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Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg, 20 June 2011

President Catherine ASHTON
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and
Security Policy

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 8352 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

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Main results of the Council

*The Council discussed **Sudan**, the **European Neighbourhood Policy**, the **eastern and southern neighbourhood**, and the **Western Balkans**. It adopted conclusions on **Sudan**, the **European Neighbourhood Policy**, **Albania**, **Belarus**, **Syria**, **Libya** and **Yemen**.*

*The Council endorsed the comprehensive approach of the EU towards **Sudan** and **South Sudan**, ahead of South Sudan's declaration of independence on 9 July, and expressed its serious concern at the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Sudan.*

*The Council welcomed the **European Neighbourhood Policy Review**, presented by the High Representative and the European Commission which sets out the EU's response to the rapid changes in its neighbourhood, with support for deep and sustainable democracy and the strengthening of both the eastern and southern dimensions of the ENP. The Council welcomed the creation of the Task Force for the Southern Mediterranean and the HR's proposal for a Special Representative for the Southern Mediterranean Region.*

*The Council adopted conclusions on **Libya**, **Syria** and **Yemen**, calling on each of their governments to halt the violence against their citizens and begin the process of transition. The Council last week extended the EU's sanctions to six ports controlled by the Gaddafi regime and is preparing to extend its restrictive measures against Syria. It called for an orderly and inclusive transition in Yemen in line with the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative.*

*Over lunch, the High Representative briefed ministers on her weekend trip to the **Middle East** and led a discussion on the efforts to move the peace process forward. The Council examined the situation in **Albania** and called on political leaders to support the finalisation of the election process and step up reform efforts, with a focus on its European future, stressing the EU's continued commitment to Albania's European perspective and support for its efforts in that process.*

*The Council toughened its sanctions on the **Belarus** regime, in view of the continuing deterioration in the political and human rights situation, while signalling its continued commitment to the people of Belarus. It imposed an arms embargo and a ban on materials that could be used for repression, extended the visa ban and assets freeze to four more individuals and, for the first time, targeted certain business interests linked to the regime*

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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.

DEVELOPMENT

– Republic of Niger 29

PARTICIPANTS

High Representative

Ms Catherine ASHTON

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Belgium:

Mr Steven VANACKERE

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Institutional Reforms

Bulgaria:

Mr Nickolay MLADENOV

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Czech Republic:

Mr Karl SCHWARZENBERG

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Denmark:

Ms Lene ESPERSEN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Germany:

Mr Guido WESTERWELLE

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Estonia:

Mr Urmas PAET

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ireland:

Mr Eamonn GILMORE

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

Greece:

Mr Stavros LAMBRINIDIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr Juan Antonio YÁÑEZ-BARNUEVO

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Latin America

France:

Mr Alain JUPPÉ

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Italy:

Mr Franco FRATTINI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr Markos KYPRIANOU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Girts Valdis KRISTOVSKIS

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Audronius AŽUBALIS

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Hungary:

Mr János MARTONYI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Tonio BORG

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Uri ROSENTHAL

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Austria:

Mr Michael SPINDELEGGER

Federal Minister for European and International Affairs

Poland:

Mr Radosław SIKORSKI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr Antonio ALMEIDA RIBEIRO

Director General Foreign Policy

Romania:

Mr Bogdan AURESCU

State Secretary for European Affairs

Slovenia:

Mr Samuel ŽBOGAR

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Mikuláš DZURINDA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Alexander STUBB

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

.....

Commission:

Mr Štefan FÜLE

Member

ITEMS DEBATED**Sudan**

The Council discussed the situation in Sudan and adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. As the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) draws to an end, the Council views with deep concern recent developments in Sudan, especially in Southern Kordofan and Abyei. It urges the two Sudanese parties to reach agreement on outstanding CPA issues and post-CPA arrangements without further delay. That key issues such as citizenship, management of the oil sector and border arrangements are yet to be agreed remains particularly worrying. The Council is convinced that it is possible to find solutions that will meet the vital needs of both parties and lay the basis for two viable states living in peace with each other as good neighbours. It is important at this critical juncture that dialogue on all the outstanding issues takes place at the highest level. The Council welcomes and expresses its full support to ongoing efforts by the African Union (AU), under the auspices of the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) and in close cooperation with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles, to facilitate a cessation of hostilities in Southern Kordofan and political agreements on Southern Kordofan and Abyei. It urges the parties to continue making full use of the good offices of the African Union (AU) High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), under the leadership of President Mbeki, and stands ready to provide further assistance if required.
2. The Council is alarmed by recent violence and subsequent displacement of civilians in Southern Kordofan. It calls on all parties to stop hostilities immediately and for the resumption of negotiations on political and security arrangements for Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile after 9 July 2011 including Popular Consultations. Failure to do so will have a practical impact on the engagement of the international community in Sudan.
3. The Council also remains concerned about the situation in Abyei and deplores the military action taken by the Sudan Armed Forces. This action and the dissolution of the Joint Administration constitute serious violations of the CPA. The Council denounces all attacks against UNMIS, including that of 19 May by southern forces, which was a criminal act against a UN mission. The Council calls for the immediate withdrawal of the Sudan Armed Forces and all other military elements from Abyei and for security arrangements to be agreed that would allow the voluntary and safe return of those displaced from their homes. The Council supports the UN Security Council statement of 3 June and underlines that the future status of Abyei shall only be resolved by negotiations between parties in a manner consistent with the CPA and not by the unilateral actions of either party.

