth and Jobs to shift the focus towards reforms and issues of direct concern to citizens, in the wake of the widespread, citizen-led protests in early 2014 which underlined the fragility of the socio-economic situation.

3. The Council welcomes the recent visit of HR Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn to Sarajevo and their engagement in the revitalisation of the reform process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council agreed on a renewed EU approach towards Bosnia and Herzegovina on its EU accession path throughout which all conditions, including the implementation of the Sejdic-Finci ruling will have to be met. The Council calls on BiH political leadership to anchor the reforms necessary for EU integration in the work of all relevant institutions.

4. The Council invites HR Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn to continue engaging with the BiH leadership to secure at the earliest its irrevocable written commitment to undertake reforms in the framework of the EU accession process. The overall objective is to establish functionality and efficiency at all levels of government and allow Bosnia and Herzegovina to prepare itself for future EU membership. The text will also contain a commitment to work out in consultation with the EU an initial agenda for reforms, in line with the EU acquis. The reform agenda should be developed and implemented in consultation with civil society. This agenda should include first and foremost reforms under the Copenhagen criteria (socio-economic reforms including the "Compact for Growth and Jobs", rule of law, good governance) and also agreed functionality issues (including the EU coordination mechanism).

The BiH leadership will also commit to make progress, at a later stage, on further reforms in order to enhance functionality and effectiveness of the different levels of government.

5. The Council invites HR Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn to regularly report on progress in bringing about this written commitment and on how this is reflected in the work of all relevant institutions.

6. Once the written commitment has been agreed by the BiH Presidency, signed by the BiH political leaders and endorsed by the BiH Parliament, the Council will decide on the entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

7. Meaningful progress on the implementation of the agenda for reforms, including the "Compact for Growth and Jobs", will be necessary for a membership application to be considered by the EU. When requesting the Commission's Opinion on the membership application, the Council will ask the Commission to pay particular attention to the implementation of the Sejdic-Finci ruling.

8. The Council underlines the crucial importance of swift government formation and calls on the country's leaders to ensure that this takes place."

Ukraine

The Council confirmed its agreement in principle to the High Representative's proposals for additional EU restrictive measures in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. Technical discussions on the proposals are ongoing.

Ebola

The Council took note of a report by EU Ebola coordinator Christos Stylianides on the state of play on the epidemic and the EU's response. Collectively, the EU and its member states are the prime donor to the effort to help stem the Ebola outbreak: they have committed over €1.1 billion.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Central African Republic

The Council adopted the following conclusions on the Central African Republic:

"1. The European Union (EU) is continuing to play close attention to the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR), which remains fragile despite a relative improvement in the security situation in Bangui in recent weeks. The EU calls for the country's territorial integrity to be respected and reaffirms its commitment to the peaceful coexistence of the different communities and religions there.

2. In order to set the country on a sustainable path out of the crisis, the political process in the CAR must continue to be taken forward. The EU reaffirms its full support for the transitional authorities and urges them to continue their efforts, in as united a stance as possible, to implement the necessary reforms. It welcomes the increase in the strength of MINUSCA for the purposes of supporting the political process, and calls for it to be fully deployed as soon as possible. The EU notes that the support of the international community as a whole is crucial in order to help the transitional authorities to strengthen their capabilities and in order to keep up the impetus for change.

3. The Bangui Forum on Political Dialogue and National Reconciliation, which is an important stage in the transition process, must be broad and inclusive and must be conducted by local stakeholders if it is to be sustainable and provide genuine added value. It must allow the Central African stakeholders themselves to find lasting solutions to the interrelated challenges of security, governance and development facing the country. In this context, the EU notes the statement on the Bangui Forum issued by the faith-based platform and acknowledges the importance of local talks and inter-community dialogue in laying the groundwork for genuine national reconciliation. It urges the transitional authorities to actively pursue this process, in conjunction with all stakeholders, and recalls the absolute necessity for all concerned to act in good faith.

4. A clear strategy is needed on how to deal with armed groups. As the current crisis is largely being fuelled by continued impunity, those responsible for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law must be held accountable for their actions. The EU calls on the transitional authorities to keep up their efforts to combat impunity, by making an active contribution to restoring the criminal justice system, with the support of the international community, and especially the EU and the United Nations, by speeding up the adoption of legislation setting up the Special Criminal Court, and by continuing to cooperate with the International Criminal Court in its ongoing investigation.

5. Holding elections which are as inclusive as possible is also a crucial stage in the process. It is therefore all the more important that thorough preparations be made for the elections. The EU is therefore in favour of extending the transition period until August 2015. The EU welcomes the adoption of a timetable for the elections as urged by the International Contact Group meeting in Bangui on 11 November, and calls for preparations to be speeded up. The EU once more stresses its willingness to support the electoral process, including through the deployment of an election observation mission. It urges all international partners to contribute - including financially - to the preparation of elections in the CAR.

