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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

Security and defence

EU foreign ministers and defence ministers held a joint session on implementation of the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence. The Council adopted the following conclusions assessing progress in implementing the various lines of action agreed by the European Council of 15 December 2016:

Introduction

- "1. In accordance with the 15 December 2016 European Council Conclusions and guidance contained therein, the Council has reviewed progress in the implementation of its conclusions of 17 October and 14 November 2016. It welcomes the initial advances made, as set out below, in fulfilling through a comprehensive set of actions the EU's level of ambition derived from the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence. It calls for further work and guidance and agrees to revert to these matters in May, ahead of the June European Council.
2. The Council recalls that this should contribute to enhancing the Union's ability to act as a security provider and to enhance the Common Security and Defence Policy, as well as its global strategic role and its capacity to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible.
3. The Council welcomes the ongoing work on the implementation of the European Defence Action Plan by the Commission, in close cooperation with the Member States. It also welcomes the Commission's intention, included in its Communication dated 30 November 2016, to present further proposals in the first semester of 2017 for the establishment of a European Defence Fund including a window on the joint development of capabilities to be commonly agreed by the Member States, and a research window (whose first step is the launch of the Preparatory Action for defence-related research) to be examined under the next Multiannual Financial Framework. The Council recalls the invitation made by the European Council in December 2016 to the European Investment Bank to examine steps with a view to supporting investments in defence research and development activities.

The Council also reiterates, in line with its Conclusions of 14 November 2016, the need to enhance the effectiveness of CSDP and the development and maintenance of Member States' capabilities, supported by a more integrated, sustainable, innovative and competitive European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), which also contributes to jobs, growth and innovation across the EU and can enhance Europe's strategic autonomy, strengthening its ability to act with partners. The Council recalls that these efforts should be inclusive, with equal opportunities for defence industry in the EU, balanced and in full compliance with EU law.

4. The Council furthermore welcomes the swift action in follow-up to the Council conclusions of 6 December 2016 implementing all areas of the Joint Declaration signed in Warsaw by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In this regard, it calls for further work, in full respect of the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and the autonomy of the EU's decision-making processes, and to report back on progress in June 2017.

Improving CSDP crisis management structures

5. Today, the Council approves the Concept Note on the operational planning and conduct capabilities for CSDP missions and operations. Further to the December European Council Conclusions and in line with its Conclusions of November 2016, this Note contains measures to improve the EU's capacity to react in a faster, more effective and more seamless manner, building on existing structures and in view of enhancing civilian-military synergies, as part of the EU's Comprehensive Approach. On this basis, the Council agrees in particular:
 - To establish, as a short term objective, a Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) within the EU Military Staff in Brussels which will be responsible at the strategic level for the operational planning and conduct of non-executive military missions, working under the political control and strategic guidance of the Political and Security Committee. The newly created MPCC will work in parallel and in a coordinated way with the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC).
 - That the Director General of the EU Military Staff will be the Director of the MPCC and in that capacity will assume the functions of missions' commander for non-executive military missions, including the three EU Training Missions deployed in the Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia, in line with the agreed Terms of Reference.

- To invite the High Representative to propose consolidated terms of reference of the EU Military Staff, as well as to propose a Council Decision reflecting the above arrangements and amending the Council Decisions of the CSDP missions concerned.
- To bring together civilian and military expertise in key mission support areas within a Joint Support Coordination Cell at the Brussels level, in order to work on a daily basis to further strengthen and enable effective civilian/military coordination and cooperation in the operational planning and conduct of CSDP civilian and non-executive military missions. This would further contribute to the full implementation of the EU's Comprehensive Approach, while respecting the respective civilian and military chains of command and the distinct sources of financing.
- To review the establishment of the MPCC and the Joint Support Coordination Cell one year after becoming fully operational, but no later than by the end of 2018, based on a report by the High Representative. This review should be prepared in full consultation with the Member States and would not prejudge any political decisions to be taken.

The Council also agrees to proposals on strategic foresight and oversight contained in the Concept Note and requests the High Representative, in cooperation with the Commission as appropriate, to proceed with their implementation.