4. The Council condemns the fact that north-south roads have been blocked, causing food and fuel shortages in the South, and calls for immediate access to be restored through all routes.
5. The Council deplors the increasing violence in Darfur, especially the continued targeting of civilians, which has resulted in more than 70,000 displaced persons in 2011. The Council urges the Government of Sudan and the armed movements parties to cease hostilities. The Council hopes that the outcome of the recent All Darfur Stakeholders' Conference in Doha will provide the basis for reaching a comprehensive and inclusive peace settlement and a permanent ceasefire. The Council recalls the obligation of the Government of Sudan to cooperate with the International Criminal Court pursuant to UNSC Resolution 1593.
6. The Council urges all parties in Southern Kordofan, Abyei, Darfur and South Sudan to protect civilians and to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access to vulnerable populations. The EU commits to the continued provision of needs-based humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations throughout Sudan.
7. The Council recalls the obligation of all parties to respect international humanitarian and human rights law and underlines that those responsible for violations must be held accountable.
8. The Council agrees to follow a comprehensive EU approach to Sudan and, from 9 July 2011, to South Sudan. To this end, the EU will:
 - underpin the development and peaceful co-existence of two viable, stable and prosperous states;
 - continue to support efforts to reach a comprehensive and inclusive peace settlement for Darfur;
 - continue to support poverty reduction efforts by both governments;
 - assist the development of accountable, transparent and efficient government in both states based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law;
 - contribute to the effective co-ordination of international support, including through a state building strategy for South Sudan, at the strategic and operational level under the overall leadership of the UN.

9. The EU is committed to engage both Sudan and South Sudan in the promotion of democratic governance, respect for human rights and a peaceful and prosperous future for all Sudanese people. In this context, the EU will step up its political dialogue with Sudan and establish a regular and comprehensive political dialogue with the Government of South Sudan.
10. Ensuring stability in the north-south border areas will be of paramount importance for Sudan and South Sudan. The EU is ready to support stability in these areas using the Instrument for Stability.
11. The Council recognises the many challenges facing Sudan. EU Member States are actively examining possible support for an international debt relief effort for Sudan through the IMF, the World Bank and the Paris Club, consistent with tangible political progress in Sudan. The Council remains convinced that a constructive attitude by the Government of Sudan, as illustrated in the referendum process of January 2011, and the development of good neighbourly relations between Sudan and South Sudan would bring real benefits to the peoples of north and south. In this context, the Council reiterates its willingness to increase its engagement in Sudan.
12. The Council also recognises the complex challenges facing South Sudan and supports the Government of South Sudan in their efforts to achieve a peaceful and stable transition to independence. In coordination with the UN, and using all instruments at its disposal, the Council will urgently take forward consideration of ways to provide support to South Sudan's civilian capacity-building requirements in the field of security.
13. The EU has substantially increased its development assistance to meet South Sudan's needs. In consultation with the Government of South Sudan and in coordination with other international partners including the UN, the EU and its Member States will take forward the joint programming of development assistance in the following areas: justice/rule of law; education; health; water management; urban development and the rural economy. Furthermore, the EU commits to continued cooperation with South Sudan on trade matters, and to ensure duty-free and quota-free access to EU markets under "Everything But Arms", as soon as the conditions are met.
14. The Council looks forward to the strengthening and further development of the EU's relations with the Government and people of South Sudan, including the establishment of diplomatic relations. As an important first step in this regard, the Council agrees with High Representative Ashton's proposal to open an EU Delegation in Juba, as soon as the necessary conditions are fulfilled."

European Neighbourhood Policy review

The Council had a broad discussion on the EU's neighbourhood, in response to the European Neighbourhood Policy Review presented by the High Representative and the Commission on 23 May 2011, and adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Welcoming the publication of the Joint Communication on a new response to a changing Neighbourhood of 25 May 2011, the Council thanks the High Representative and the Commission for this response to its invitation of 26 July 2010 to initiate a reflection on the future implementation of the ENP. The Council also welcomes the consultations that were held in view of the Joint Communication.
2. The new approach of the EU will be based on mutual accountability and shared commitment to universal values of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. The partnership between the EU and each of its neighbours will reflect their needs, capacities and reform objectives. It will be based on joint ownership and differentiation. Such a partnership may lead those countries that are willing and able to move further to closer political association and progressive economic integration into the EU Internal Market. Action Plans and equivalent documents will be used more effectively by focusing on a limited number of priorities with a clearer sequencing of actions, incorporating clearer objectives and more precise benchmarks, and be pursued with closer political steering. This will help partners prioritising reforms and will allow better linking of policy objectives and assistance programming.
3. The Council agrees on the need to provide greater support to partners engaged in building deep and sustainable democracy, to support inclusive economic development and to strengthen both the Eastern and the Southern dimensions of the ENP, in particular in the areas of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It underlines that stronger political co-operation, closer economic integration and increased EU support, will depend on progress towards reforms. They will be tailored to the needs of partners willing to undertake reforms and to cooperate effectively with the EU in all relevant domains, and may be reconsidered where reform does not take place. These principles would equally apply to all ENP partners. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to design the appropriate mechanisms and instruments that will help deliver these objectives.

