



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESS RELEASE

3209th Council meeting

Foreign Affairs

Brussels, 10 December 2012

President

Catherine Ashton

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and
Security Policy

P R E S S

Main results of the Council

*Ministers debated recent developments in the **Middle East**. The Council stressed that now is the time to take bold steps towards peace and underlined the urgency of renewed, structured and substantial peace efforts in 2013. It expressed its deep dismay and strong opposition to Israeli plans to expand settlements in the West Bank, in particular plans to develop the E1 area. The E1 plan, if implemented, would seriously undermine the prospects of a negotiated resolution of the conflict. At the same time, the Council welcomed the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and Israel. Fully recognising Israel's legitimate security needs, it reiterated the EU's call for the immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from the Gaza Strip.*

*During a working lunch, ministers exchanged views with Moaz Al-Khatib, President of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces. The Council reiterated its full support for the efforts of Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi in finding a political solution to the crisis in **Syria**. The EU recalled that all those responsible for the crimes must be held accountable and that there should be no impunity for such violations and abuses.*

*The Council reaffirmed the EU's engagement with **Ukraine**, in the context of the Eastern Partnership, towards political association and economic integration. The Council reaffirmed its commitment to the signing of the Association Agreement as soon as the Ukrainian authorities demonstrate determined action and tangible progress in three areas, possibly by the time of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013.*

*The Council expressed its deep concern about the serious political and security crisis affecting **Mali**, in particular in the north of the country and its concern about the delays in the political transition process. In addition, the Council approved the crisis management concept for a CSDP operation to provide military training and advice to the Malian Armed Forces. The Council also welcomed the High Representative's proposal to appoint an EU Special Representative for the Sahel and invited her to take the process forward without delay.*

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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.
- 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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PARTICIPANTS

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

High Representative

Ms Catherine ASHTON

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Belgium:

Mr Didier REYNDERS

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, External Trade and European Affairs

Bulgaria:

Mr Nickolay MLADENOV

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Czech Republic:

Mr Karel SCHWARZENBERG

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Denmark:

Mr Villy SØVNDAL

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Germany:

Mr Guido WESTERWELLE

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

Estonia:

Mr Urmas PAET

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ireland:

Mr Eamon GILMORE

Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

Greece:

Mr Dimitrios AVRAMOPOULOS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr José Manuel GARCIA-MARGALLO

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

France:

Mr Laurent FABIUS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Italy:

Mr Giuliomaria TERZI DI SANT'AGATA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Cyprus:

Ms Erato KOZAKOU-MARCOULLIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Edgars RINKĒVIČS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Vytautas LEŠKEVIČIUS

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Hungary:

Mr János MARTONYI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Ms Marlene BONNICI

Permanent Representative

Netherlands:

Mr Frans TIMMERMANS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Austria:

Mr Michael SPINDELEGGER

Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister for European and International Affairs

Poland:

Mr Radosław SIKORSKI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr Paulo PORTAS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Romania:

Mr George CIAMBA

State Secretary

Slovenia:

Mr Karl Viktor ERJAVEC

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Miroslav LAJČÁK

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Sweden:

Mr Carl BILDT

Minister for Foreign Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr William HAGUE

First Secretary of State, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Mr David LIDINGTON

Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Commission:

Mr Štefan FÜLE

Member

Ms Kristalina GEORGIEVA

Member

The Government of the Acceding State was represented as follows:

Croatia:

Ms Vesna PUSIĆ

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

ITEMS DEBATED

Russia

Ministers exchanged views on EU relations with Russia, ahead of the 30th EU-Russia summit on 21 December in Brussels. The Council took note of preparations for the summit.

Middle East Peace Process

Ministers discussed recent developments in the Middle East, following the vote on the status of Palestine at the UN, the ceasefire in Gaza and recent decisions by the Israeli authorities on settlements and tax revenues of the Palestinian authority.

