



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 23 April 2012

9009/12

**COAFR 111
ACP 56
PESC 496
DEVGEN 95
COTER 33
COMAG 34
COHAFA 49
RELEX 352**

NOTE

From: General Secretariat

Dated: 23 April 2012

No. prev. doc.: 8768/12

Subject: Council Conclusions on Mali/Sahel

At its meeting on 23 April 2012, the Council adopted Council Conclusions set out in the Annex to this note.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

on

Mali/Sahel

1. The Council recalls its conclusions of 22-23 March 2012 on Sahel firmly condemning the seizure of power by force in Mali and calling for an immediate end to violence, the protection of civilians and the restoration of civil, constitutional government.
2. The Council stands firmly behind the efforts of ECOWAS and the countries of the region to restore constitutional order in Mali and supports the continued engagement of President Ouattara in his capacity as President of ECOWAS and President Compaoré as mediator. In this context, it welcomes the signature of a Framework Agreement on 6 April 2012 for the restoration of constitutional order and urges all Malian stakeholders to ensure its timely implementation.
3. As the first steps towards the restoration of legitimate civilian administration, the Council is encouraged by the inauguration of Dioncounda Traoré as interim President, the appointment of Cheick Modibo Diarra as interim Prime Minister and the release of detained Ministers. The Council expects the rule of law to be respected and that extra-judicial arrests will cease.

4. The EU will monitor closely progress in the transition process in Mali. It stands ready to provide support to the civilian-led transition, including an electoral process involving all the people of Mali, in close cooperation with ECOWAS, the African Union and other international partners. EU development cooperation currently on hold will be resumed in line with progress towards the full restoration of constitutional order. In the meantime, ongoing direct support to the population will continue as well as humanitarian aid.
5. The Council supports the commitment of the interim President, ECOWAS, the African Union, the United Nations and the international community to preserve the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Mali. It repeats its call for an immediate end to violence and to abuses of human rights in the north of the country. It urges all rebel groups to seek a peaceful solution through a political process that respects the territorial integrity of Mali.
6. The Council is deeply concerned by the growth of Al Qa'ida and close affiliates' presence in the north of Mali and the increased terrorist threat that it implies. It condemns all terrorist activities.

7. The Council is alarmed by the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Mali and the wider Sahel region due to serious food shortages. Exacerbated by insecurity and the lack of access for humanitarian aid, the situation of the civilian population in the north of the country gives rise to particular concern of the risk of a major humanitarian disaster. The Council is gravely concerned by reports that significant numbers of people are being forced to flee the north in circumstances involving frequent violations of human rights. It calls on all parties to fully respect international humanitarian law and human rights and to allow immediate, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian aid and international humanitarian workers. The Council commends neighbouring states for their ongoing assistance in compliance with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

8. Recent developments in Mali and the broader security, development and humanitarian challenges in the region confirm the importance of security sector reform and accelerated implementation of the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel including the deployment of the proposed civilian CSDP mission to Niger by July 2012.