4. The Council welcomes the emphasis in the Joint Communication on a partnership with societies. It invites the High Representative and the Commission to put forward concrete proposals in support of civil society, including on a European Endowment for Democracy and a Civil Society Facility, to develop new means for the EU to support the development and functioning of deep and sustainable democracy in the neighbouring countries, in full coherence with existing instruments and structures.
5. Recognising the economic benefits of enhancing trade in goods and services, the potential for increased investment flows and the importance of progressive economic integration with the EU Internal Market, the Council supports the EU continuing to pursue such integration through the establishment of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) with ENP partners, as proposed in the Joint Communication, as soon as conditions are met. The launching of DCFTA negotiations requires WTO membership and thorough preparation based on key recommendations. The Council expects rapid progress in the ongoing DCFTA negotiations with Ukraine and notes the good progress made by some of the other Eastern partners towards implementing key recommendations. It welcomes the adoption today of the negotiating directives of DCFTA with the Republic of Moldova. As regards the Southern Mediterranean, the Council encourages initiatives aimed at enhancing trade and investment relations with partners engaged in democratic and economic reforms. To this end, the Council invites the Commission to submit recommendations for negotiating directives for DCFTAs with selected Southern Mediterranean partners. The Council agrees that in the context of ongoing or future negotiations, the EU will seek to improve market access opportunities including, where appropriate, by extending trade concessions, taking into account the particular circumstances of each partner country.
6. Well-managed mobility of people is crucial for mutual understanding, business links and economic growth both in the EU and in the partner countries. Recalling the European Council Declaration of 11 March 2011 and the Justice and Home Affairs Council Conclusions of 9 June 2011, the Council invites the Commission to pursue and intensify work with partners in this field on the basis of the Global Approach to Migration. The EU will prepare the launch of negotiations for Mobility Partnerships with Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, as a first group, as proposed by the Commission in its Communication of 25 May 2011. The EU will seek to fully utilise the potential of the EU Visa Code for bona fide travellers between the EU and all partners. In line with the JHA Council conclusions of 9 and 10 June, the EU will consider to launch, on a case by case basis, readmission and visa facilitation agreements with Southern partners and EU engagement will depend inter alia on effective cooperation against illegal migration including on readmission and border management.

Recalling its conclusions on the Eastern Partnership of 25 October 2010, the EU will seek to conclude negotiations for a Mobility Partnership with Armenia and will also seek to launch negotiations on visa facilitation agreements in parallel with readmission agreements with Belarus, for the benefit of the population at large, as well as with Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Council welcomes the entering into force of the visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Georgia. The Council welcomes the presentation of the progress reports on the implementation of the Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova Visa Liberalisation Action Plans, which could serve as useful models also for the other eastern partners bearing in mind the specificity and progress of each country, in line with the Prague declaration and subsequent Council Conclusions.

7. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to implement the proposals of the Communication regarding sector cooperation in close cooperation with other initiatives existing in the neighbourhood. The EU will also facilitate partner countries' participation in EU programmes and agencies.
8. Significantly increased financial support of up to EUR 1.242 billion to address the urgent needs and to respond to the new challenges and transformations underway in the Neighbourhood will be decided in accordance with the normal budgetary procedures and without prejudice notably to the Multiannual Financial Framework. The Council looks forward to the Commission proposal to the budgetary authority in that respect. Such resources shall be allocated taking fully into account partner countries' needs, their readiness to engage in reforms and their progress towards deep and sustainable democracy as defined in the Communication. The Council asks the Commission, in connection with the EIB, to consider how risk capital operations could be reinforced in the neighbourhood, taking into account sound budgetary management. The Council also underlines the need to reprioritise existing resources and reaffirms its support for the increase in lending from the EIB. The Council also reaffirms its support for the extension of the EBRD area of operations to those Southern partners engaged in democratic transition and appeals to other major donors and international financial institutions to contribute to this effort.