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. In light of recent developments and taking into account previous Council Conclusions, the European Union firmly believes that now is the time to take bold and concrete steps towards peace. The parties must engage in direct and substantial negotiations without pre-conditions in order to achieve a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ending all claims.
2. The European Union reaffirms its position that clear parameters outlining the basis for negotiations are key elements for a successful outcome. All parties must avoid acts which undermine confidence and the viability of a two-state solution. The European Union underlines the urgency of renewed, structured and substantial peace efforts in 2013 and, towards this end, it is ready to work with the US and other international partners, including within the Quartet. There will be no sustainable peace until the Palestinians' aspirations for statehood and sovereignty and those of Israelis for security are fulfilled through a comprehensive negotiated peace based on the two-state solution. The European Union recalls that the Arab Peace Initiative provides regional support for a comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. The European Union will work with those who are willing to join in such a quest for peace, stability and prosperity.
3. The European Union is deeply dismayed by and strongly opposes Israeli plans to expand settlements in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, and in particular plans to develop the E1 area. The E1 plan, if implemented, would seriously undermine the prospects of a negotiated resolution of the conflict by jeopardizing the possibility of a contiguous and viable Palestinian state and of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. It could also entail forced transfer of civilian population. In the light of its core objective of achieving the two-state solution, the EU will closely monitor the situation and its broader implications, and act accordingly. The European Union reiterates that settlements are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace.

4. Recalling its parameters for the resumption of negotiations between the parties, as set out in previous Council Conclusions, including in December 2009, December 2010 and May 2011, the European Union reiterates that it will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties. The European Union expresses its commitment to ensure that – in line with international law – all agreements between the State of Israel and the European Union must unequivocally and explicitly indicate their inapplicability to the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, namely the Golan Heights, the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Recalling its Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions adopted in May 2012, the European Union and its Member States reiterate their commitment to ensure continued, full and effective implementation of existing European Union legislation and bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products.
5. The European Union calls on Israel to avoid any step undermining the financial situation of the Palestinian Authority. Any such action by Israel would undermine existing cooperation mechanisms between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and thus negatively affect the prospects of negotiations. Contractual obligations, notably under the Paris Protocol, regarding full, timely, predictable and transparent transfer of tax and custom revenues have to be respected.
6. On 29 November, the UN General Assembly voted in favour of resolution A/RES/67/19 on the granting of non-member observer State status in the United Nations to Palestine. The European Union calls on the Palestinian leadership to use constructively this new status and not to undertake steps which would deepen the lack of trust and lead further away from a negotiated solution.
7. The European Union welcomes the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and Israel which followed several days of intense violence and commends the efforts of Egypt and all those who engaged in mediation. This tragic escalation of hostilities underlined very clearly the unsustainable nature of the status quo with regard to the situation in the Gaza Strip. Fully recognising Israel's legitimate security needs, the European Union reiterates its call for the immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from the Gaza Strip, the situation of which is unsustainable as long as it remains politically and economically separated from the West Bank. It is vital that all parts of the ceasefire agreement are implemented. The European Union is committed to facilitating the social and economic development of the Gaza Strip. Equally, the issue of illegal weapons' transfer into the Gaza Strip has to be effectively addressed as a matter of urgency. The European Union expresses its readiness to make use of its instruments in support of the parties' efforts, including the possible reactivation, in the appropriate way, of the EUBAM Rafah mission. The European Union underlines its readiness to explore further ways to address the situation in the Gaza Strip, including with concerned parties in the region, in line with UNSC Resolution 1860 (2009).

8. The European Union reiterates its call for intra-Palestinian reconciliation behind the strong leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas, in line with the principles set out in his speech of 4 May 2011, as an important element for the unity of a future Palestinian state and for reaching a two-state solution.
9. The European Union reiterates its fundamental commitment to the security of Israel, including with regard to vital threats in the region. The European Union will never stop opposing those who embrace and promote violence as a way to achieve political goals. The EU finds inflammatory statements by Hamas leaders that deny Israel's right to exist unacceptable. The European Union will never cease its efforts to combat terrorism which seeks to undermine the openness and tolerance of societies through indiscriminate acts of violence against civilians.
10. It is in the fundamental interest of the European Union to support peace and democracy in the entire region and a strategic priority to see an end to this conflict which will continue to undermine peace and security along the EU southern borders, as long as it remains unresolved."

Southern neighbourhood

– Egypt

The Council took stock of the latest developments in Egypt, ahead of the planned referendum on a draft constitution on 15 December.

– Libya

The Council debated the situation in Libya. It received an update about preparations for EU action to support border management in Libya.

