

12943/02 (Presse 314)

**GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS** \*

2458th Council meeting

**- EXTERNAL RELATIONS -**

Luxembourg, 21 October 2002

President : **Mr Per Stig MØLLER**

Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of  
Denmark

\* *The 2459th session on General Affairs is reflected in a separate press release  
(12945/02 Presse 315)*

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- *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.*
- *The documents whose references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site <http://ue.eu.int>.*
- *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 above mentioned Council Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.*

## ITEMS APPROVED WITHOUT DEBATE

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## **PARTICIPANTS**

The Governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

### **Belgium :**

Mr Louis MICHEL

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Denmark :**

Mr Per Stig MØLLER

Mr Bertel HAARDER

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Refugees, Immigration and Integration and Minister without Portfolio with responsibility for European Affairs  
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Mr Friis Arne PETERSEN

### **Germany :**

Mr Günter PLEUGER

State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### **Greece :**

Mr George PAPANDREOU

Mr Anastasios GIANNITSIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Spain :**

Ms Ana PALACIO VALLELERSUNDI

Mr Ramón DE MIGUEL Y EGEA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary for European Affairs

### **France :**

Ms Noëlle LENOIR

Minister attached to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, with responsibility for European Affairs

### **Ireland :**

Mr Brian COWEN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Italy :**

Mr Roberto ANTONIONE

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

### **Luxembourg :**

Ms Lydie POLFER

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

### **Netherlands :**

Mr Jaap de HOOP SCHEFFER

Mr Atzo NICOLAÏ

Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary for European Affairs

### **Austria :**

Ms Benita FERRERO-WALDNER

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **Portugal :**

Mr António MARTINS da CRUZ

Mr Carlos COSTA NEVES

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Portuguese Communities Abroad

State Secretary for European Affairs

### **Finland :**

Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA

Mr Jari VILÉN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister of Foreign Trade

### **Sweden :**

Ms Anna LINDH

Minister for Foreign Affairs

### **United Kingdom :**

Mr Peter HAIN

Minister of State for Europe

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### **Commission :**

Mr Christopher PATTEN

Member

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### **General Secretariat of the Council :**

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

**ITEMS DEBATED****MIDDLE EAST**

Ministers expressed their shock at and their condemnation of the terrorist attack perpetrated near Hadera in the North of Israel. On the basis of a presentation by High Representative Solana, they took stock of the situation in the Middle East, including discussions within the "Quartet" on the road map leading towards a final, just and comprehensive settlement with two states living side by side in peace and security by 2005. They expressed concern about the humanitarian situation, as well as about settlements activities in the occupied territories.

**WESTERN BALKANS - Council conclusions****"ALBANIA**

The Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Albania and invited Albania to take the necessary measures to build up the capacities required to implement the agreement. In parallel to negotiations, Consultative Task Force (CTF) meetings will continue to take place in order to encourage further reforms.

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

The Council noted the results of the 5 October 2002 elections, which were efficiently organised by the Bosnian authorities. Turnout in the elections was disappointing. The Council reiterated that the only way towards justice, prosperity and closer European integration was through further vigorous reforms as set out in the Stabilisation and Association Process and called for the early creation of new governments committed to these goals. On this basis, the Council reconfirmed the EU's commitment to actively work with the new authorities to move forward.

**FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA (FRY)**

The Council regretted that the turnout during the 13 October 2002 elections was insufficient to enable the election of a new President in Serbia, and urged all political parties to ensure that the process of selecting a new Serbian President would be conducted in a manner safeguarding democratic stability in a period of reform.

The Council welcomed the peaceful and orderly conduct of the legislative elections in Montenegro. It anticipated the rapid formation of a government fully committed to address Montenegro's reform agenda.

The Council called upon the Serbian, Montenegrin and Federal authorities to finalise the text of the Constitutional Charter. It urged all parties to live up to their responsibility to enable the FRY to join the Council of Europe.

#### FRY/KOSOVO

The Council called upon the voters of all communities in Kosovo to participate in the 26 October 2002 municipal elections and to seize the chance to have their interests properly represented, thus demonstrating their shared responsibility for the building of a multi-ethnic and tolerant society. The Council noted the need to further promote inter-ethnic reconciliation and to ensure a secure environment for all Kosovars pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

#### FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA (fYROM)

The Council welcomed the agreement on the composition of the new government in Skopje. It encouraged the new government to give priority to the full implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and to the Stabilisation and Association Process and looked forward to a close and fruitful co-operation. The Council looked forward to the 1-15 November 2002 census being conducted in accordance with international standards.