9. In the context of the enhanced approach to the ENP, the Council looks forward to the Commission proposal to establish under the next multi-annual financial framework a new European Neighbourhood Instrument which is based on a simplified programming, is increasingly policy driven and provides for increased differentiation on the basis of a "more for more" approach, including the flexibility to allow for greater targeting of resources in line with reform performance and needs and will reflect the new level of ambition of the policy. The new instrument will also support regional cooperation and Cross Border Cooperation at the EU external border and in this regard the Council also underlines the importance of flexible mechanisms for effective implementation. The Council will revert to these issues in the context of the discussions on the next multiannual financial framework.
10. The Council looks forward to the Eastern Partnership Summit in Warsaw on 29-30 September 2011 with the view to enhancing the relations between the EU and the Eastern partners. The Eastern Partnership seeks to accelerate political association and economic integration as laid out in the Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit of 7 May 2009, based on the shared principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. These values are adhered to by all the Member States of the European Union. The Council acknowledges the European aspirations and the European choice of some partners. The Council also invites the High Representative and the Commission to propose a roadmap to guide the further implementation of the Eastern Partnership, drawing on the results of the Summit and taking into account the further implementation of flagship initiatives and concrete projects, and including proposals on how to enhance regional cooperation.
11. The Council underlines the importance of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), which complements the bilateral relations between EU and partners in the South and should be enhanced to organise effective and result-oriented regional cooperation through concrete projects. The Council welcomes the nomination of Mr. Youssef Amrani as Secretary General of the UfM Secretariat. The Council reiterates its support to the UfM Secretariat that should operate as a catalyst to bring states, the EIB, International Financial Institutions and the private sector together around concrete projects of strategic importance and support job generation, innovation and growth throughout the region.

12. The ENP will have to live up to the new challenges in the Southern Neighbourhood. Transitions may be long and difficult, nonetheless the Council underlines the strong commitment of the EU and Member States to accompany and support concrete efforts by the governments genuinely engaged in political and economic reforms, as well as the civil societies. In this respect, the Council encourages the High Representative and the Commission to ensure that the ongoing implementation of the 8 March Communication on a Partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean, in line with the related European Council Conclusions, takes into account the new approach set out in the new response to a changing Neighbourhood. The Council welcomes the setting up of the Task Force for the Southern Mediterranean by the High Representative which will enhance the EU's efforts to foster coherent international support for the strengthening of democracy and inclusive economic development in the Mediterranean region. It also welcomes the High Representative's proposal for an EUSR for the Southern Mediterranean region and stresses that the EUSR should start working as soon as possible. The Council welcomes the Deauville Partnership and the G8 support to the countries in democratic transition.
13. The Council encourages the High Representative and the Commission to seize the opportunities provided by the Lisbon Treaty to enhance EU involvement in the resolution of the protracted conflicts, taking into account existing formats, and pursue joint efforts to enhance regional security in our neighbourhood, making joined-up use of Common Foreign and Security Policy and other EU instruments. It calls on Partner Countries to increase their efforts to resolve conflicts and to make best use of the EU's support.
14. The Council agrees that Member States should complement and reinforce EU support in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy with national support programmes, while ensuring close co-ordination. It also encourages the European Commission to intensify coordination with other donors and international finance institutions.
15. The Council looks forward to the implementation of the new response to a changing Neighbourhood and invites the High Representative and the Commission to report in 2012."

Western Balkans

The Council discussed the situation in the Western Balkans, looking ahead to the Western Balkans Forum held at the end of the afternoon with foreign ministers from the region.

The High Representative and ministers referred to some very important developments in the region recently, notably the arrest of Mladic in Serbia and his transfer to The Hague, the launch of the structured dialogue with Bosnia and Herzegovina and the start of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. They stressed that the countries of the region must build on the progress achieved and that there was still much to be done.

Albania

The Council discussed recent events in Albania and adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU has closely followed the 2011 municipal elections and notes that they were generally conducted in a transparent and competitive manner, albeit with procedural difficulties. However the situation in Tirana is a matter of concern. The EU deplores the deterioration of the political situation and increased tensions that followed the elections and conduct of the process.
2. The EU, while noting the decisions by the Electoral College, underlines that it is essential that the election process, including the appeals procedure and the declaration of the final results by the CEC, is completed transparently, independently and in full compliance with the existing legal framework. It is also essential for all parties to recognise the supremacy of the Rule of Law over any other interests. The EU calls on all political leaders to support finalisation of the election process calmly, constructively and with a focus on the European future of the country. The EU will closely follow the assessment of the process by the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission.
3. The EU urges the Government and the opposition, in collaboration with civil society, to agree on a thorough electoral reform, addressing all recommendations by OSCE-ODIHR in 2007, 2009 and 2011 before the next elections are called. The EU notes the intention of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to ask the Venice Commission for an opinion on how to avoid similar situations in future elections.
4. The EU calls on the Government and the opposition to urgently restore the political dialogue and overcome the long-standing political stalemate. Such a dialogue is indispensable for the normal functioning of any democratic society and its institutions, including the effective functioning of the Parliament, as well as for the advancement of the country's European integration. The EU urges the Albanian authorities to renew and strengthen efforts on the reform agenda and its implementation. These are essential in order to achieve the necessary degree of compliance with the Copenhagen criteria, including the twelve key priorities identified in the European Commission's 9 November 2010 Opinion on Albania's application for membership. Only upon fulfilling the above will Albania be able to move forward towards the EU, in line with Council conclusions of December 2010.
5. The EU remains committed to the European perspective of Albania and will continue to support the country's efforts in this process."