6. The EU welcomes the stabilisation efforts that have been implemented, in particular the contributions made by MINUSCA, France's Sangaris force and the EUFOR RCA operation, and also by the transitional authorities. The extension of the EUFOR RCA military transition operation, as requested by all involved on the ground, is further proof of how useful and effective the EU operation has been. The EU fully supports the action of MINUSCA, which is the main guarantor of security in the country. Discussions on a programme for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration - as well as on security sector reform - must continue as part of the political process under way, in order to stabilise the country in the long term. The EU accordingly stresses the importance of close coordination of international efforts and continued international mediation under the auspices of Congo-Brazzaville and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the African Union and the United Nations, with the full involvement of the transitional authorities.

7. To contribute to the reform of the CAR armed forces (FACA) as part of the EU's overall approach in the country, the Council approves a crisis management concept for a one-year CSDP military advice mission based in Bangui. This CSDP mission will contribute to providing the CAR Government with expert advice on reforming the FACA to make them into a multi-ethnic, professional, republican armed force. Based on a gradual approach overseen by the Political and Security Committee, the mission could also provide the CAR army with specific, limited, non-operational training. The Council calls on the EEAS to continue its operational planning using fast-track procedures to enable the mission to be deployed, subject to a Council decision, before the end of the EUFOR RCA mandate. Lastly, the Council emphasises the importance of close coordination with the partners involved, in particular the Central African authorities and the UN, to ensure good cooperation and complementarity in the efforts under way to restore stability in the CAR.

8. The EU reiterates its concerns over the humanitarian situation in the CAR and the considerable impact this is having on neighbouring countries. Humanitarian aid workers still have only limited freedom of movement and access to the population in the interior of the country because of the activities of many armed groups in the CAR; as a result, it is proving very difficult to deliver aid and reach the most vulnerable sections of the population. The EU strongly condemns the attacks against humanitarian aid workers and convoys. The mobilisation of resources to respond to the humanitarian crisis, including in neighbouring countries which have taken in large numbers of refugees from the CAR, remains a priority. The international community must continue to work alongside the CAR.

9. In terms of development, priority is being given to the reconstruction of the Central African state, in particular in order to enable it to exercise its powers throughout the territory and to provide the population with basic social services. Such a process must be accompanied by the gradual deployment, now under way, of international forces throughout CAR territory. The European trust fund for the CAR, named "Bêkou", has started implementing the first of the projects and others will follow shortly. The Council notes that the Bêkou Fund is open to contributions from any source, including third parties. It also welcomes the authorities' commitment to continuing with reforms aimed at gradually bringing finances back into balance, in particular by implementing the recommendations made during the visit by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to the CAR."

At the same time, the Council adopted the crisis management concept for a possible EU military advisory mission in the Central African Republic.

Southern Mediterranean investment initiative

The Council adopted the following conclusions on a Southern Mediterranean investment initiative (AMICI):

"1. Against the background of regional developments in the past few years in the EU's Southern Neighbourhood and the necessity for political and economic reforms and respect for the rule of law, the Council highlights the need for greater co-ordination in investment-related programmes and enhanced support for policy dialogue and regional cooperation aiming at inclusive economic growth, private sector development and job creation.

2. In this context, the Council welcomes the successful completion of the mapping/stocktaking exercise on ongoing projects and operations in the region and existing coordination mechanisms, which cover resources managed by the European Commission, and those from EU Member States and European Financial Institutions. The Council endorses the key findings and proposals of the mapping/stocktaking exercise.

3. The Council invites the High Representative/Vice President and the European Commission, within their respective competences, to pursue the Southern Mediterranean Investment Coordination initiative (AMICI). This initiative will be fully in line with European Neighbourhood Policy principles and will not create any duplications but will operate within the existing institutional framework. It will also take into account initiatives such as the Deauville Partnership. . The aim is to optimise the policy dialogue among relevant actors and donors in order to support the Southern partner countries in a more effective way, and provide more targeted investments in the region with a greater socio-economic impact in line with European and partners' priorities.

4. Regular coordination will be initiated at country level, where feasible, in the framework of Joint Programming, to be followed up during the implementation phase through the local EU development counsellors meetings, and at EU Member States level, through the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) Committee and in the framework of the Neighbourhood Investment Facility. It will also include a regional and international dialogue, involving the European Commission, the EEAS, Member States, European Financial Institutions, the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), partner countries, International Financial Institutions and other donors, as appropriate. The Council notes the important role that the UfM and its Secretariat can play in this respect, notably by facilitating the dialogue at sectorial level.

It is planned that the first plenary meeting takes place in the first semester of 2015.

5. The Council invites the High Representative/Vice President and the European Commission to review annually the progress made and the functioning of the AMICI initiative as a part of the ENI implementation report."

South Sudan

The Council adopted the following conclusions on South Sudan:

"1. Today marks one year since the outbreak of the destructive conflict in South Sudan. The European Union (EU) is dismayed that all efforts have so far proved unsuccessful in resolving the situation. It calls on the parties to bring the conflict to an immediate end and swiftly reach a political settlement.

2. The civil war has resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands, the displacement of two million people with detrimental effects also in the neighbouring countries and appalling violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. At least 2.5 million people will face severe food shortages in the coming months and this man-made situation has become one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. The EU is particularly concerned at the continued hindrance of international humanitarian assistance.

