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Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg, 23 June 2014

President

Catherine Ashton

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and
Security Policy

P R E S S

Main results of the Council

Ukraine

The Council exchanged views with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin on President Poroshenko's peace plan for Ukraine. It supported the plan as a major chance for de-escalation and called on all sides to honour a ceasefire and create the conditions needed to implement the plan.

The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, said: "We called in particular of course on Russia to support the plan and use its influence to ensure its implementation. We want to see the spiral of violence ending and we called on all sides to do their maximum to protect civilians and to let humanitarian organisations do their job."

The Council also agreed to establish a Common Security and Defence Policy mission to assist Ukraine in the field of civilian security sector reform, including the police and the rule of law. In that regard, the Council approved a related crisis management concept so that operational planning can be pursued with a view to an early deployment in the summer.

In addition, the Council completed the preparatory work for the full signature of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. As part of the EU's non-recognition policy vis-à-vis the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, the Council also prohibited the import of goods from Crimea and Sevastopol if they do not have Ukrainian certificates.

Iraq

Ministers debated the latest developments in Iraq, in the presence of Nikolay Mladenov, UN Special Representative for Iraq. The Council expressed its deep concern about the rapidly deteriorating security situation, strongly condemning the attacks perpetrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. The Council reiterated the EU's support to the Iraqi authorities in the fight against terrorism, emphasising that the security response needs to be combined with a sustainable political solution involving all Iraqi leaders and communities. In response to the unfolding humanitarian crisis, the Commission brought total EU humanitarian funding for 2014 to € 12 million.

Egypt

Ministers also discussed the sentences pronounced that day against journalists in Egypt. The High Representative said: "Ministers around the table were extremely concerned about the sentences pronounced this morning against the Al Jazeera journalists, and those pronounced in absentia against a number of European journalists. We've also expressed great concern about the death sentences against more than 180 people in Minya and the recent decision by the court to start the process of imposing death sentences against 14 leading figures from the Islamist movement."

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ITEMS DEBATED

Ukraine

After an exchange of views with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Klimkin, the Council held an in-depth debate on the latest events in Ukraine. It adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The European Union welcomes Petro Poroshenko as new President of Ukraine. It supports the peace plan as a major chance for de-escalation and commends the President's determined actions towards peace and stability in Ukraine since his inauguration, against the backdrop of increased violent activities by pro-Russia separatists in Eastern Ukraine and the daily loss of lives, in particular the recent downing of a Ukrainian military aircraft killing 49 persons near Luhansk. This is occurring despite the encouraging talks held with the participation of representatives of the Russian Federation and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, upon President Poroshenko's initiative, as well as direct high-level contacts between Ukrainian and Russian authorities. It is now all the more important that they bring rapid and tangible results.

The EU calls on all sides to agree and honour a ceasefire immediately in order to stabilise the security situation, achieve a genuine de-escalation and create the necessary conditions for President Poroshenko's peace plan to be implemented. In this regard, the EU calls on the Russian Federation to support the peace plan and to adopt effective measures to stop the continued flow of illegal fighters, arms and equipment over the border into Ukraine, to use its influence on the separatists to stop the violence and lay down their arms, to continue withdrawing and refrain from gathering troops again near the Ukrainian border and to cancel the mandate of the Federation Council to use force on Ukrainian soil. The Council also urges the Russian Federation to use its influence to ensure immediate release of the OSCE monitors and other kidnapped persons held hostage by the armed separatists.

2. The Council recalls that the Commission, EEAS and the Member States have been undertaking preparatory work on possible targeted measures, as requested by the European Council in March, so that further steps can be taken should events in Eastern Ukraine so require.
3. The Council recalls its strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and will not recognize it. The Council welcomes the work carried out on the implementation of the legal consequences of the illegal annexation of Crimea. The Council decided to prohibit the import into the European Union of goods originating from Crimea or Sevastopol with the exception of those having been granted a certificate of origin by the Government of Ukraine or to provide, directly or indirectly, financing or financial assistance, as well as insurance and reinsurance, related to the import of such goods. The Council calls on the EEAS and the Commission to continue to monitor the situation, and to present further measures, as necessary. The Council calls on UN member states to consider similar measures in line with UNGA Resolution 68/262.