Eastern neighbourhood - Belarus

The Council discussed the situation in Belarus and adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Recalling its Conclusions of 31 January 2011, the statements by High Representative Ashton on the situation in Belarus of 18 February, 12 April and 14 and 26 May as well as the Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU of 18 March 2011, the EU expresses its deep concern at the deteriorating human rights, democracy and rule of law situation in Belarus.
2. The EU strongly condemns the detention, trials and sentencing on political grounds of representatives of civil society, the independent media and the political opposition, including former presidential candidates, Nyaklyayew, Rymashewski, Sannikaw, Statkevich and Uss in the aftermath of 19 December 2010 Presidential elections. The EU reiterates its calls for the immediate release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners. It underscores its deep concern at reports of torture and other forms of ill-treatment in Belarusian prisons, and urges the authorities to respect international commitments endorsed by Belarus, notably the absolute prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.
3. The EU deplores the continuing deterioration of media freedom in Belarus, including the lawsuits filed by the Ministry of Information to close two of Belarus' largest independent newspapers, *Nasha Niva* and *Narodnaya Volya*, the trial of the journalist Poczobut, and the cancelled licence of radiostation *Autoradio*. It calls on Belarus to end the ongoing politically motivated persecution and harassment of democratic forces, independent media, civil society and those defending them.
4. The Council urges Belarus to respect internationally recognised diplomatic immunities and privileges of EU diplomatic representations and their personnel in Minsk and to stop the ongoing harassment and intimidation.
5. The EU remains determined to address the human rights situation in Belarus, including in international fora such as the UN Human Rights Council and the OSCE. The Council welcomes the successful adoption of the resolution on the situation on human rights in Belarus at the 17th session of the UN Human Rights Council and calls on Belarus to implement it fully. The EU reiterates its regret at the lack of cooperation by Belarus in the framework of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism and notes with concern the findings of the OSCE Rapporteur's Report on Belarus regarding Belarus' fulfillment of its OSCE commitments in the human dimension.

6. In view of recent developments, the Council has decided to designate additional persons to travel restrictions and assets freeze. The Council has furthermore decided to impose an embargo on Belarus on arms and on materials that might be used for internal repression. It has also decided to freeze the assets of three companies linked to the regime.
7. The Council agrees that the extension of European Investment Bank operations to Belarus should only proceed if and when the EU is able to give a sufficiently positive assessment of the human rights and rule of law situation. The Council welcomes the outcome of the recent European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Country Strategy Update, which implies a recalibrating of EBRD assistance away from the Belarusian central authorities in favour of non-state and local actors implementing projects in areas which benefit the population at large. The Council expresses its hope for conditions to be re-established in Belarus that would allow the country to enjoy the full benefits of EIB and EBRD support.
8. The EU reiterates its strong commitment to strengthening its engagement with the Belarusian people and civil society. It welcomes that the EU assistance strategy towards Belarus has been revised in order to further strengthen support to civil society and that the EU's special assistance package is reaching full implementation speed, providing notably support to repressed individuals, NGOs, media and students. Donor coordination will continue, with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of aid to Belarusian civil society in the years ahead.
9. Recalling the importance it attaches to people to people contacts to the benefit of Belarusian population at large, the Council takes positive note of the ongoing work to fully use the existing flexibilities offered by the Visa Code, in particular the possibility for Member States to waive and reduce visa fees for certain categories of citizens. In the same spirit, the Council also welcomes the Commission's formal invitation to Belarus to start negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission agreements, on the basis of negotiation directives adopted by the Council on 28 February, and calls on the Belarusian authorities to engage constructively.
10. The EU will continue to closely monitor the situation in Belarus. The EU reiterates its commitment to the policy of critical engagement, including through dialogue and the Eastern Partnership, and recalls that the development of bilateral relations is conditional on progress towards respect by Belarus for the principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. At the same time, and in the light of further developments, the EU stands ready to consider further targeted measures in all areas of cooperation, as appropriate."