3. The EU is deeply concerned about reports that human rights violations and abuses, including sexual violence against women, continue even today. It stresses the need to end impunity in South Sudan and bring the perpetrators to justice, and looks forward to the publication of the report from the AU Commission of Inquiry.

4. The EU expresses its full support for the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to protect civilians in all parts of South Sudan and to the benefit of all communities, including by sheltering more than 100 000 civilians in its own bases.

5. The EU has lent full support to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) efforts to push for inclusive and comprehensive peace talks, including by financing the cease-fire verification and monitoring mechanism, yet the government and the opposition have failed to engage in the process in good faith. Both sides have undermined the process by failing to honour their commitments and excluding others from negotiations, while regularly breaching the cessation of hostilities agreement and continuing their hostilities on the ground. It is vital that the parties respect their commitments and desist from any planned offensives.

6. Given this alarming lack of progress, the EU welcomes the declarations of the latest IGAD Summit and the African Union Peace and Security Council that restrictive measures will be applied to any party responsible for violating the cessation of hostilities or obstructing the political negotiations. The EU calls for their swift adoption in coordination with the UN Security Council. The EU has imposed an arms embargo and invites all international key partners to consider this step, and calls for measures to ensure that the wealth of the country is used for the benefit of the South Sudanese people rather than to stockpile weapons of war. The EU is ready to consider further targeted restrictive measures against those individuals obstructing peace in South Sudan.

   Tougher action by the international community as a whole, including regional partners, is needed to press all sides in the conflict to pursue the path of peaceful negotiation to a lasting settlement to their political differences in the primary interest of the South Sudanese population."

EU action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The Council extended the implementation period for EU support for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and UN Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The EU funds were initially granted in December 2013 and will be extended until 30 September 2015.

Action against proliferation of small arms in the Sahel region

The Council allocated €3.5 million to support states in the Sahel region conducting physical security and stockpile management activities to reduce the risk of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

EU action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The Council allocated € 990.000 for activities in support of the Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation. The funds will be used for information and communication, action to strengthen ballistic missile non-proliferation and outreach activities for the universalization of the Hague Code of Conduct.

EU - Ukraine relations

The Council endorsed the EU position on the rules of procedure of the Association Council with Ukraine and those of the Association Committee and of Sub-Committees, the establishment of two Sub-Committees, and the delegation of certain powers by the Association Council to the Association Committee in its Trade configuration.

Relations with Serbia

The Council adopted the EU position for the Stabilisation and Association Council with Serbia, to take place in Brussels on 17 December.

Relations with Morocco

The Council adopted the EU position for the twelfth meeting of the EU-Morocco Association Council, to be held in Brussels on 16 December.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Chairman of the EU military committee

The Council appointed General Mikhail Kostarakos as the next Chairman of the EU Military Committee as of 6 November 2015. For more details, see press release.

Amendment of the small arms and light weapons article in agreements

The Council adopted the following conclusions concerning the amendment of the small arms and light weapons article in agreements between the EU and third countries:

"The Council:

1. Recalls its 2008 Conclusions on the inclusion of a small arms and light weapons (SALW) article in agreements between the EU and third parties, which have since then been included in numerous agreements;

2. considers that, following the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and its forthcoming entry into force in December 2014, there is a need to complement the standard reference text for the SALW article with provisions relating to the regulation of legal arms trade;

3. considers that the provisions relating to the regulation of arms trade should contain, in addition to a generic part, a part referring specifically to the ATT, to be included in agreements with third countries that have ratified/acceded to the ATT, or expressed their intention to do so;

4. considers that the revised clause will have a more comprehensive nature, as it will cover both legal and illicit trade aspects;

5. considers that the following text will be used as a reference in future negotiations:

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS AND OTHER CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

I. The Parties recognise that the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, including their ammunition, and their excessive accumulation, poor management, inadequately secured stockpiles and uncontrolled spread continue to pose a serious threat to peace and international security.

II. The Parties agree to observe and fully implement their respective obligations to deal with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including their ammunition, under existing international agreements and UN Security Council resolutions, as well as their commitments within the framework of other international instruments applicable in this area, such as the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects.

III. The Parties recognise the importance of domestic control systems for the transfer of conventional arms in line with existing international standards. The Parties recognise the importance of applying such controls in a responsible manner, as a contribution to international and regional peace, security and stability, and to the reduction of human suffering, as well as to the prevention of diversion of conventional weapons.

Part III bis to be added when negotiating with a country that has ratified/acceded to the ATT or expressed its intention to do so: The Parties undertake in this regard to fully implement the Arms Trade Treaty and to cooperate with each other within the framework of the Treaty, including in promoting the universalisation and full implementation of the Treaty by all UN Member States.

IV. The Parties therefore undertake to cooperate and to ensure coordination, complementarity and synergy in their efforts to regulate or improve the regulation of international trade in conventional arms and to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in arms. They agree to establish regular political dialogue that will accompany and consolidate this undertaking."

EUCAP SAHEL Mali

The Council approved the Operational Plan for the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Mission EUCAP SAHEL Mali. EUCAP SAHEL Mali has been established as a civilian mission to deliver strategic advice and training for the Malian internal security forces, in coordination with international partners.