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)

6. To strengthen Europe's security and defence in today's challenging geopolitical environment, the Council agrees on the need to continue work on an inclusive Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) based on a modular approach. It should be open to all Member States who are willing to make the necessary binding commitments and meet the criteria, based on articles 42.6 and 46 and Protocol 10 of the Treaty. The Council recognises that PESCO could significantly contribute to fulfilling the EU's Level of Ambition including with a view to the most demanding missions and that it could facilitate the development of Member States' defence capabilities and strengthen European defence cooperation, while making full use of the Treaties. It notes that any capabilities developed through PESCO will remain owned and operated by Member States. It recalls that Member States have a single set of forces that they can use in other frameworks. Underlining the responsibility and competence of the Member States in the area of defence, it stresses that PESCO should help generate new collaborative efforts, cooperation and projects.
7. To this end, the Council invites the Member States, supported by the EEAS and the European Defence Agency (EDA), to continue working in order to further consider and develop:

- An agreement on a shared understanding of the common commitments, goals and criteria on the basis of the relevant provisions of the Treaty, as well as the governance model.
- The possible projects and initiatives that Member States are willing to pursue through PESCO including in a modular way and while making use of ongoing projects and making new commitments in the area of defence investment, with a view to tackling recognised shortfalls and addressing EU and Member States' priorities in the field of capabilities; improving the deployability and operational availability of their armed forces; and increasing their interoperability by pooling and sharing existing capabilities.

This work would feed into the preparation of the notification to the Council and the High Representative and of the Council Decision establishing PESCO.

8. While noting that they are standalone initiatives, the Council underlines the need to reflect on the possible links between PESCO and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). The Council recognises that more work is needed to explore the potential link to the Commission's proposals to establish a European Defence Fund, including on how PESCO projects and initiatives could benefit from its mechanisms, which will be subject to further decisions to be taken on the setting up and final structure of the fund.
9. The Council agrees to revert in May 2017 in order to provide further political guidance on the possible decision-making.

Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD)

10. The Council welcomes the work launched to develop the principles and scope of a Member States-driven CARD to deepen cooperation in defence, including by fostering capability development addressing shortfalls, and ensure more optimal use, including coherence, of defence spending plans. It stresses the importance to develop through CARD a more structured way to deliver the key capabilities needed in Europe, based on greater transparency, political visibility and commitment from Member States, while avoiding any unnecessary additional administrative effort by Member States and EU institutions. The Council stresses the need to ensure coherence between the CARD and the NATO Defence Planning Process where requirements overlap while recognising the different nature of the two organisations and their respective responsibilities. The Council stresses that CARD, as an overarching tool, needs to build on and make best use of existing processes and tools and should draw as much as possible on available information generated through them.

11. The Council highlights that CARD would be implemented on a voluntary basis and in full respect of Member States' prerogatives and commitments in defence, including, where it applies, in collective defence, and their defence planning processes, and taking into account external threats and security challenges across the EU.

The Council stresses the importance of bringing greater transparency and political visibility to the European capability landscape. In this regard, it underlines that CARD should provide an overarching assessment on capability-related issues contributing to political guidance by the Council. The Council therefore underlines that CARD should help Member States deliver on critical capabilities notably on the basis of the capability priorities agreed through the EU's Capability Development Plan. It should also provide Member States with a forum for coordinating and discussing their national defence planning – including in terms of defence spending plans, taking into account the commitments made by the European Council in December 2016 – in a more structured way that builds on the voluntary measures set out in the Policy Framework for Systematic and Long-Term Defence Cooperation. While noting that they are standalone initiatives, the work on CARD should be undertaken in coherence with the implementation of the European Defence Action Plan.