For the decision on further restrictive measures against the Belarus regime: see below under the "Other items approved section"

Southern neighbourhood

Syria

The Council had an in-depth discussion on recent developments in Syria and repercussions in neighbouring countries. It adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU condemns in the strongest terms the worsening violence in Syria. The EU deplors that the Syrian authorities have not responded to the calls to immediately stop the violence and engage in meaningful reforms. The EU considers that the ongoing violent repression in Syria constitutes a threat to internal and regional stability.
2. The EU regrets the loss of life, mostly of peaceful protestors, as stated in the Preliminary report of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in Syria. The Report contains allegations of human rights abuses, including torture. The EU expresses its condolences to the families of the victims and salutes the unwavering courage of the Syrian people. The EU calls on the Syrian authorities to immediately end violence. The EU calls on demonstrators to uphold the peaceful nature of protests. The EU also calls for an independent, effective and transparent investigation as requested by the UNSG to hold those responsible for the violence to account.
3. The EU notes with grave concern reports of army activities, notably in northern Syria and the city of Jisr al-Shughour, and of the thousands of people displaced due to the violence. It urges the Syrian authorities to allow immediate and unconditional access by humanitarian agencies to all affected areas. It also urges the Syrian authorities to cooperate fully with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, including by granting its mission access to Syria, as requested by the UN Human Rights Council on 29 April.
4. Stressing that the current crisis can only be settled through a political process, the EU reiterates its calls on the Syrian authorities to launch a credible, genuine and inclusive national dialogue and meaningful political reforms without delay. The EU emphasizes that for such a process to take place, the Syrian authorities must stop the violence, put an immediate end to arbitrary arrests and intimidations, release all those arrested in connection with protests, as well as other political prisoners who remain in detention despite the recent amnesty announced by President Al-Assad. Such a process is also the only way to provide stability for Syria in the long term, by initiating a peaceful transition to democracy, based on national unity and respectful of the rights of all citizens.

5. The EU is concerned that the lifting of the state of emergency on 21 April is not implemented on the ground and deplores the fact that the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression continue to be constantly violated. President Al-Assad's credibility and leadership depend on the implementation of the reforms he himself announced publicly without taking any step since then to fulfil his commitments.
6. The EU emphasises that the Syrian authorities must ensure that access by the Syrian people to basic goods and services is not interrupted.
7. The EU also urges the Syrian authorities to allow immediate and unhindered access to international human rights monitors, and to independent and international media. The Syrian people should not be deprived of access to free media, including the Internet.
8. The situation has affected neighbouring countries. The EU stands ready to assist in addressing the humanitarian situation. The EU acknowledges the efforts by Turkey and other regional partners on the different aspects of the crisis, in particular the humanitarian aspects, and will work with them to address the situation in Syria.
9. The EU continues its diplomatic efforts with partners from the international community to ensure that the UN Security Council assumes its responsibility in relation to the situation in Syria and its regional implications, condemns the ongoing violence and urges the Syrian authorities to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.
10. Until there is an end to unacceptable violence against the civilian population, and decisive progress towards fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, the EU will maintain its current policy.
11. In this respect, the EU is actively preparing to expand its restrictive measures by additional designations with a view to achieving a fundamental change of policy by the Syrian leadership without delay. The Council recalls that restrictive measures target individuals and entities responsible for, or associated with, the violent repression against the civilian population."

Libya

The Council discussed the situation in Libya and adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU is unwavering in its commitment to protecting Libyan civilians, including through the intensification of pressure on the Libyan regime. In this context, the EU notes the lifting of the Misrata siege by the TNC, the extension of the operation to enforce UNSC Resolutions (UNSCR) 1973 and the continuing defections from the Kadhafi regime. Time is not on Kadhafi's side. He has lost all legitimacy to remain in power. The EU endorses the call of the Contact Group that the time has come for a new chapter where Libyans can choose their own future. The EU strongly supports the work of the UN Special Envoy al-Khatib to initiate this new chapter.

2. The EU is firmly committed to the full implementation of UNSCRs 1970 and 1973. More than three months after their adoption, the Kadhafi regime remains in constant breach of its obligation to protect Libyan citizens. The EU is working closely with the UN Special Envoy for Libya as the focal point for the political transition process. It welcomes the Joint Chairs' Conclusions of the meeting of the International Contact Group held in Abu Dhabi on 9 June which demonstrated the continuing resolve of the international community to protect civilians from the Kadhafi regime. The Cairo meeting on 18 June underlined the resolve of the international organisations to work together under the leadership of the UN and reaffirmed their readiness to assist the Libyan people during the transitional period. Both the Abu Dhabi meeting and the Cairo meetings of the UN, LAS, OIC, AU and the EU demonstrate the unity of purpose and the strong commitment of the international community to achieve a cease-fire linked to, and followed by a genuine and inclusive political process based on a clear commitment to national reconciliation and unity of post-Kadhafi Libya. Kadhafi must relinquish power immediately and the cease-fire must be genuine, verifiable and include an unconditional cessation of the use of force against civilians, as well as the withdrawal and return to their barracks of military forces from besieged and occupied cities.

3. The EU condemns the violations of human rights and the breaches of international humanitarian law perpetrated by the regime on a daily basis. Evidence has already been collected by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court of Kadhafi's crimes. Additional evidence is being gathered by the International Commission of Inquiry on the human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law in Libya mandated by the UN Human Rights Council, which published its report on the 1st of June. There can be no impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The EU calls on the remaining followers of the Kadhafi regime to disassociate themselves from such crimes as well as from the regime.