## CO-OPERATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA (ICTY)

The Council reaffirmed that co-operation with the Tribunal is an obligation for all countries and parties of the region, regardless of their domestic laws. Failure to co-operate fully with ICTY would seriously jeopardise further movement towards the European Union.

Recalling its conclusions of 30 September 2002, the Council strongly encouraged Croatia to co-operate fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The Council recalled that respect for international law principles constitutes an essential element of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between the EU and Croatia.

## LONDON CONFERENCE ON ORGANISED CRIME

The Council considered organised crime as one of the most serious threats to stability, prosperity and progress in South Eastern Europe, the consequences of which affected all of Europe. The Council therefore fully supported the initiative of 25 November 2002 London Conference on Organised Crime in South Eastern Europe, in which the EU will play a leading role. The full commitment of the countries of South Eastern Europe is vital to the success of this endeavour."



**KIMBERLEY PROCESS - Council declaration**

The Council discussed the efforts in the "Kimberley Process" to establish a certification scheme for the international trade in rough diamonds and adopted the following declaration:

"The Council reiterates its full support for the efforts of the international community to break the link between conflict diamonds and the financing of armed conflict.

The Council will provide its full support for the launch of an effective Kimberley Process Certification Scheme containing essential elements of an international scheme of certification for rough diamonds. To this end, it looks forward to the meeting of the Kimberley Process in Interlaken, Switzerland, on 5 November 2002.

Full and swift implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme must be ensured as soon as it has been agreed. The Council will take the necessary steps to this end."

**RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA**

The Council took stock of preparations for the EU-Russia Summit to be held in Copenhagen on 11 November 2002. The Summit is expected in particular to assess the Russia-EU Partnership and Co-operation Agreement after five years, as well as to discuss "the new face of Europe", including EU enlargement, and international issues.

**IRAN : HUMAN RIGHTS - Council conclusions**

- "1. In the interests of achieving significant improvements in the situation of human rights in Iran, and recalling its 17 June conclusions on support for the process of reform, the Council discussed an initiative to establish an EU-Iran human rights dialogue in accordance with the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Dialogues of 13 December 2001.
2. The Council stresses the importance it attaches to the opportunity presented by such a dialogue to bring about concrete improvements in the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Iran. It welcomes Iran's agreement, as expressed during an EU exploratory experts mission to Iran on 30 September and 1 October 2002, on the principle that both parties would enter into a dialogue with no pre-conditions, that all human rights issues could be discussed under the dialogue, that each party could choose to terminate the dialogue at any time, and that realistic and concrete benchmarks to evaluate progress would need to be established. It therefore agrees to enter into such a dialogue on the basis of the modalities, timing, interlocutors, subjects and benchmarks discussed during the EU exploratory mission to Iran.
3. The Council remains concerned about the human rights situation in Iran, including violations of civil and political rights, in particular the freedom of expression and the freedom of association, and systematic discrimination against women and girls, as well as against minorities. The EU has expressed, and will continue to express, its preoccupation with these issues. The Council expects determined progress in the essential reform of the judicial system and with respect to the enforcement of the rule of law, and expects co-operation to be extended to the relevant UN thematic rapporteurs and working groups. The Council also recalls its longstanding and firm position against the use of the death penalty and particularly cruel forms of execution such as stoning, and the importance it attaches to the prevention and abolition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

4. Recalling that the purpose of the dialogue is to achieve concrete progress on the ground, the Council agrees to assess the results of the dialogue on a regular basis. The benchmarks for assessing the EU-Iran dialogue would refer to all the areas of concern mentioned above, as well as, inter alia, Iran's signing, ratification and implementation of international human rights instruments; co-operation with international human rights procedures and mechanisms; openness, access and transparency; discrimination; the prison system.
5. The Council agrees that the first meeting under the dialogue would take place in Tehran before the end of 2002, according to the mutually agreed format and modalities, and would discuss discrimination and the prevention of torture, as well as other human rights issues of concern, inter alia within the framework of international human rights instruments, standards and mechanisms.
6. The Council further reaffirms its position of principle whereby the establishment of a dialogue is without prejudice to the tabling of a resolution at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights or at the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. It agrees that at the 57th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the EU will convey its deep concern at the serious violations of human rights in Iran and the lack of progress in a number of areas.