– Syria

The Council debated the latest developments in Syria, ahead of the next meeting of the Friends of Syria group in Marrakesh on 12 December. During the working lunch, ministers exchanged views with Ahmed Moaz Al-Khatib, President of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces.

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Recalling its previous Council Conclusions, the EU is appalled by the increasingly deteriorating situation in Syria, primarily due to the unprecedented use of force by the regime. The EU condemns the recent attacks on an UNDOF convoy in which four peacekeepers have been wounded. It also condemns all attacks, including the recent terrorist acts, that indiscriminately targeted civilians. The current situation is unsustainable and does not allow for the adequate protection of civilians, in particular vulnerable groups and religious communities. The EU is seriously concerned about the potential use and transfer of chemical weapons in Syria and reminds the Syrian regime and other parties that, in case of their use, those responsible will be held accountable. The EU remains deeply concerned by the spill-over effects of the Syrian crisis in neighbouring countries. It remains committed to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria.
2. The EU reiterates its full support to the efforts of the Joint Special Representative of the UN and the League of Arab States, Lakhdar Brahimi in finding a political solution to the crisis based on the principles included in the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012. The EU takes note of the proposals made by Brahimi in his briefing to the UN Security Council on 29 November 2012. The EU continues to call on all members of the UN Security Council to uphold their responsibilities.
3. The Council welcomes the opportunity it had today to exchange views with Moaz Al-Khatib, President of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces which the EU accepts as legitimate representatives of the Syrian people. The EU welcomes the efforts made by the Coalition in its meeting in Cairo on 28 – 29 November to set up its structures and to become more operational and inclusive. The EU encourages the Coalition to continue working on these goals and to remain committed to the respect of the principles of human rights, inclusivity, democracy and engaging with all opposition groups and all sections of Syrian civil society. The EU encourages the Coalition to engage with the UN/LAS Special Representative and to put forward its programme for a political transition with a view to creating a credible alternative to the current regime. The EU stands ready to continue engaging with and to support the Coalition in these endeavours and its relations with the international community at large.
4. The EU looks forward to the meeting of the Group of Friends of the Syrian People on 12 December in Marrakesh to maintain international pressure on the Syrian regime and reaffirm its support to the Syrian people's aspirations for democracy.

5. The EU reiterates its call on all parties to the conflict to facilitate humanitarian access and aid delivery to the people in need, to ensure the neutrality of humanitarian aid and to abide by International Humanitarian Law. It also reiterates its demand for the specific protection provided to medical personnel and facilities. The EU urges all parties to guarantee the safe passage and protection of civilians, especially of women and children that have been displaced as a result of the violence. The EU supports the international humanitarian response under the leadership and coordination of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator. The EU continues to support affected populations inside Syria and in neighbouring countries. The EU is increasing its humanitarian assistance as the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate dramatically. The EU calls on all other donors to further enhance their response to urgent needs, focusing on lifesaving humanitarian operations and to enhance their efforts to meet urgent humanitarian needs through increased humanitarian contributions, in coordination with the UN and in line with humanitarian principles.

6. The EU welcomes the adoption by the 3rd Committee of the UNGA of the Resolution on the situation of human rights in Syria. The EU also denounces the recent limitations to the use of telecommunications and Internet in Syria and considers of primary importance that unhindered access to all media, including the Internet, is guaranteed.

The EU remains deeply concerned about the widespread and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law which, according to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes under the Rome Statute of International Criminal Court. The EU recalls that all those responsible for such crimes must be held accountable and that there should be no impunity for such violations and abuses. The EU has repeatedly stated that, if concerns about war crimes and crimes against humanity are not adequately addressed on a national level, the International Criminal Court should deal with the situation. The United Nations Security Council can refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court at any time. The EU calls on the United Nations Security Council to urgently address the situation in Syria in all aspects, including this issue.

7. The EU reiterates its support in strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations and stresses their importance for the building of the future democratic Syria.

The EU also acknowledges the importance of supporting local civilian structures throughout Syria.

8. The EU will continue working closely and comprehensively with international partners on planning to ensure the international community is ready to provide rapid support to Syria once transition takes place. As soon as a genuine democratic transition begins, the EU stands ready to develop a new and ambitious partnership with Syria across all areas of mutual interest."