12. The Council welcomes the idea of regular and dedicated meetings of Defence Ministers', initially every two years, and more frequently if so decided. The EDA should play a key role in CARD to provide the overarching objective assessment and supporting analysis in the form of a written report to Defence Ministers, while making full use of existing tools and acting also as CARD secretariat.
13. The Council agrees to the parameters of CARD set out above and invites the High Representative/Head of the Agency, in close cooperation with Member States, to develop more detailed proposals on the scope, methods and content of CARD by June, notably in terms of interaction with Member States, with a view to preparing the establishment of CARD by the end of 2017. The first full CARD should be implemented based notably on the revised Capability Development Plan priorities as well as other existing processes and tools as of 2018.

Developing Civilian Capabilities

14. The Council underlines the importance of taking work forward swiftly on developing civilian capabilities. It agrees on the need to enhance responsiveness in order to ensure more effective, rapid and flexible deployment of civilian CSDP missions, which play an important role as a pillar of the EU's Comprehensive Approach. In this context, the Council notes ongoing discussions, including on a standing capacity, pre-configured specialised teams of experts and contingents of police and/or other professional categories, and revisiting the Civilian Response Team (CRT) mechanism. It requests the High Representative and, where relevant, the Commission, working together with Member States, to present concrete proposals to enhance responsiveness in view of their approval ahead of the June European Council. It also agrees on the need to further review the Feira priority areas of civilian CSDP missions. The Council underlines the importance of strengthened EU-UN synergies, compatibility and interoperability also in this field. It will revert to these issues in May.

Implementation in various other areas

15. As an important contribution to allow the EU to provide capacity building in an effective, responsible and seamless way, the Council looks forward to the swift finalisation of legislative work on the proposal to amend the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace. The Council recalls its Conclusions of November 2016 about the need to fully cover all requirements to further support partner countries in preventing and managing crises on their own, including those in the context of non-executive CSDP missions. In this context, it calls to continue the ongoing preparatory work to identify the needs in the area of Capacity Building in support of Security and Development (CBSD). The Council reiterates the flexible geographical scope of CBSD and calls to identify and develop new projects. The Council further recalls its proposal to work on a dedicated instrument for providing capacity building. The Council will revert to CBSD in May 2017.
16. The Council welcomes the first reflections and looks forward to further work on strengthening the relevance, usability and deployability of the EU's Rapid Response toolbox including the EU Battlegroups – particularly to reinforce their modularity, their preparation and their effective financing. As part of this, further consideration should be given to the particular modalities and common costs and other financial provisions for rapid response operations in general and the EU Battlegroups in particular.

The Council will revert to the issue in May based on consolidated proposals to be presented by the High Representative in close consultation with the Member States. Regarding their financial aspects, these proposals could contribute to the comprehensive review of the Athena mechanism foreseen by the end of 2017 and to be discussed in the relevant framework.

17. The Council reiterates the importance of working with its partners, in particular the UN, NATO, OSCE, African Union, League of Arab States and ASEAN, as well as strategic partners and other partner countries, within our neighbourhood and more globally, with due respect to the institutional framework and decision-making autonomy of the EU, and the principle of inclusiveness. In this regard, the Council recalls the need to take CSDP partnerships forward and invites the High Representative to present options before May 2017 for a more strategic approach to CSDP partners as set out in the November 2016 Council Conclusions.
18. The Council welcomes the review and organisational steps taken to promote an increased EU civil-military intelligence-based situational awareness to inform strategic foresight. It supports further steps to be taken in view of a future increase of staff, logistics and infrastructure, if deemed necessary, and will revert to the issue in June.
19. The Council, recalling the need for a timely implementation of the review of the Capability Development Plan by spring 2018, welcomes that the EDA is developing proposals on the improvement of the EU Capability Development process. In this regard, it also welcomes the ongoing work on the revision of the Requirements Catalogue. The work being taken forward by Member States within EDA on capability priorities, overarching R&T priorities and Key Strategic Activities will help to guide future investments and inform the implementation of the European Defence Action Plan. The Council further recalls the need for the expeditious implementation of actions taken forward within the EDA related to critical enablers and security of supply based on Member States' political commitments and programme/sector specific agreements."

