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Foreign Affairs

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President **Federica Mogherini**
High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security
Policy

P R E S S

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CONTENTS¹**ITEMS DEBATED**

Arctic.....	3
Sahel.....	4
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.....	5
Middle East peace process	6
Visa liberalisation in the context of EU-Georgia relations	7
EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Council	8

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED*FOREIGN AFFAIRS*

– Economic partnership agreement with EAC countries.....	9
– Conclusions on Myanmar/Burma.....	9
– Conclusions on business and human rights	10
– Conclusions on child labour	10
– EU annual report on human rights and democracy in the world in 2015	10
– Lifting of sanctions against Liberia.....	10

ENLARGEMENT

– EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association Council.....	11
--------------------------------------------------------	----

DEVELOPMENT

– Food and nutrition security.....	11
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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.

ITEMS DEBATED

Arctic

The Council discussed the future integrated EU policy for the Arctic with a view to set out a coherent response to the environmental, economic and social challenges of the region, on the basis of the joint communication by the High Representative and the Commission issued in April 2016. An important objective of the EU is to contribute to enhancing socio-economic resilience in the Arctic region, which is home to 4 million inhabitants, while also enhancing environmental resilience.

The Council adopted [conclusions on the EU policy for the Arctic](#).

Sahel

The Council discussed the EU comprehensive approach to security and development in the Sahel region and adopted conclusions. The High Representative briefed the ministers on the second EU - G5 Sahel ministerial meeting that took place in Brussels on 17 June.

Ministers discussed how to strengthen the political dialogue and partnership further with G5 countries on security and migration. Ministers also underlined the importance of the full implementation of the Mali peace agreement, exactly one year after its signature.

The Council adopted [conclusions](#).

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Ministers discussed the ongoing political crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Ministers agreed on the need for the country's political leadership to engage in a dialogue to overcome the crisis and implement the 2015 Pržino agreement. The agreement, facilitated by the EU, saw the four main political parties committed themselves to create the conditions for credible elections, support the works of the special prosecutor and implement the urgent reform priorities, including in the field of rule of law.

Middle East peace process

Ministers had a discussion over lunch on the Middle East peace process following the international conference that took place in Paris on 3 June 2016.

The Council adopted conclusions on the Middle East peace process.

Visa liberalisation in the context of EU-Georgia relations

The Council discussed visa liberalisation in the context of EU-Georgia relations. Ministers recognised that Georgia had done an important work to fulfil the benchmarks necessary for being granted visa liberalisation, and that this work should be recognised as soon as possible. The rotating Presidency of the Council will continue the work to move forward in this regard.

EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Council

The seventh meeting of the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Council, chaired by Bert Koenders, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, provided the opportunity to review progress in EU-Montenegro relations and take stock of the accession process.

The Stabilisation and Association Council adopted a [joint communiqué](#)

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia

The Council extended until 27 July 2017 the mandate of the EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, the EU naval operation to disrupt the business model of human smugglers and traffickers in the Southern Central Mediterranean. The Council also reinforced the operation's mandate by adding two supporting tasks: training of the Libyan coastguards and navy and contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya.

The Council also adopted the revised operation plan and the rules of engagement authorisation for EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia.

See the [press release](#) for the details.

Economic partnership agreement with EAC countries

The Council approved the signature and provisional application of the economic partnership agreement between the EU and the East African Community (EAC) partner states, which comprises Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

See the [press release](#) for the details.

Conclusions on Myanmar/Burma

The Council conclusions welcome the peaceful transfer of power in the country and the consolidation of democracy following the credible elections that took place in November 2015 and note that the new government has an historic opportunity to consolidate democracy and to achieve peace, national reconciliation and prosperity. The European Union has a strategic interest in strengthening its relationship with Myanmar/Burma and that the joint communication "Elements for an EU strategy vis-à-vis Myanmar/Burma: a special partnership for democracy, peace and prosperity" lays out a plan for a coherent, ambitious and forward-looking EU engagement and intensified cooperation with the country in its transition process.

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini said: "Myanmar is at a turning point. With these Council conclusions, the EU reaffirms its strong commitment to accompany the country along its democratic path and to support reform efforts of the government."

Read the full text of the [conclusions](#).

Conclusions on business and human rights

The Council adopted conclusions on business and human rights on the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the UN guiding principles on business and human rights (UNGPs), the main comprehensive framework providing the international community with the tools to address human rights violations by business.

The Council reaffirmed the EU strong and active engagement to prevent abuses and ensure remedy worldwide, and to ensure the UNGPs' implementation.

Read the [full text of the conclusions](#).

Conclusions on child labour

The Council reaffirmed its strong commitment to ensuring every child is protected from child labour including its worst forms and stressed the importance of eradicating the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict including child soldiers.

Read the [full text of the conclusions](#).

EU annual report on human rights and democracy in the world in 2015

The Council approved the EU annual report on human rights and democracy in the world in 2015, which summarizes the various EU instruments, guidelines and country strategies available to defend and protect human rights in the world, and the challenges they face.

Read the [full text of the report](#).

Lifting of sanctions against Liberia

The Council repealed Common Position 2008/109/CFSP and Council Regulation No 234/2004, thereby lifting restrictive measures and an arms embargo imposed against Liberia.

In light of the recent developments in Liberia, as well as the lifting of UN sanctions through UN Security Council resolution 2288 (2016), the Council decided the revocation of its own restrictive measures against the country .

ENLARGEMENT

EU–Serbia Stabilisation and Association Council

The Council adopted the EU's common position in view of the third meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Council with Serbia, to take place in Brussels on 22 June 2016.

DEVELOPMENT

Food and nutrition security

The Council adopted conclusions food and nutrition security.

Read the [full text of the conclusions](#).