Western Balkans

The Council took stock of recent developments in the region and discussed foreign policy aspects of the Commission's 2012 enlargement package regarding the Western Balkans. The High Representative briefed ministers on the latest developments in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FOREIGN AFFAIRS****Ukraine**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council reaffirms the EU's engagement with Ukraine, in the context of the Eastern Partnership, towards political association and economic integration based on the respect for common values, acknowledging the European aspirations of Ukraine and welcoming its European choice. The Council recalls the outcome of its debate in May 2012, stating that Ukraine's performance will determine the pace of engagement, and will be assessed on the basis of progress in three areas: the compliance of the 2012 parliamentary elections with international standards and follow-up actions, as well as Ukraine's progress in addressing the issue of selective justice and preventing its recurrence, and in implementing the reforms defined in the jointly agreed Association Agenda.
2. The Council notes with concern that the conduct of the 28 October parliamentary elections presented a mixed picture with several shortcomings and constituted a deterioration in several areas compared to standards previously achieved. Looking forward to the final report by the OSCE-ODIHR, the Council underlines the importance of fully implementing its recommendations and of addressing the observed shortcomings. The Council also expects the Government of Ukraine to implement in an inclusive dialogue with the opposition the public commitments made by the Prime Minister of Ukraine, including early steps to establish a reliable electoral system based on an Election Code and clear rules for balanced media access for electoral competitors. The Council will pay close attention to how the inconclusive results in the five single mandate electoral constituencies will be addressed.
3. The Council reiterates its strong concern regarding the politically motivated convictions of members of the former Government after trials which did not respect international standards as regards fair, transparent and independent legal process and regrets that, as a consequence, opposition leaders were prevented from standing in the parliamentary elections. The Council commends the efforts undertaken by the European Parliament's monitoring mission to Ukraine headed by former Presidents Cox and Kwaśniewski. The Council expects the authorities to address the cases of politically motivated convictions without delay as well as to take further steps to reform the judiciary to prevent any recurrence. In this context, the Council stresses the importance of a clearly expressed commitment by the Ukrainian authorities to an early implementation of all judgments of the European Court of Human Rights as well as the recommendations by the Council of Europe related to detention conditions and medical assistance to persons in detention.

4. Welcoming the entry into force of a new Criminal Procedure Code, the new legislation on the Bar, as well as the establishment of a National Preventive Mechanism against torture, the Council stresses the importance of their effective implementation. In the spirit of Ukraine's commitments within the Association Agenda, the Council expects Ukraine to take additional steps on judicial reform, including through a comprehensive review in close consultation with the Council of Europe/Venice Commission of the law on the functioning of the Prosecutor's Office, of the Criminal Code, of the role of the High Council of Justice, of the laws on the Judicial System and the Status of Judges as well as a reform of the Police. The Council welcomes the European Union's and Ukraine's intention to launch an informal dialogue with Ukraine on judicial reform to facilitate Ukraine's progress on these matters.
5. The Council recalls the importance of the jointly agreed Association Agenda in preparing for a possible future entry into force of the Association Agreement and its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Electoral, judiciary and constitutional reforms in line with international standards are integral parts of it and commonly agreed priorities. The Council looks forward to necessary reforms to prepare for establishing a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Sustained efforts are also required to take forward the fight against corruption and public finance management reform, including the broadening of the remit of the Accounting Chamber. The Council calls upon Ukraine to take determined action to improve the deteriorating business and investment climate, and in this context welcomes the European Union's and Ukraine's intention to launch an informal dialogue with Ukraine on business climate. The Council also stresses the importance of inclusive reforms through constructive engagement between Government, parliamentary opposition and civil society.
6. The Council invites the High Representative together with the Commission to monitor and keep the Council informed about progress achieved, including in the preparations of the upcoming EU-Ukraine Summit, the 2013 EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council and the November 2013 Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius. The Council reaffirms its commitment to the signing of the already initialled Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, as soon as the Ukrainian authorities demonstrate determined action and tangible progress in the three areas mentioned above, possibly by the time of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013. The signature could be accompanied by opening for provisional application of parts of the Agreement.