Egypt

Over lunch, EU ministers discussed EU-Egypt relations with their Egyptian counter-part, Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry. Together, they addressed political developments, economic reforms, cooperation in various sectors, including counterterrorism and migration, as well as Egypt's role in the region, in particular in regard to Libya, Syria and the Middle East peace process.

Western Balkans

Ministers reconfirmed the **EU engagement** and focus on the region, including through political and economic links. The Council also stressed the need for partners in the region **to deliver on reforms** to ensure they make steady progress on the European path. In this context, **good regional cooperation** continues to be essential, as is the need to contain and avoid inflammatory rhetoric. Ministers also underlined the importance of reaching out to the populations of the region, in particular through public diplomacy, to better **communicate the benefits** of the European path has on offer: improvement in the rule of law, the transformation of societies and economic and social opportunities, in particular for the youth. Ministers also expressed the EU's readiness to continue helping the Western Balkans **address common challenges**, such as human trafficking, drugs smuggling, extreme radicalisation and terrorism. The Council's discussion will feed into the European Council meeting of 9-10 March, which is expected to discuss the situation in the region.

[Western Balkans \(EEAS website\)](#)

Migration

The Council briefly discussed the external aspects of migration ahead of the **European Council** meeting of 9-10 March. The High Representative presented the main elements of the progress made under the Partnership Framework approach and with the five priority countries, namely Mali, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria and Ethiopia, based on the third report on the Partnership Framework issued on 2 March 2017. The Maltese presidency touched on the ongoing work on the implementation of the Malta declaration, an undertaking that is being taken forward in close cooperation with the Commission and the High Representative.

Middle East Peace Process

The Council briefly discussed the Middle East peace process in light of the most recent developments, including the new US administration. EU ministers reaffirmed the EU's strong commitment to long-standing consolidated positions, not least on the two-state solution, on settlements and on Jerusalem, and its willingness to continue working to achieve a comprehensive peace deal, preserve the viability of the two-state solution and reverse ongoing negative trends on the ground. The Council took note of the preparations for an Association Council with Israel, which have started, while maintaining a corresponding political dialogue with the Palestinian side.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Council adopted the following conclusions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo:

- "1. The European Union remains seriously concerned by the political situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) caused by the blockage in the implementation of the inclusive political agreement of 31 December 2016, as well as by the security situation in several parts of the country, where the disproportionate use of force has been observed. The situation is aggravated by the economic and budgetary crisis severely affecting the population.

2. The EU welcomes the agreement of 31 December 2016 which is the only way to establish the necessary legitimacy for the institutions which should manage the transition, including the Presidency. Neither the death of opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, nor the security situation, should provide any excuse for calling into question this process which must lead to a democratic and peaceful transition of power. This agreement provides, inter alia, for maintaining the President in office, provided that a Prime Minister nominated by the opposition is appointed and that all the institutions continue on an interim basis until the end of the year. It also rules out maintaining the current President beyond that deadline. The EU underlines the urgency of the effective implementation of the agreement by all stakeholders, in particular the presidential majority, in order to lead to elections before the end of 2017 and thus to full constitutional legitimacy. The recent appointment of a new president of the governing council of the Rassemblement, who will also be the President of the National Council for the Monitoring of the Agreement (CNSA), is a first step in this direction.