The EU will return to the matter in the light of developments in the human rights dialogue."

**INDONESIA : FOLLOW-UP TO THE TERRORIST ATTACK IN BALI - Council conclusions**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council condemns in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks on October 12, 2002 in Bali, Indonesia. It expresses its deepest sympathy and condolences to the Governments and peoples and to the victims and families who suffered as a consequence of this attack.
2. The EU remains committed to the fight against terrorism and to combating all who seek to impose their will through acts of violence and terror anywhere in the world. The Council recognises that the fight against terrorism is for the long haul. The challenge stemming from terrorism is global in nature and the response of the international community must also be global. In this context, the EU will continue to strengthen its role in the international community to prevent and stabilise regional conflicts. The Council remains determined to bring to justice the perpetrators, organisers and sponsors of terrorist acts and to hold accountable those responsible for hiding, supporting or harbouring such persons.
3. The Council reconfirms its determination to play a full role in this fight and to use all available instruments to combat terrorism. It is of vital importance to secure universal and full implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on the fight against terrorism, in particular Resolution 1373. The Council reiterates that the fight against terrorism must be conducted in full respect of the rule of law and international law, including human rights.

4. In line with the United Nations Security Council resolution 1438, the EU Action Plan of September 2001 and the Council conclusions of 22 July 2002 on EU external action against terrorism, the EU will
- Co-operate closely with the Government of Indonesian at all levels so that no efforts are spared in finding and bringing to justice the perpetrators. In this respect the EU stands ready to extend its full support and to work together with the Indonesian authorities to bring to justice the perpetrators of this horrendous crime as well as others responsible for the cruel terrorist acts in Bali.
  - Strengthen the political dialogue with Indonesia to include all aspects of counter terrorism, the fight against terrorism, and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions. To this end a high-level Troika delegation will visit Indonesia in the near future, based on further guidance to be furnished by a preparatory report by EU Heads of Mission in Jakarta, in order to affirm the common determination in dealing effectively with all terrorist threats. Furthermore, the Council directs its competent bodies to finalise their assessment of the terrorist threat in Indonesia and to follow up the operative recommendations inter alia in regular troika contacts at expert level on counter terrorism with Indonesia.
  - Develop its co-operation with Indonesia on counter-terrorism measures. In particular, the Council takes note of the Commission's intention to consider Indonesia as a pilot country for assistance in the implementation of UNSCR 1373. It also notes the Commission's will to speed up the identification, through an early expert mission, of specific projects within the framework of Community assistance to Indonesia, notably in the fight against money laundering and financing of terrorism.
  - Accelerate EU assistance to Indonesia as well as other parts of South East Asia in other fields relevant to the fight against terrorism, including good governance, rule of law and border monitoring.

5. The Council notes with concern the terrorist threat to South East Asia. The European Union welcomes the strengthening of anti-terrorism co-operation within ASEAN since September 11, 2001. In this context, the EU urges the Indonesian authorities to co-operate with the countries of ASEAN in the fight against terrorism and to increase their security system. The EU continue to urge the ASEAN countries to develop further their co-operation in this area and emphasises the need to implement the series of activities agreed in the ASEM Copenhagen Co-operation Programme on Fighting International Terrorism of September 2002. This subject will also be high on the agenda of the coming EU-ASEAN Ministerial in the beginning of 2003."

The Council furthermore agreed that the High-Level Troika delegation should also visit Australia to discuss with the Australian authorities ways to reinforce cooperation in the fight against terrorism, both bilaterally and with Indonesia.

Finally, the Council asked its preparatory bodies to look at ways to improve the exchange of information among delegations on terrorist threats.

**IVORY COAST - Council declaration**

The Council was briefed by the Presidency and the French delegation on the latest developments in the Ivory Coast, in particular the truce signed between the government and the rebels on 17 October. It also took note of the Commission's intention to explore financial support to the mediation efforts through the Rapid Reaction Mechanism and the European Development Fund (EDF). The Council subsequently adopted the following declaration:

"The European Union reaffirms its condemnation of the violence perpetrated in Côte d'Ivoire against a legitimate government and deeply regrets the resulting loss of human life. It reiterates its attachment to the principles of the African Union condemning any recourse to force to obtain political change.