4. The European Union is also concerned about the rapidly deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea, as highlighted by the latest report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in particular cases of torture, killings and disappearances of journalists and activists. The European Union commends the Ukrainian authorities for the ongoing inquiries which we expect will shed light on the responsibility for such acts. The Council calls on all sides engaged to do their utmost to protect civilians and, as part of this, to let humanitarian organisations – particularly medical staff – perform their roles, guided by the principles of neutrality, impartiality and non-discrimination.
5. The EU encourages the Ukrainian authorities to continue their reform efforts, including as regards constitutional and decentralisation reforms, the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, the reform of the judiciary, fight against corruption and improving the business climate. These efforts should be brought forward through an inclusive national dialogue. The Council welcomes the continued strong engagement of the Council of Europe and other international organisations in assisting the Ukrainian authorities to ensure that these reforms are in line with European standards. The EU confirmed its commitment to support the economic stabilisation process in Ukraine through two recent significant Commission disbursements totalling 750 mln EUR in the framework of the State Building Contract and the Macro Financial Assistance in accordance with the conditions set out in the Memorandum of Understanding. In this context, the Council looks forward to the high level donor coordination meeting on Ukraine to be held in Brussels on 8 July.
6. The Council looks forward to the forthcoming signature of the remaining provisions of the Association Agreement, including its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, later this week. The EU is convinced that the Agreement will give an impetus for political and economic reforms, bringing about modernisation, strengthening of the rule of law and economic growth. The EU confirms its support to Ukraine in proceeding with the provisional application of the Agreement and its effective implementation.

The Council recalls the Commission's intention to also engage in political level consultations with Ukraine and the Russian Federation on implementation aspects of the agreement, in order to dispel concerns about its possible effects. Russia's threats of trade measures against countries that sign Association Agreements/DCFTAs are unjustified.

7. The Council agrees to establish a Common Security and Defence Policy mission to assist Ukraine in the field of civilian security sector reform, including police and rule of law. In that regard, the Council approves the Crisis Management Concept, submitted by the HR in response to its conclusions of 12 May. On this basis, operational planning can be pursued with a view to a decision on further steps at its next meeting and an early deployment in the Summer. The Council recalls the importance of coordination and coherence with other EU efforts, with the OSCE, and with other international actors.

8. The EU commends the work already undertaken by the OSCE and its Special Monitoring Mission. The EU will continue to support the Mission and looks forward to its mandate's extension.
9. Regretting that discussions on the conditions of the gas supply from the Russian Federation to Ukraine within the framework of the trilateral gas talks initiated and facilitated by the European Commission have so far been inconclusive and that gas delivery to Ukraine has been switched to prepayment and then interrupted, the Council urges both sides to reach an agreement as soon as possible and supports the Commission in its efforts to facilitate a compromise solution. An agreement is important for the stabilisation of Ukraine's economy and for safeguarding the security of supply and transit of natural gas to and through Ukraine on the basis of a transparent regime. In this context, the Council underlines the importance of continuing energy sector reforms in Ukraine.
10. The Council reiterates the EU's commitment to enhance people-to-people contacts between the citizens of the European Union and Ukraine, i.a. through the visa liberalisation process in a secure and well managed environment and provided all conditions are met, in line with agreed conditions in the framework of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan. In this context, it welcomes the Commission's fourth progress report of 27 May 2014 on the implementation of the action plan on visa liberalisation by Ukraine. The Council shares the analysis that Ukraine has fulfilled all the benchmarks under the first phase of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan and decides to launch the assessment of the benchmarks under the second phase. It stresses the need for full and effective implementation of all benchmarks during the second phase.

The Council looks forward to the Commission's assessment of the possible migratory and security impact on the European Union of a future visa liberalisation for Ukraine to be presented as soon as possible, and in any event as a matter of priority during the second phase of the VLAP. The Council invites the Commission to continue supporting Ukraine in implementing the Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation, as well as to continue reporting about the implementation thereof, on the possible migratory and security impact and its follow-up, with a view to deciding on the fulfilment of all the benchmarks of the Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation."

In addition, the Council finalised preparatory work for the full signature of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. For details, see press release [11067/14](#).

The Council also approved a crisis management concept for a civilian mission under the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy to assist the reform of the civilian security sector in Ukraine. For more information, see press release [11156/14](#).

As part of the EU's non-recognition policy vis-à-vis the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, the Council also prohibited the import of goods originating in Crimea and Sevastopol into the EU. More can be found in the related press release [11076/14](#).