3. In this context, the EU reiterates its full support for the mediation role played by the Catholic Bishops' Conference (CENCO), whose moral leadership, impartiality and legitimacy are indispensable for the success of the process and are recognised by all Congolese actors. It supports the recommendations in the message from CENCO's plenary assembly of 22 February 2017, and calls on the region and the international community to maintain their commitment to working alongside CENCO. The EU condemns the recent violence against churches and other CENCO institutions and stresses that those responsible will be held accountable.
4. It will only be possible to overcome the deep institutional, security and socio-economic crisis suffered by the country by fully implementing the agreement of 31 December 2016 and forming a government with sufficient legitimacy to lead the country to elections. Concrete progress is vital, in particular the urgent need to appoint the Prime Minister from the 'Rassemblement' coalition. There is also an urgent need to ensure implementation of measures to ease tension, such as the release of political prisoners, an immediate end to the abuse they are suffering, the end of intimidation and arbitrary arrests of opponents and activists, and the cessation of all politically motivated legal prosecutions. The EU notes that women's participation in the political dialogue has been limited and calls for their involvement in the implementation of the agreement to be facilitated.
5. The EU underlines the responsibility of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), and the crucial role which it must play, in the implementation of a credible and democratic electoral process. To this end, it reiterates its call for further measures on transparency and governance of the CENI, and for the urgent fixing of an electoral calendar and of a realistic and consensual budget so that the elections can be held before the end of 2017. The EU invites the National Assembly to adopt as quickly as possible the legislative measures required to hold the elections and to establish the CNSA which is called upon, in this context, to play an essential role in supervising the CENI. These elements, as well as the financial commitment of the future government, are conducive to promoting the trust that will allow the EU and the other partners to mobilise their support for the elections.
6. The UN Security Council will renew the mandate of MONUSCO in March. On that occasion, the priority will be to provide the mission with the resources needed to cope with the new political and security challenges in ensuring that measures to protect civilians are strengthened, and in providing relevant support for the electoral process.

7. The EU strongly condemns the serious human rights violations that have occurred recently in the DRC and stresses that the fight against impunity, whoever the perpetrators of those violations may be, is one of the conditions necessary for a peaceful transition and lasting stability in the country. Human rights and fundamental freedoms must be fully guaranteed by the authorities, in particular freedom of expression, including for the independent media, and freedom of association. The EU considers it essential in this respect that the work of the UN Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC (UNJHRO) should be able to take place without hindrance throughout the country.
8. The EU deplores the emergence of outbreaks of violence in all three Kasai provinces and in Kongo Central, which illustrates the potential for further deterioration of the situation which the country is facing. The EU is concerned, as are the members of the UN Security Council, at recent reports of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law committed by local militias in the Kasai region, including the recruitment and unlawful use of child soldiers and the killing of civilians by members of the DRC security forces, which could constitute war crimes under international law. The EU supports the UN Security Council's call, issued on 25 February 2017, for the government of the DRC to immediately launch a credible and impartial investigation into these events in order to bring those responsible to justice, and would also like an independent international investigative team to be invited to support the process.
9. The EU is deeply concerned at the deteriorating humanitarian situation in several regions of the country and wishes to emphasise the primacy of respect for humanitarian principles and the need to ensure access to the populations affected.
10. The situation in the East, in the Kivu provinces and in Tanganyika, also remains of concern, as do the reports of the former rebels of the M23 possibly taking up arms again. The EU recalls the responsibility of the Congolese authorities and urges the FARDC – with the support of MONUSCO – to make every effort to protect the population. As regards the M23, the EU recalls the commitments of the Nairobi declarations of December 2013 as well as the principles laid down in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region.

11. The EU reminds political leaders and members of the security forces that it is prepared to adopt new individual restrictive measures against those responsible for serious human rights violations or for incitement to violence and those who would obstruct a consensual and peaceful solution to the crisis, one that respects the aspiration of the people of the DRC to elect their representatives. The EU invites the High Representative to initiate work to this end.

12. The EU confirms its willingness to engage in a political dialogue at the highest level with the future government as soon as possible, in accordance with Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement. It stands ready to provide support, including financial support, for an election process which meets all the necessary conditions. The EU is also ready to continue supporting the Congolese people faced with serious socio-economic challenges on a daily basis and encourages the resumption of dialogue in a structured manner with the international financial institutions, in order to work out a lasting solution to the current economic and budgetary crisis."