7. In the spirit of establishing a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, the European Union expects Ukraine to refrain from introducing protectionist measures, such as recycling fees on vehicles, which are potentially in breach of its WTO commitments. The European Union reiterates its request to Ukraine to withdraw the notification for renegotiations of its WTO commitments under Article XXVIII of the GATT as this initiative raises commercial concerns and poses a challenge to the integrity of the multilateral trading system.
8. The Council reconfirms its support to the process of modernisation of Ukraine and to the EU's continued work with Ukraine to this end, including through bilateral financial assistance and potential EU Macro-Financial Assistance and the facilitation of support from International Financial Institutions for the modernisation of the Ukrainian Gas Transmission System, in accordance with existing agreements, including the Energy Community Treaty.
9. The Council furthermore re-affirms its commitment to the shared objective of visa-free travel in due course provided that conditions for well-managed and secure mobility set out in the Action Plan on Visa Liberalization are in place and encourages Ukraine to increase efforts towards fulfilment of its first phase benchmarks. It looks forward to the early conclusion of the amended Visa Facilitation Agreement.
10. The EU looks forward to close cooperation and continued political dialogue with Ukraine at all levels, including as a future Chair-in-Office of the OSCE. It expects Ukraine to uphold and promote all existing OSCE commitments, provide leadership in implementing the decisions taken at the Dublin Ministerial, as well as to step up efforts of the OSCE to resolve conflicts."

Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU reiterates its Council conclusions of 19 November 2012, and remains gravely concerned about the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The withdrawal of the M23 from Goma, as called for by the Leaders of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), is just a first step in re-establishing stability and tackling the intolerable suffering inflicted upon the people in the eastern DRC. The EU condemns all human rights violations and calls for those responsible to be held accountable. The EU reiterates that external support to the M23 is unacceptable and calls on those concerned to cease any such support. It underlines that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC must be respected. It calls upon the Government of the DRC to promote effective efforts to establish security and the rule of law in the east.

2. The opening of a dialogue between the various parties to the conflict is an important step forward. Furthermore, the EU welcomes the high level contacts between Presidents Kabila of DRC, Kagame of Rwanda and Museveni of Uganda and the engagement of the ICGLR and the African Union (AU) to prevent a further deterioration of the crisis and to start work on a sustainable solution. It calls upon all states and organisations in the region to intensify their dialogue, to work constructively to implement agreements and to address impunity.
3. The EU welcomes UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 2076 and 2078, including the renewal of the arms embargo and of the sanctions against armed groups and the leadership of M23. It awaits the Security Council's conclusions on the reports of external support to the M23 and proposals from the UN Secretary-General on how MONUSCO can best implement its mandate. Close cooperation and complementarity between the AU, ICGLR, SADC (Southern African Development Community), UN and EU is essential. In this context, the EU welcomes the appointment of Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra as Special Representative of the AU for the Great Lakes Region and encourages the UN Secretary-General to appoint a Special Envoy. The EU stands ready to contribute actively to initiatives to find a sustainable solution to the crisis and in this context reiterates its willingness to support the ICGLR Extended Joint Verification Mechanism.
4. It is vital that all those in the region as well as the international community contribute to a lasting solution to the cyclical crises in the eastern DRC addressing the underlying causes of the conflict."

Mali

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU remains deeply concerned about the serious political and security crisis affecting Mali, in particular in the north of the country, marked by the emergence and consolidation of a safe haven for terrorists and organised crime that poses a grave threat to the Sahel region as well as West and North Africa and Europe.
2. The EU reiterates the need for a coherent and comprehensive approach to the crisis in Mali, in which Malian, regional and African ownership is essential. In this context, it supports enhanced international coordination in close cooperation with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Romano Prodi.

3. The EU is concerned by the delays in the political transition process. It calls on political leaders in Bamako to demonstrate their commitment to work for the benefit of all Malians through the rapid adoption and implementation of a credible and consensual roadmap for the restoration of constitutional and democratic order in Mali, including a return to civilian control of the Malian Armed Forces and the organisation of free and transparent elections as soon as possible. A credible framework for national dialogue is also essential in order to engage all Malians, including northern communities' representatives and armed groups not involved in terrorist activities, in a process of reconciliation and peace building that respects the territorial integrity of the country and the rule of law. The EU recalls its willingness to gradually resume its development cooperation once a credible roadmap has been adopted and in light of progress in its implementation.
4. In parallel to the political process, the EU supports the continued planning for an African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA). The EU awaits its authorisation by the UN Security Council (UNSC), building on UNSC Resolutions 2056 and 2071, as a response to the request from the Malian authorities, ECOWAS and the AU. The EU welcomes the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General, including those in relation to respect for international humanitarian law. The EU recalls the importance of adequate financial support for AFISMA from the states and organisations in the region, as well as from other key international partners and organisations. The EU reiterates its willingness to provide financial support through the mobilisation of the African Peace Facility.