The European Union welcomes the signature of the cease-fire agreement between the rebels and the ECOWAS mediator. It commends President Laurent Gbagbo, who has given preference to a political solution, and assures him of its full support in continuing along this path until success is achieved. Lastly, it congratulates the ECOWAS mediators on their perseverance.

The European Union calls upon Ivorian authorities to take all the necessary measures to calm the situation so that negotiations can be held.

The European Union assures ECOWAS of its support and encourages it to use its best endeavours to facilitate the conclusion of negotiations in optimum conditions.

The European Union appeals for respect for human rights and for the physical safety of all citizens and residents of Côte d'Ivoire to be guaranteed. It emphasises the importance of a return to stability and socio-economic development in Côte d'Ivoire in the interests of the country and of the region as a whole. It urges the Ivorian Government to pursue resolutely the policy of national reconciliation.

The European Union would remind countries in the region of the need to prevent illegal movements of arms and ammunition and emphasises that it will support any initiative by neighbouring countries to enhance their cooperation and economic development on a regional basis."

**ESDP**

Over dinner, Ministers had an exchange of views on the state of play concerning EU-NATO relations.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

– ***International Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation (ICOC)***

The Netherlands minister recalled that the Launching Conference of the International Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation (ICOC) would take place in The Hague on 25-26 November and underlined the importance of a successful launch with the largest possible adherence to the Code of Conduct.

– ***North Korea - KEDO***

The Council briefly touched upon the issue of recent reports concerning the admission by North Korea of its development of a clandestine nuclear weapon programme, as well as the implications for KEDO (Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation) and the EU's participation in that scheme. It agreed to revert to the issue at its next session on the basis of more in-depth information.

– ***EU - Africa relations***

Over dinner, Ministers discussed EU - Africa relations, ahead of the EU-SADC Ministerial Meeting in Maputo (7-8 November 2002) and in the perspective of the Lisbon EU-Africa Summit (5 April 2003).

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**EVENTS IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL****– *Conference on the Northern Dimension***

The third Foreign Affairs Ministers Conference on the Northern Dimension was held on 21 October 2002. At this Conference participated the 15 European Union Member States, the European Commission and the 7 Partner Countries (Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and the Russian Federation). The Presidency conclusions are reflected in the separate Press Release No 13377/02 (*Presse 331*).

**– *Association Council with Israel***

The 3rd meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council was held on 21 October 2002.  
(See separate Press Release No 13329/02 (*Presse 329*))

## **ITEMS APPROVED WITHOUT DEBATE**

### **EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

#### **Belarus - Council declaration**

The Council adopted the following declaration on Belarus and its relations with OSCE:

- "1. At its meeting on 21 October 2002, the Council of the EU expressed serious concern about the situation of democracy and human rights in Belarus and adopted the following declaration:
2. Recalling the conclusions of the Council of 15 September 1997, the EU reiterates once again the hope that Belarus would take place among European democratic countries, not least since Belarus will become a direct neighbour after EU enlargement.
3. The EU emphasises the importance for all European States of respect for human rights and freedoms, as guaranteed in the UN Charter and embodied in the Helsinki Final Act. In Belarus, the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group (AMG) in Minsk has a vital role to play in assisting the Government of Belarus and civil society in promoting democratic institutions and in complying with other OSCE commitments as well as monitor and report on this process.
4. The EU has consistently supported the Portuguese Chair of OSCE in its efforts to solve the impasse regarding the AMG in Minsk. It believes that the Chair has already shown great flexibility in trying to find a solution to the problems that have arisen as a result of Belarus' treatment of the AMG. The EU cannot accept the Belarusian position that the AMG should be formally closed before negotiations on a new OSCE presence can begin. It supports the Chair's view that the AMG's 1997-mandate remains in force, in full, until there is consensus in the OSCE Permanent Council to amend or replace it."
5. The EU has noted the commitment made in September by FM Khvostov to enter into negotiations with a view to the continued operation of the AMG. The EU urges the Belarusian authorities to enter into immediate, meaningful and result-oriented negotiations. In addition, the EU requests the Government of Belarus immediately to extend the accreditation of the remaining member of the diplomatic staff of the Mission beyond 29 October 2002, or alternatively to extend accreditation to a replacement, with a view to avoiding disruption to the activities of the Mission.

