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**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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## **PRESS RELEASE**

3082nd Council meeting

### **Foreign Affairs**

Luxembourg, 12 April 2011

President

**Catherine ASHTON**

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**

*The Council discussed the situation in **Côte d'Ivoire**, following the arrest of Laurent Gbagbo, and adopted conclusions welcoming President Ouattara's declaration that he intends to pursue a policy of reconciliation and reconstruction. In order to assist the relaunch of Côte d'Ivoire's economy, the Council has lifted the restrictive measures on the ports of Abidjan and San Pedro, the Ivorian Refining Company and the Coffee and Cocoa Trade Management Committee and will consider lifting further measures to reflect changing circumstances.*

*Ministers held an in-depth political discussion on the EU's **southern neighbourhood**, focusing on **Libya**, and including **Syria**, **Yemen** and **Bahrain**. The Council adopted conclusions on each of these four countries. It also reviewed the Libya sanctions, notably extending the EU asset freeze imposed on Libya to a number of entities, including entities in the oil and gas sector, and to some individuals.*

*The Council held an exchange of views on the **Middle East Peace Process** ahead of the international meeting of the *Ad hoc Liaison Committee*, to be hosted by the High Representative on 13 April in Brussels.*

*The Council adopted conclusions and restrictive measures on **Burma/Myanmar**.*

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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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**Commission:**

Mr Štefan FÜLE

Member

Mr Andris PIEBALGS

Member

## **ITEMS DEBATED**

### **Southern Neighbourhood**

Ministers held an in-depth political discussion over lunch on the EU's Southern Neighbourhood, focussing on the situation in Libya, and including Bahrain, Syria and Yemen.

#### **Libya**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council welcomed the efforts undertaken by the international community to ensure implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1970 and 1973 in Libya. Recalling the need for close cooperation between all international partners, the Council welcomed the conference on Libya which was held in London on 29 March and the establishment of the Libya Contact Group. The creation of this Group, together with the further steps outlined at the Conference, provides an important platform for coordination of the international community's efforts. The Council looked forward to the first meeting of the Contact Group in Doha on 13 April. The European Union is ready to intensify its efforts, in line with UNSCR 1973, to foster a political solution in close collaboration with the UN, the League of Arab States, the African Union and other relevant partners.
2. The Council called for an immediate and genuine ceasefire. The Council repeated its call on Colonel Kadhafi to relinquish power immediately. It once more condemned the Libyan regime's refusal to respect UNSCR 1970 and 1973. It reiterated its call to the Libyan regime for a halt to the violence against citizens and for full respect for human rights. The Council also called for full compliance with international humanitarian law and in particular the protection of civilians. In this regard it noted the importance of cooperation with the International Criminal Court and welcomed the decision of the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights of 25 March.
3. Those working within the regime face a choice: to continue to associate themselves with the brutal repression of the Libyan people by Colonel Kadhafi or work to support an orderly and Libyan-led transition to democracy through a broad-based dialogue in the interests of the security and prosperity of all the Libyan people. The unity and territorial integrity of Libya should be ensured. The Council took note of the interim Transitional National Council's "Vision of a democratic Libya", which it considered as a contribution to the transition process.

4. The Council expressed its deep concern regarding the serious humanitarian situation in Libya and on its borders. It noted the risk of a further deterioration caused by displacements and migratory flows resulting from the conflict. It recalled in particular the obligation to ensure unhindered access for humanitarian aid. The Council welcomed the role of the UN Secretary General in coordinating humanitarian assistance. The EU is also determined to continue actively contributing to humanitarian activities for the Libyan people and stands ready to step up efforts in this regard, in coordination with the UN and other relevant organisations.
5. The EU has decided that it shall, if requested by UN OCHA, conduct a CSDP operation, "EUFOR Libya", to support humanitarian assistance in the region, in full respect of the principles governing humanitarian action, particularly impartiality and neutrality. To this end, the EU has appointed an Operation Commander and designated an Operational Headquarters in Rome. The Council tasked the Operation Commander to pursue urgently further planning, in close cooperation and complementarity with the UN, NATO and others in order for the EU to be able to react quickly to developments as regards the humanitarian and security situation. As part of preparations, the EU stands ready to consider offers of contributions from third states including countries in the region, following PSC invitation.
6. Recalling the Conclusions of the European Council of 24 and 25 March and the Conclusions of the Justice and Home Affairs Council of 11 and 12 April, the EU and its Member States stand ready to demonstrate their concrete solidarity to Member States most directly concerned by migratory movements and provide the necessary support as the situation evolves.
7. The Council has adopted today further restrictive measures, including in the oil and gas sector, against the regime and will take additional measures as necessary in order to prevent further funding of the regime. In this context, the Council and Member States will continue to deprive the regime completely of all funding derived from exports of oil and gas.
8. The Council underlined the readiness of the EU to support Libya in the longer term, and to play a leading role in helping stabilisation, building a democratic constitutional state, developing the rule of law and supporting civil society."