In order to guarantee predictable and sustainable EU funding for African peacekeeping operations, including the mission in Mali, the Council invites the Commission to identify additional funds from the 10th EDF which could be mobilised.

5. In this context, the Council approved the Crisis Management Concept for a CSDP military mission to provide military training and advice to the Malian Armed Forces. It underlines the need to proceed swiftly with the planning process and to elaborate a Council Decision establishing the mission. It emphasises that this mission is an essential element in the EU's comprehensive approach as elaborated in the Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, and calls for continued coherence and synergies between the EU's instruments including other CSDP activities in the wider region. The Council notes that this military mission will take place upon invitation of the Malian government, following its request for assistance, and under the framework of UNSCR 2071 and in coordination with all other relevant UN activities.

6. The Council notes that the EU Training Mission in Mali aims to improve the functioning and operational effectiveness of the Malian Armed Forces, under civilian authority, and to contribute to their respect for the rule of law and international standards of conduct, including as regards international humanitarian law, protection of civilians, in particular women and children, and human rights. It further notes that European training efforts should be complemented by wider international support for the provision of equipment for the Malian Armed Forces. While underlining the need for close coordination with the Malian Armed Forces and ECOWAS/AU on the ground, the Council stresses that the training mission will not be involved in operational actions and that any further possible support to ECOWAS/AFISMA will be considered in a separate process."
7. The Council welcomes the High Representative's proposal to appoint an EU Special Representative for the Sahel and invites her to take the process forward without delay."

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council expressed deep concern about the DPRK's declared intent to launch a "working satellite", between 10 and 22 December. Regardless of its stated purpose, such a launch will have to use ballistic missile technology, representing another clear violation of the DPRK's international obligations as set out in particular under UN Security Council Resolutions 1695, 1718 and 1874, and directly contravening the international community's unified call not to conduct such launches.
2. The EU would consider such a launch a provocative act, jeopardizing diplomatic efforts in the pursuit of lasting peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and the broader region. It would merit a clear international response, in conjunction with UN Security Council deliberations, including possible restrictive measures.
3. Therefore the Council strongly urged the DPRK not to conduct the declared launch and to comply fully with its international obligations. The EU calls upon the DPRK to re-engage constructively with the international community on the nuclear issue in order to work towards lasting peace and security on the Korean peninsula."

Relations with Azerbaijan

The Council approved the EU position and provisional agenda for the 13th meeting of the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council, to take place on 17 December in Brussels.

Relations with Georgia

The Council approved the EU position and provisional agenda for the 13th meeting of the EU-Georgia Cooperation Council, to take place on 18 December in Brussels.

Relations with Armenia

The Council approved the EU position and provisional agenda for the 13th meeting of the EU-Armenia Cooperation Council, to take place on 17 December in Brussels.

Participation of Armenia in EU programmes

The Council adopted a decision on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, of a protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the Republic of Armenia, which will allow the participation of Armenia in EU programmes. It forwarded the draft decision on the conclusion of the protocol to the European Parliament for its consent.

Restrictive measures to combat terrorism

The Council reviewed the list of persons, groups and entities subject to EU restrictive measures with a view to combating terrorism, according to common position 2001/931/CFSP. No changes were made to the measures, which currently affect 11 persons and 25 groups and entities.

Iran - restrictive measures

The Council approved preparations for the annual review of EU restrictive measures against Iran.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY**EU training mission Mali**

The Council adopted the crisis management concept for a possible EU military training mission in Mali. For more information, see press release [17395/12](#).

Implementation plan for EUSEC RD Congo

The Council adopted the implementation plan for the EU advisory and assistance mission for security reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo (EUSEC RD Congo) for the period until 30 September 2013.

EUTM Somalia

The Council adopted a revised crisis management concept for the EU Training Mission in Somalia. The mission will be prolonged for two years. The operation is set to refocus its activities on political and strategic advice on security sector development as well as on mentoring, capacity building and advice in the training domain.