4. The EU remains concerned about the humanitarian situation, particularly in Misrata and the Western mountains. Humanitarian organisations must be granted unhindered access throughout Libya without delay. The EU as a whole has already committed 136 million euro in humanitarian assistance and reiterates its commitment to deliver it to all Libyans and people in need in an impartial and non-discriminatory manner. If requested by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the EU will conduct a CSDP operation "EUFOR Libya" to support humanitarian assistance in the region.
5. The EU condemns the Kadhafi forces' violations of the international border of, and its attacks into, Tunisia. The EU acknowledges the disruptive impact of the Libyan crisis on all its neighbours. The EU will continue its co-operation with these neighbouring countries to help alleviate the humanitarian, social, economic and security challenges created by the Libyan crisis.
6. The EU has decided to step up its sanctions against the Kadhafi regime by adding six port authorities under the regime's control to the EU asset freeze list. In this way, the EU is taking further action against the military arsenal used by the regime against its own citizens. Humanitarian shipments will be exempt from this measure. The list of targeted persons and entities remains under constant review.
7. The EU welcomes the "Road to Democratic Libya" presented to the Contact Group by the Transitional National Council (TNC), which reinforces its commitment to the principles of inclusion and representation, as well as its importance as a key political interlocutor representing the aspirations of the Libyan people. The EU supports the TNC's vision for a new Libya, and recognises the important steps taken to improve its organization and accountability. It must also continue its commitment to address alleged violations of international law, including of human rights, committed in the areas under its control. The EU is ready to assist the TNC in developing its capacity to assume its responsibilities and uphold the rule of law throughout the areas under its control.
8. The EU acknowledges the urgent financial needs of the TNC in order to serve the Libyan people. It welcomes the announcement, at the Abu Dhabi meeting, that the Temporary Financial Mechanism (TFM) is now operational. The EU welcomes the specific contributions of France and Italy. The mobilisation of international resources, including, where possible, through the use of Libyan frozen funds in compliance with the provisions of the relevant UNSCRs, is key to support an inclusive transition process aiming at fostering national reconciliation and fulfilling the democratic aspirations of the Libyan people. Measures in this regard will respect the rule of law.

9. Working in coordination with the UN, the World Bank and other actors, notably regional organizations, the EU has started to mobilize its resources to support the political transition and will also do so on post-conflict reconstruction. The EU is committed to supporting the building of a democratic Libyan state, respectful of the international human rights standards, the rule of law and good governance principles. On the basis of Libya's needs and demands, the EU will explore ways, to combine all its actions to support the stability of the country, and the security and prosperity of its citizens as they strive to build a new sovereign and democratic state. The Council encourages the High Representative and the Commission to continue their work in this regard so as to be ready to act as the situation allows."

Yemen

The Council discussed the situation in Yemen adopted the following conclusions:

"The European Union continues to view events in Yemen with extreme concern, following weeks of violence and turmoil that have inflicted substantial suffering on the Yemeni people.

The European Union condemns recent attacks, including that of 3 June on the Presidential compound and urges all parties to cease all hostilities, respect international human rights standards and abide by a permanent ceasefire, throughout the country. The EU is closely monitoring developments. Violence cannot resolve the issues that confront Yemen. Those who stand in the way of peace must be held accountable and those responsible for violence against peaceful protesters must be brought to justice.

The EU supports Vice President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi's commitment to respect the ceasefire process, to demilitarize Yemen's cities and to ensure proper protection for any further peaceful protests and demonstrations. The EU also emphasizes the importance of proceeding with an orderly and inclusive political transition in Yemen in line with the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative, to respond to the legitimate interests of all Yemen's people. The EU calls on the Yemeni leadership to follow through on their commitment to this transition.

In this context the EU underlines its serious concern at the impact of the current political impasse on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, including the internal displacement of many thousands as a result of fighting.

The EU recalls its view that the authorities in Yemen must meet the challenge of restoring order in a manner which complies fully with international human rights standards. The EU welcomes the announced mission of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and encourages the Government of Yemen to ensure the free and unhindered access to the country that they have promised to grant the mission. The EU welcomes the cross regional statement on Yemen by the Human Rights Council and looks forward to a dialogue during its 18th session.

The EU remains ready, alongside other international partners, to provide assistance and necessary political support for the implementation of Yemen's transition."

Middle East peace process

Over lunch, the High Representative briefed ministers on her trip to the region during the weekend and led a discussion on the Middle East Peace Process, focusing on the efforts to convene a Quartet principals meeting and encourage the parties to return to the negotiating table. This is more urgent than ever, following the events of the Arab Spring and President Obama's speech,