6. If the Government of Belarus fails to indicate its agreement to this request by 29 October, this will seriously effect not only relations with the OSCE, but also the development of relations between Belarus and the EU. The EU remains deeply concerned at the lack of progress in democratic reform and the growing deterioration of individual freedoms and rights of expression in Belarus; should, in addition, the AMG be unable to continue its work, the EU will be obliged to review its relations with Belarus and envisage further specific measures. If, on the other hand, an adequate solution allowing for the effective and lasting operation of the AMG was found, the EU could take this as a new starting point for discussions on the improvement of its relations with Belarus.
7. The EU expresses readiness to continue to work closely with the Chair to ensure that the OSCE can contribute to the development of genuine democracy and full respect for human rights in Belarus, including through an active OSCE presence.
8. The Council of the EU will consider the evolution of the situation in Belarus at its meeting on 18/19 November 2002."

#### **Albania - Stabilisation and Association Agreement**

The Council authorised the Commission to negotiate a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Albania. (See also the Council conclusions on the Western Balkans on page 6).

#### **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) - Appointment of a new EU Special Representative**

The Council adopted a Joint Action concerning the appointment of a new Special Representative of the European Union in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Following the Council's decision of 30 September 2002, Mr Alexis Brouhns will replace Mr Alain Le Roy as the Special Representative of the European Union in Skopje from 1 November 2002. The EU Special Representative's role is to establish and maintain close contact with the government of FYROM and the parties involved in the political process and to offer the EU's advice and facilitation in the political process. (12734/02)

### **Transit traffic of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) through Austria**

The Council decided on the signing, on behalf of the Community, and provisional application of an Agreement between the European Community and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) concerning the system of ecopoints (Rights of Transit) to be applied to transit traffic of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) through Austria. The Agreement will apply on a provisional basis from 1 January 2002. (11919/02)

The EC and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had signed on 29 April 1997 an Agreement in the field of transport which entered into force on 28 November 1997. The latter provided for a subsequent agreement to be negotiated on the method of calculation and the detailed rules and procedures for the management and control of the ecopoints.

### **Small Arms / South East Europe**

The Council adopted a Decision implementing Joint Action 2002/589/CFSP with a view to a European Union contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons in South East Europe. Under this Joint Action, the EU envisages operating in a regional context to render assistance through international organisations, programmes and agencies as well as regional arrangements to countries requesting support for controlling or eliminating surplus weapons.

Under the implementing Decision, which includes a budget provision of EUR 200,000 the EU will contribute to the "South East Europe Regional Clearinghouse for Small Arms Reduction", located in Belgrade, which was established under the auspices of the UNDP and the Stability Pact for South East Europe. (13015/02)

### **EU Report on Human Rights**

The Council adopted the EU Annual Report on Human Rights for 2002 (covering the period from 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002). The aim of the document, the fourth of its kind, is to present a global view of the EU's human rights policy. It concentrates on the Union's external relations and on its international role, but also contains a section devoted to human rights in the EU itself. (12747/1/02)

### **Burma/Myanmar - Common Position and Council conclusions**

The Council adopted a Common Position amending its Common Position (96/635/CFSP) in order to take into account changes in the composition of the regime in Burma/Myanmar and extending it for another six months. The Common Position includes restrictive measures (visa ban, assets freeze) against a number of persons. (12890/02)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The European Union has long urged the restoration of democracy, the pursuit of national reconciliation and the protection of human rights in Burma/Myanmar. The European Union continues to follow closely developments in the country and the Council expressed its strong support for the efforts of Sri Razali, the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General.

The EU has welcomed the release of Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest in early May 2002. The EU has also noted the subsequent release of a number of political prisoners, and the relaxation of some constraints on political activities in the country. The Council is disappointed, however, that these promising first steps have not led to the start of a wider political process. The European Union noted with grave concern the reports of recent politically motivated detentions and arrests in Burma/Myanmar, including the detention of several students in August and, most recently, of 30 people in the last week of September. The European Union calls on the authorities of Burma/Myanmar to immediately cease the arrest and detention of people on political grounds. The Council believes that the political process can no longer be put off if the Burma/Myanmar authorities' stated ambition of national reconciliation, respect for human rights and transition to civilian rule is to be achieved. The lack of progress casts doubts on the sustainability of the current process and serve to increase the human costs suffered by the people of Burma/Myanmar.