The Council adopted legislation extending the EU's autonomous assets freeze to a number of entities, including entities in the oil and gas sector, and to some individuals.

It also removed one person from the EU lists of individuals subject to travel restrictions and an assets freeze.

The decision and the regulation adopted today will be published in the Official Journal on Thursday, 14 April 2011.



## Syria

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council is extremely concerned at the situation in Syria. It deplores the many deaths resulting from ongoing violence, strongly condemns the use of force by the security forces against peaceful demonstrators and urges the authorities to exercise restraint. The Council calls for the immediate release of those arrested in connection with the peaceful demonstrations. The Council calls on the Syrian authorities to investigate the deaths of protestors and to bring those responsible to account through a fair and transparent process.
2. The Council calls on the Syrian authorities to respond urgently to the legitimate demands of the Syrian people including through the lifting of the state of emergency. It underlines the importance of a clear and credible programme of political reform and that the announced intention for political reforms must be more ambitious and backed by a concrete timetable for their implementation. It takes note of the appointment of a new Prime Minister and looks forward to the formation of a new government that should urgently launch the necessary reforms.
3. The Council notes the announced formation of a number of committees to review legislation and expects them to produce substantive proposals towards an inclusive, open and representative government. The Syrian authorities must abide by their international commitments with regard to ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms including freedom of assembly, expression and media. The Council calls on the Syrian authorities to release without further delay all political prisoners and human rights defenders.
4. The Council will monitor events closely and stands ready to review its policies towards Syria as appropriate, including by supporting, once launched, a genuine process of reform."

## Yemen

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council reiterates its utmost concern at the deteriorating situation in Yemen. The Council strongly condemns the new wave of violence and repression against peaceful demonstrators and deeply deplores the further loss of life. It reiterates that protests must be dealt with peacefully.

The Council calls on the Yemeni authorities to abide by their responsibility to respect and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons, including their freedom of expression, to ensure their safety and prevent further bloodshed. The Council and Member States underline that they will keep the full range of their policies towards Yemen under continuous review in the light of developments.

The European Union calls for a full and independent investigation into all recent events which have resulted in loss of life and injuries. Those responsible must be held accountable and brought to justice.

The Council repeats its call on the government of Yemen and all parties to engage immediately in constructive, comprehensive and inclusive dialogue with the opposition parties and the youth. The EU stands ready to support this process. In this regard the Council welcomes the initiative of the GCC and fully recognises the role the GCC can play as a mediator. The Council urges President Saleh to take without delay concrete steps to enable a credible and peaceful political transition in Yemen."

**Bahrain**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council reiterates its serious concern at the situation in Bahrain, and the lack of any tangible progress towards dialogue which should address the legitimate concerns of all Bahraini people.

The Council is equally concerned at the arrest of those who exercise their legitimate right to freedom of expression. Persons who have been detained for peacefully expressing themselves should be released immediately. The Government and security forces have a clear duty to respect fully the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons, without discrimination, as well as upholding international standards in this regard. The Council encourages the authorities to further investigate all recent events which have resulted in loss of life and injuries.

The Council calls on all parties rapidly to take concrete and meaningful steps enabling the start of a constructive dialogue that will lead to real reforms."

## **Côte d'Ivoire**

The Council discussed the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and adopted the following conclusions:

"1. Following the arrest of Laurent Gbagbo, the EU welcomes the declaration of President Ouattara that he intends to pursue a policy of reconciliation and reconstruction in Côte d'Ivoire. It appeals to all parties to refrain immediately from any further acts of violence or intimidation. The EU stresses the need for full cooperation with the legitimate authorities in the swift re-establishment of law and order throughout the country. It is imperative to create as soon as possible conditions in which all citizens can, without fear or harassment, return to their homes and work, and resume a normal life in peace and security. The EU pledges its support for the creation of those conditions and for the restoration of social and political harmony. This is an historic opportunity.