The High Representative also reported on the meeting of the Cairo Group (UN, African Union, Arab League, Organisation of Islamic Conference and the EU) on Libya on 18 June, which she attended during her visit to the region.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FOREIGN AFFAIRS****Conflict prevention**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The aim of preserving peace, preventing conflicts from erupting into violence and strengthening international security is an important element of the external action of the European Union as laid down in the Lisbon Treaty. Violent conflicts cost lives, cause human rights abuses, displace people, disrupt livelihoods, set back economic development, exacerbate state fragility, weaken governance and undermine national and regional security. Preventing conflicts and relapses into conflict, in accordance with international law, is therefore a primary objective of the EU's external action, in which it could take a leading role acting in conjunction with its global, regional, national and local partners.
2. The EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts – the “Gothenburg Programme” – adopted by the Council 10 years ago – set out a series of actions to be undertaken by the European Union to prevent violent conflict, human suffering and social and economic dislocation. Informed by a period of reflection under the joint leadership of the European External Action Service and the Hungarian Presidency, the Gothenburg Programme remains a valid policy basis for further European Union action in the field of conflict prevention
3. Substantial progress has been made in implementing the Gothenburg Programme and there are a number of positive examples where preventive action was successful. Policies and priorities for preventive action have also been set through the European Security Strategy and its implementation report of 2008, the Commission Communication on conflict prevention, and the development of policies on dialogue and mediation, security sector reform, the security and development nexus and situations of fragility. EU instruments for long and short term prevention have been strengthened, notably through the development of civilian and military CSDP, including the rapid deployment and security sector reform pools, and the establishment of the Instrument for Stability. EUSRs have also played an important role in conflict prevention work. Partnerships with key actors, notably the UN, World Bank, OSCE, NATO, the AU, other regional organisations and individual countries such as the US have been strengthened. Early warning capabilities, notably through SITCEN, have been enhanced. Furthermore the Union has acted, often in conjunction with partners, in a substantial number of actual and potential conflicts in our neighbourhood and beyond.

4. The EU already has conflict prevention tools at its disposal. Successful use of these tools relies on strengthening and combining them more effectively. There is scope for reinvigoration of EU efforts to prevent violent conflicts and their recurrence. The Lisbon Treaty and the creation of the European External Action Service, with its enhanced and integrated resources provide the opportunity to give renewed impetus to preventive action by the EU. This will be done by forging comprehensive approaches to preventing conflicts, by better integrating conflict prevention and key cross cutting issues, particularly human rights, gender, protection of civilians, children and armed conflicts and responsibility to protect, in all areas of short and long term external action.
5. The Council considers that early warning needs to be further strengthened within the EU, by better integrating existing early warning capacities and outputs from all sources, including from Member States, and drawing more extensively upon field based information from EU Delegations and civil society actors, in order to provide a more solid foundation for conflict risk analysis. Enhancing early warning will also enable the EU to work more effectively with partners regarding responsibility to protect and the protection of human rights.
6. More emphasis also needs to be put on taking early action, to mitigate the risks of outbreak and recurrence of conflicts, for example through the effective utilization of conflict risk analysis. There is scope for the EU and its Member States to strengthen their capacity to design viable, operational, coherent and realistic options for preventive action. One form of early action is mediation: the EU will build on the “Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities” of 2009 and strengthen mediation capacities by providing support and training to mediators and their staff and increase their readiness. The Council welcomes the support of the European Parliament in this regard. The EU will continue to support local, regional, international partners, relevant non-governmental organisations and institutions for conflict prevention and resolution and the strengthening of peace efforts, as appropriate.
7. The Council also emphasises that mutually reinforcing, beneficial and sustainable partnerships with key partners such as the UN, OSCE, NATO, World Bank, African Union and other international actors and individual countries such as the US need to be further strengthened to enable the European Union to operate successfully in the field of long term structural conflict prevention to complement shorter term crisis management and peace support operations.
8. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to implement the lines of action as mentioned above in consultation with the Member States and decides to come back to the issue by the end of the year."

Belarus – restrictive measures

The Council decided to strengthen its restrictive measures against Belarus in view of the deteriorating human rights, democracy and rule-of-law situation there.

It imposed an arms embargo and an export ban on materials that might be used for internal repression.

The Council also decided to add further names to the list of individuals subject to the EU travel restrictions and assets freeze and to freeze the assets of three companies linked to the regime.

The Decision and the Regulation will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union on Tuesday, 21 June 2011.

EU/Republic of Moldova association agreement

The Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations with the Republic of Moldova for a free trade area as part of the association agreement.

Relations with Kazakhstan

The Council took note of preparations for the twelfth meeting of the EU/Kazakhstan cooperation council to take place in Brussels on 27 June.

United Nations General Assembly - EU priorities

The Council approved the EU's priorities, with regard to peace and security, environment, sustainable development and human rights, for the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly, which will start in September ([11298/11](#)).

The Treaty of Lisbon reaffirms the EU's commitment to the principles of the UN charter, calling for multilateral solutions to common problems and challenges. To contribute to the achievement of this objective, the EU will continue to strive to build a stronger multilateral system, notably by enhancing the representativeness, transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations. In this regard, the EU will actively engage in the reflection started in the General Assembly on the role of the UN in global governance.

DEVELOPMENT

Republic of Niger

The Council approved a letter confirming the full resumption of development cooperation with the Republic of Niger ([11266/11](#)).

For more information, see press release [11832/11](#).