Therefore, the Council stressed the necessity for the Government of Burma/Myanmar to engage, without further delay, in substantial dialogue with the opposition, leading to a peaceful political transition and national reconciliation. Such a dialogue should ultimately include all relevant political players, including the ethnic nationalities and lead to the re-establishment of a genuine and legitimate democratic government in Burma/Myanmar, which could benefit from full international support.

The Council expressed its serious concern about the continuing human rights violations in Burma/Myanmar and reiterated its full support for the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights, Paolo Sergio Pinheiro. The Council urged for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, with a special priority for the elderly and sick detainees. The Council also invited the authorities to pursue the co-operation with the ICRC with a view to improve the conditions in the country's prisons. The Council reiterated its call for the lifting of all restrictions on freedom of association and expression, including the freedom of the media. The Council expressed its serious concern about the disproportionate sufferings of ethnic minorities, women and children, and internally displaced persons also in the non-cease fire areas, from the ongoing and systematic violations of the civil, political, social, and cultural rights, including the use of rape.

The Council urged the authorities to permanently eradicate the practice of forced labour and encouraged the Government to actively work with the ILO Liaison Officer in this field.

The Council also urged the authorities to take vigorous action to combat the production and trafficking of drugs.

The Council expressed its grave concern about the humanitarian situation in Burma/Myanmar and urged the authorities to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches the most vulnerable part of the population. In particular the Council underlined the need to address urgently in collaboration with all interested parties, including the NLD, the HIV/AIDS epidemic given the exponential pace, with which this disease is spreading in Burma/Myanmar. In this context, the Commission is in the final stage of preparation of its Euro 5 million programme to assist in combating HIV/AIDS in the country. If the implementation of the programme is appropriately facilitated by Burmese authorities, the Commission and EU Member States will consider granting further assistance to the Burmese population.

The Council expressed its preoccupation with the rapidly deteriorating economic situation in the country, and the first indications of social unrest due primarily to a failure to meet the basic need of some populations groups. The Council encouraged the Burmese authorities to accept the invitation from the International Financial Institutions to initiate a substantive dialogue on macro economic reforms.

The Council also encouraged the early accession by Burma/Myanmar to the eight UN anti-terrorist conventions to which it is not a party, as well as the ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and the Palermo Convention on Transnational Organised Crime.

The Council decided to extend the EU's Common Position on Burma/Myanmar for a further six months and to keep the evolution of the political situation in the country under close scrutiny. The Council is prepared to continue to react proportionately to developments in Burma/Myanmar, either positive or negative."

### **Rwanda- Common Position**

In the light of developments since November 2001, the Council adopted a new Common Position on Rwanda and repealed its Common Position of 19 November 2001 (2001/799/CFSP). The aim is to encourage and support the Government of Rwanda in the process of recovery from genocide and the promotion of national reconciliation, in reconstruction, poverty reduction and development, in the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and in the process of transition to democracy. (13021/02)

### **Democratic Republic of Congo- Common Position**

The Council adopted a Common Position amending the arms embargo imposed on 7 April 1993 in order to allow for certain exemptions with a view to supporting the implementation of the Lusaka cease-fire agreement and the peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo. (12923/02)

**Mexico - Rules of origin**

The Council adopted a decision on a Community position within the EU-Mexico Joint Council relating to Annex III to Decision No 2/2000 of the EU-Mexico Joint Council of 23 March 2000, concerning the definition of the concept of "originating products" and methods of administrative cooperation. Annex III sets out the rules of origin for the products originating in the territory of the parties.

**Countries of Central and Eastern Europe / Cyprus / Malta - Information Society Services**

The Council adopted negotiating directives for agreements with the above countries establishing an exchange of information in the field of technical regulations and rules on information society services.

**Relations with Russia**

The Council adopted the position of the European Union for the seventh Co-operation Committee with Russia to be held in Brussels on 23 October 2002.

**European Economic Area**

The Council adopted the European Union's position for the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EEA Council to be held in Luxembourg on 22 October 2002.

*(See also Press Release EEE 1609/02 (Presse 330))*

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