2. The EU welcomes President Ouattara's commitment to achieving national reconciliation. It stands ready to support the work of the proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and encourages President Ouattara to form an inclusive, broad-based government representative of all the regions and all strands of political opinion in the country. The reconciliation process will lay the foundations of the country's recovery. To this end, the EU acknowledges the importance of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and the reform of the security sector. It urges the International Commission of Inquiry into human rights violations established by the UN Human Rights Council on 25 March 2011 to investigate the allegations of such violations as swiftly and thoroughly as possible. As the EU has said repeatedly on previous occasions, all those found responsible for such crimes must be held accountable for their acts. In this context, it welcomes President Ouattara's commitment to fight impunity and to support the work of the International Commission. Impunity cannot be allowed to undermine the re-establishment of public confidence in the government and the security forces.

3. The EU considers that the united stance of the International Community has been crucial in the resolution of this crisis. It recognises the unity of purpose demonstrated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the African Union (AU). The United Nations (UN) has also played a particularly crucial part. The EU welcomes the essential and continuing role of the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), assisted by the French force "Licorne", in protecting the civilian population in Côte d'Ivoire in line with its mandate and UN Security Council resolution 1975.

4. The EU affirms its willingness to support the rapid economic reconstruction of the country. In order to assist the re-launch of the economy of Côte d'Ivoire and in response to the public request of President Ouattara, the Council has decided to lift restrictive measures on the ports of Abidjan and San Pedro, the Ivorian Refining Company and the Coffee and Cocoa Trade Management Committee with immediate effect. In consultation with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, it will consider lifting further measures to reflect the changing circumstances. The EU is preparing a comprehensive recovery package, in consultation with President Ouattara's Government, using the full range of its instruments. It will resume its development assistance programmes in full as soon as possible and will examine the possibility of delivering some quick-disbursing assistance to meet immediate needs.

5. The EU remains seriously concerned at the humanitarian situation in the country and its impact on neighbouring countries, in particular Liberia. The EU will work closely with the UN and other international agencies to alleviate the suffering of those displaced by the conflict or in need of essential supplies where they live. In addition to the EUR 30 million already provided by the Commission and bilateral contributions of Member States, the EU is committed to providing further humanitarian assistance as required. It is essential to ensure a secure humanitarian space for the urgent and efficient delivery of humanitarian aid.

6. The EU deeply regrets the unnecessary loss of life and destruction of economic prosperity that has accompanied the current crisis. It is important not merely for Côte d'Ivoire but for the whole region that, with the restoration of accountable government, the country can re-establish its stability, peace and prosperity, so that shattered lives can be re-built, families be re-united and normal life be resumed. The EU will continue to work with all countries of the region to reduce poverty, stimulate growth and support accountable government and the respect of human rights."

On 8 April, the Council lifted the EU assets freeze on the ports of Abidjan and San Pedro, the Ivorian Refining Company and the Coffee and Cocoa Trade Management Committee. The decision and regulation are published in the Official Journal of the EU today.

Council Implementing Regulation (EU) No [348/2011](#) of 8 April 2011 implementing Regulation (EC) No 560/2005 imposing certain specific restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities in view of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Council Implementing Decision [2011/230/CFSP](#) of 8 April 2011 implementing Decision 2010/656/CFSP renewing the restrictive measures against Côte d'Ivoire

**MEPP**

The Council discussed the Middle East peace process, ahead of the forthcoming international meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC), to be hosted in Brussels by the High Representative on 13 April.

The High Representative informed the Council that it was not possible to arrange a Quartet meeting this week as more time was needed for consultations. She stressed that the Quartet remained fully committed to helping the parties move forward towards peace and that this effort was now more urgent than ever.

**Belarus**

The Council discussed the situation in Belarus and the situation of political prisoners. The Council will continue to evaluate the situation in the country and continue work on options for further measures.

The High Representative also informed ministers about her recent statement of condolences to the families of the victims of the Minsk metro explosion. This tragic event should not be used as an excuse for increased repression.

**European External Action Service**

The High Representative gave a short presentation on the European External Action Service. The Council will revert to this item at a forthcoming meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS****Kyrgyzstan**

Under other business, the Lithuanian minister raised the situation in Kyrgyzstan, pointing to ethnic tensions and the risk that a protracted conflict could develop.