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FOREIGN AFFAIRS****Strengthening synergies between EU climate and energy diplomacies**

The Council adopted the following conclusions on "Implementing the EU Global Strategy - strengthening synergies between EU climate and energy diplomacies and elements for priorities for 2017:

1. The Council recalls its conclusions of 20 July 2015 and 15 February 2016 which continue to guide the common work of the EU and its Member States on energy and climate diplomacies, the respective Action Plans on EU Energy Diplomacy and EU Climate Diplomacy, as well as the conclusions on the Global Strategy on the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) of 17 October 2016, which call for the implementation of joined-up actions in these fields, and the conclusions on Energy and Development of 28 November 2016, which stress the need for an EU strategic approach.
2. Recalling the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Energy Union Framework Strategy, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Council underlines that tackling climate change and supporting a climate-neutral and resilient future as well as promoting the global transition to low greenhouse gas emissions, climate resilient, competitive and sustainable economies and energy security are mutually reinforcing objectives and constitute integral parts of the EUGS.
3. The Council congratulates the United Nations and the Moroccan COP 22 Presidency for their significant efforts in making COP 22 a success and expresses its support to the upcoming Fiji COP23 Presidency. The Council reiterates the EU's and its Member States' commitment to the Paris Agreement as signalled by its ambition to turn climate goals into climate action, and stresses its continued support for sustaining this positive momentum in the UNFCCC processes and other international climate fora, including by maintaining the global ownership of the Paris Agreement. It emphasises the need for the EU to maintain its leadership in implementing the Paris Agreement and in the transition to low greenhouse gas emission and climate resilient economies. It also calls for Europe to become the world leader in renewable energy, including research, innovation and technologies.

4. In line with the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda and the Marrakech Action Proclamation which reaffirmed the world's determination to fight climate change and confirmed the irreversibility of the transition towards low greenhouse gas emission and climate resilient economies and societies, the Council also resolves to reinvigorate EU Climate Diplomacy and to maintain climate change as a strategic priority in diplomatic dialogues, taking into account the latest developments and changing geopolitical landscape. The Council invites the EU Green Diplomacy Network to update the current Climate Diplomacy Action Plan as soon as possible, with a view to implementing these Council conclusions during 2017/2018.
5. The Council resolves to strengthen synergies and joined-up actions where appropriate between the relevant elements of the EU and Member States' climate and energy diplomacies. This includes better utilising EU and Member States' financial and technical assistance instruments, and strengthening the links with other important policy areas, including economic diplomacy, sustainable development cooperation, nuclear safety, migration, water and food security, ocean and marine resources, disaster preparedness, research and innovation. EU Delegations in coordination with Member States' embassies have a key role to play in promoting more joined-up actions.
6. The Council underlines the importance of sustained and tailor-made partnerships with third countries, as well as with non-state actors, including local and regional authorities, civil society and the private sector, with the aim of supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Energy Union Strategy and to foster the linking of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with national development strategies, and their translation into actionable policies and measures in all sectors of the economy. The Council also highlights the positive economic impact of the transition to low greenhouse gas emission economies for EU and third country economic actors around the world as well as the importance of enhancing energy efficiency and renewable energy in order to ensure universal access to sustainable energy. In this context, the Council considers that climate and energy diplomacies' action in G20 countries – accounting for some 80% of global emissions – will be particularly important, while recognising the importance to continue to support and work together with developing countries in meeting their mitigation and adaptation needs.

7. The Council also encourages the active inclusion of EU climate and energy objectives in EU partnerships with the International Financial Institutions, Development Banks, and other financial institutions as well as within other multilateral organisations and fora, recognising the importance of all indigenous resources and safe and sustainable low greenhouse gas emission technologies in line with the Paris Agreement and the EU Energy Union Strategy.
8. The Council reaffirms the importance of energy diplomacy supporting the efforts to ensure sustainable, competitive, secure, safe, affordable energy in terms of diversification of sources, suppliers and routes, as well as universal access to sustainable energy, following the objectives of the Energy Union in line with its external dimension, and relations with third countries based on a level-playing field. In this respect, guidance through regular high-level engagement remains important. The Council also recognises how the clean energy transition fosters economic opportunities, energy security, climate security, prosperity as well as state and societal resilience, and reiterates the significance of intensifying engagement with non-state actors such as local authorities, businesses, NGOs, civil society, the security community and the scientific community. On nuclear safety the EU remains committed to the promotion and continuous improvement of the highest level of standards in third countries.
9. In particular, the Council stresses the urgency to focus on the potential destabilising effects of climate change and the development implications of energy poverty on resilience, security and migration, and to mainstream its work with all Sustainable Development Goals, in particular with goals 13 on Climate, 7 on Sustainable Energy, 16 on Peace, 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation and 2 on Food Security. From the G7 and G20 to the UN Security Council and other international fora, building on existing initiatives, the EU and the Member States should work towards a broader awareness, analysis and management of climate risks and support EU partners around the world to better understand, integrate, anticipate and manage the impacts of climate change on domestic stability, international security and the displacement of people.

