

Brussels, 14 May 2012

9877/12

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat
Dated:	14 May 2012
No. prev. doc.:	9587/12
Subject:	Council Conclusions on a renewed EU-Pacific Development Partnership

At its meeting on 14 May 2012, the Council adopted Council Conclusions set out in the Annex to this note.

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COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

on

a renewed EU-Pacific Development Partnership

1. The Council welcomes the Communication from the Commission and the High Representative "Towards a renewed EU-Pacific development partnership" as a key step forward in the process of renewing the EU strategy for engagement in the Pacific.
2. The Council highlights the need for the EU to enhance its profile in the region, including through regular visits to the area and meetings within the international fora. The 2006 EU Strategy for the Pacific¹ has advanced the EU relationship with the region and led to the establishment of regular regional political dialogues. The Council encourages the EU leadership to continue strengthening the political relationship with the Pacific through enhanced dialogue at country and regional level, including through strengthened cooperation on human rights, participatory democracy, good governance, sustainable development, climate as well as full respect for the principles of international law and the UN charter. The strengthening of EU cooperation in the region will be pursued in line with the objectives of the EU Agenda for Change.

¹ Council Conclusions of 17 July 2006 (doc. 11182/06).

3. The EU-Pacific cooperation on climate change has grown since the 2008 Joint EU-Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Declaration and the 2010 Joint Initiative. The Council welcomes the improved EU-Pacific coordination on climate change at the UN, which has led to a common approach for the Pacific Island States, the Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS) and Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). At the UNFCCC negotiation in Durban, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the AOSIS and the EU reiterated their desire for an ambitious outcome in a common statement. The EU will continue to work on strengthening its cooperation with LDCs and the AOSIS in support of adopting a single global and comprehensive legally-binding agreement applicable to all Parties by 2015 at the latest for it to come into effect and be implemented no later than the beginning of 2020.
4. Climate change is the single greatest threat to Pacific Islands and considerable adaptation finance is needed in the region. The Council welcomes that a substantial amount of additional EU climate change funding, managed by the Commission through the Global Climate Change Alliance, has been allocated to the Pacific on top of the regular 2008-2013 EDF allocations. Member States may engage in the Pacific with voluntary contributions including within an EU-wide initiative, pooling EU and Member States development and climate change funds, in line with the objectives of the EU Agenda for Change. The Council underlines the importance of increasing investment through an enhanced use of blending mechanisms and stresses that the overall framework for blending principles and guidelines still has to be determined.

5. Many Pacific countries are Small Islands Developing States sharing characteristics of vulnerability to natural hazards, limited resource base and undiversified economies. Development and climate change assistance are especially important for the Pacific, including in the fields of energy access, adaptation to climate change and low carbon development, but are also a challenge for EU aid effectiveness requiring tailor-made delivery methods, including budget support consistent with the future approach to EU budget support to Third Countries. Delegated cooperation, which shall be considered on a case by case basis and taking into account its added value and the visibility of EU support, with like-minded donors and joint programming at the country level under the leadership of partner countries wherever possible² will contribute to the reduction of aid fragmentation in the region.
6. The Council invites the EEAS and the Commission to continue their efforts to promote a more coherent EU policy mix in the Pacific, reiterating the EU commitment to further integrate human rights, democracy support, good governance, environmental sustainability and climate diplomacy in its external action in the Pacific.
7. The Council underlines the importance of the Pacific within the EU external action, as a result of the longstanding partnership established in the Cotonou Agreement, whilst recognizing the EU close links with the associated overseas countries and territories in the Pacific (French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna and Pitcairn), gathering more than 520,000 European citizens, whose successful integration in the region will enhance their role in promoting EU values and better contributing to inclusive development in the Pacific.

² Council Conclusions of 14 November 2011 (doc. 16773/11).

8. Recalling the specific importance of regional cooperation in the Pacific, the Council invites the EEAS and the Commission to continue supporting regional integration and the work of regional organisations coordinated by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat within the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific. The Council notes the important roles of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in addressing the socio-economic and environmental challenges as well as climate change in the region.
 9. The Council invites the EEAS and the Commission to implement the set of recommendations for action proposed in the Communication, in view of promoting effective delivery of aid, addressing regional challenges, in particular climate change and environmental threats, promoting green growth and supporting regional integration, and to report on progress. The Council invites the EEAS and the Commission, in collaboration with Pacific partners, to prepare a policy paper on the EU-Pacific relationship including on CFSP aspects.
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