**Afghanistan**

Under other business, the Swedish minister reported on his recent visit to Afghanistan and asked for a Council discussion on Afghanistan before the summer.

**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED****COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY****Burma/Myanmar**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council recalls the unwavering support of the EU for the people of Burma/Myanmar. The EU recognises the considerable development needs of the country and stresses the ongoing increase in the funding of assistance to improve their social and economic condition.
  
2. The Council also recalls the High Representative's statement on the elections in Burma/Myanmar, regretting that they were not free, fair or inclusive, and that many aspects of those elections were not compatible with internationally accepted standards. The Government, which has just taken up office, and the new institutional structures could create the potential for peaceful change and greater pluralism. The Government should now assume responsibility for a peaceful transition to democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this regard, the EU reiterates its call for the unconditional release of all those detained for their political convictions. The EU will pay particular attention to policies adopted by the new Government, for delivering basic social services to the people, developing the economy and reducing poverty. The Council calls for the launching of an inclusive dialogue with the political opposition inside the national Parliament and the regional Assemblies, and with stakeholders outside, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD, as well as with various ethnic groups.
  
3. In current circumstances, the EU deems it necessary to renew the restrictive measures for a period of twelve months. In doing so, however, the EU reiterates its willingness to encourage and respond to improvements in governance and progress, in the hope that a greater civilian character of the Government will help in developing much needed new policies. The application of the visa ban and asset freeze will be suspended for certain civilian members of the Government, including the Foreign Minister as an essential interlocutor, for a period of one year, subject to continued review. The ban on high level visits to the country will also be lifted, anticipating access to senior levels of the Government, and to key opposition figures. The EU will assess the new Government by its deeds, and will review the set of restrictive measures accordingly.

4. In deciding on this approach, the EU has listened carefully to a broad range of stakeholders, including civil society, opposition groups, ASEAN members and regional and international partners. The European Union reiterates its readiness to develop a high-level dialogue with the new institutions and with opposition figures across the spectrum, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The EU also stands ready to further strengthen its dialogue with ASEAN and other regional neighbours of Burma/Myanmar. In this context, the Council stressed the need to mobilise the high-level mission as soon as possible and expressed its strong support for the continuing work of EU Special Envoy, Mr. Piero Fassino, inviting the new authorities to cooperate with him. The EU continues to look at opportunities to reinforce its institutional presence in the country given the development needs in Burma/Myanmar.

5. The EU welcomes the adoption of resolution A/HRC/16/L.11 of the UN Human Rights Council, including its call for an end to impunity for violations of human rights with appropriate attention from the United Nations and urges the authorities of Burma/Myanmar to comply with it, in full cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Myanmar."

The Council adopted a decision renewing the EU's restrictive measures for a further year from 1 May 2011 to 30 April 2012.

In order to encourage future progress in civilian governance and to strengthen democracy and respect for human rights, the application of the restrictive measures will be suspended for a period of 12 months for new members of the Government with no affiliation to the military or who are essential for dialogue with the international community in order to pursue the interests of the European Union.

The suspension of high-level bilateral governmental visits to Burma/Myanmar should be waived until 30 April 2012 with a view to encouraging dialogue with relevant parties in Burma/Myanmar.

The decision will be published in the Official Journal of the EU on Thursday, 14 April 2011.



**Iran**

The Council followed up the political agreement reached at its March meeting by imposing autonomous EU restrictive measures (an asset freeze and a visa ban) on 32 individuals deemed responsible for serious human rights violations in Iran.

These measures form part of the EU's dual-track policy of sanctioning human rights violations and seeking engagement on human rights issues where possible.

The decision and the regulation will be published in the Official Journal on Thursday, 14 April 2011.

**Gulf Cooperation Council**

The Council adopted the EU position on the draft joint communiqué and the draft agenda for the EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting in Abu Dhabi, on 20 April 2011.

**Republic of Moldova - Participation in EU programmes**

The Council approved the conclusion of a protocol to the EU/Moldova Partnership and Cooperation Agreement on the framework conditions for the participation of this country in EU programmes ([10496/10](#)).

**Palestine - Euro-Mediterranean agreement**

The Council authorised the signing of an agreement with the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with a view to providing for further liberalisation of agricultural and fisheries products, as well as amending the EU/Palestine Liberation Organization interim association agreement on trade and cooperation for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip ([7767/11](#)).

The text of the agreement ([7769/11](#)) will be forwarded to the European Parliament for approval with a view to its future conclusion.

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