10. The Council emphasises that EU climate and energy diplomacies must continue to encourage and back initiatives in vulnerable countries that are affected by the impacts of climate change as well as from lack of, or uneven access to, safe and sustainable energy. The EU and its Member States are providing financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building to assist developing countries with respect to ensuring that climate change adaptation and mitigation and increased access to sustainable energy are integrated at all relevant levels of development decision-making, in continuation of their existing commitments. The important contributions in terms of climate finance from various sources, including the Green Climate Fund, international financial institutions and multilateral development banks as well as private finance must in this respect be highlighted and maintained, taking into account the objective of the Paris Agreement of making finance flows consistent with low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilient development."

EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child

The Council adopted the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child (2017) – Leave No Child Behind, with which the EU reaffirms its commitment to fully protect and promote the rights of the child in its external human rights policy.

Read the guidelines: [6846/17](#)

Exports of military technology and equipment

The Council took note of the 18th annual report required by Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment. Transparency is paramount in the EU framework regulating arms exports.

Under this common position, the EU commits to publish an annual comprehensive report on arms exports authorised by its member states. The 18th annual report covers arms exports authorised in 2015. It also provides information on the activities of the EU Council Working Party on Conventional Arms Exports (COARM) in 2015 and 2016, and notably on outreach and co-operation activities with third countries.

Common military list of the European Union

The Council adopted the updated common military list of the EU in line with the provisions of Common Position 2008/944/CFSP on arms exports. The update was carried out following changes agreed in 2016 under the relevant international export control arrangement. The list lays down the scope of reference for member states' arms export control systems and covers the full range of military items that must be licensed by national authorities before being possibly exported.

The Council adopted the first common military list of the European Union on 13 June 2000. The list is regularly reviewed, taking into account, where appropriate, similar national and international lists. The list is a reference point for member states' national military technology and equipment lists, without, however, replacing them.

EU-Algeria partnership priorities

The Council agreed on the EU-Algeria partnership priorities to be adopted at the EU-Algeria Council, which will take place on 13 March 2017.

EU-Algeria Association Council

The Council adopted the EU position for the Association Council with Algeria, which will take place on 13 March 2017.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Operational planning and conduct capabilities for CSDP missions and operations

As part of the EU's comprehensive approach, the Council approved a concept note on the operational planning and conduct capabilities for CSDP missions and operations, which sets out measures to improve the EU's capacity to react in a more rapid, effective and coordinated manner. Furthermore, the aim is to build on existing structures and to enhance civilian-military synergies.

These measures include the establishment of a military planning and conduct capability (MPCC) within the existing EU Military Staff of the European External Action Service, for the planning and conduct of non-executive military missions. The Director-General of the EU Military Staff will be the Director of the MPCC and in that capacity will assume command of non-executive military CSDP missions (currently the EU military training missions in Somalia, Central Africa and Mali). This will allow the mission commanders in the field to concentrate on the specific activities of their mission, with better support from Brussels.

The MPCC will work under the political control and strategic guidance of the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which is composed of EU member states' ambassadors and is based in Brussels. The MPCC will work closely with its existing civilian counterpart, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) through a joint support coordination cell. This cell will be able to share expertise, knowledge and best practices on issues relevant to both military and civilian missions, as well as capabilities when civilian and military missions are simultaneously deployed in the same area, including medical support or protective measures.

Read the concept note: [6881/17](#)