Syria

The Council took stock of the situation in the Syrian crisis. In view of the gravity of the situation, it reinforced EU restrictive measures against the Syrian regime. For details, see press release [11154/14](#).

Libya

The Council exchanged views on the political and security situation in Libya as well as on the upcoming parliamentary elections. It adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Libya is at a highly critical stage in its transition to democracy which can be successful if all stakeholders commit to constructive political engagement based on nationally agreed principles. The transition to a state based on the rule of law, respect for human rights and committed to the welfare of its citizens is achievable in line with the goals of the 17th February revolution.
2. The EU remains deeply concerned by the significant deterioration of the political and security situation in Libya. It condemns the widespread acts of violence and continues to call on all sides to refrain from the use of force and to address differences by peaceful political means and through an inclusive and transparent dialogue in order to fulfil the democratic aspirations of the Libyan people. The EU also recognizes the regional impact of the situation in Libya.
3. Recalling its commitment to support Libya in the transition towards democracy, the EU welcomes the holding of parliamentary elections on 25 June. It calls on all parties to create an environment conducive for holding these elections in a peaceful environment throughout the country and in an inclusive and credible manner, encouraging in particular the participation of minorities and women, leading to the constitution of a Parliament capable of embodying national consensus and playing its role in forming a Government with wide political support.
4. The EU reiterates its full support for the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) whose role remains crucial in fostering a political dialogue with a wide and inclusive participation of all Libyan stakeholders. In this respect, the International Community must remain fully engaged in support of Libya and should act in a closely coordinated and coherent way led by the UN.

In this framework, the EU also calls on all regional actors to support a peaceful political solution in Libya.

5. The EU expresses deep concern for the recent loss of lives at sea of migrants departing from Libya. It recognizes that tackling irregular migration requires a comprehensive approach. It calls on Libyan authorities to address, also with the support of the EU and the rest of the international community, human trafficking and smuggling and control of all its borders and to ensure adequate search and rescue capabilities.
6. Recalling the Council Conclusions of November 2013, the EU remains committed to assisting the Libyan authorities in the field of border control and security and in fostering regional cooperation and coordination, especially through EU Integrated Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM Libya).

The EU will continue supporting the efforts to secure all stockpiles of arms in line with UNSCR 2017 (2011).

7. The EU remains strongly committed to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya, underpinned by functioning state structures for the stability and prosperity of Libya and its immediate region. The EU will continue, in coordination with international partners, to provide assistance and expertise to Libya."

Iraq

Over lunch, ministers discussed the developments in Iraq, in the presence of Nikolay Mladenov, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Iraq and Head of UN Assistance Mission in Iraq.

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU expresses its deep concern about the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Iraq. It strongly condemns the attacks perpetrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other armed groups against Iraqi citizens leading to the loss of many lives and which seek to derail the democratic process. The EU deplures attacks directed at civilian targets, including hospitals, schools and places of worship, and other reported atrocities. The EU utterly condemns the use of executions and sexual violence in the conflict. There can be no impunity for the perpetrators of any of these acts.

2. The EU is also seriously concerned about the unfolding humanitarian crisis and notably the massive displacement of civilians caused by the fighting. It calls on the Iraqi government to make every effort to protect all civilians, ensure a response to the needs of the affected populations, provide essential services and facilitate the safe and unhindered passage for civilians fleeing the violence and safe access for humanitarian actors to all affected populations. The EU acknowledges the burden placed on the Kurdistan region and the Kurdistan Regional Government, which are hosting a large number of IDPs, and trusts that it will continue to respond to IDP needs. The EU will continue to closely monitor the situation on the ground and respond appropriately, including, with humanitarian assistance. In this context, the EU has decided to increase its humanitarian assistance to Iraq by €5 million to provide basic assistance to displaced people, thus bringing the 2014 humanitarian funding for Iraq to €12 million so far.
3. The EU reiterates its firm commitment to Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity which are essential for stability and economic development in the country and the region. It reiterates its support to the Iraqi authorities in the fight against terrorism and emphasises that the security response needs to be combined with a sustainable political solution by the Government of Iraq involving all Iraqi leaders and communities in a spirit of national unity, putting their differences aside to jointly combat this threat and to restore security and the rule of law. Failure to do so will exacerbate the conflict and deepen the sectarian divide. The EU stresses the importance, in the fight against terrorism, of respecting human rights and international humanitarian law, and avoiding the indiscriminate use of force. The EU reminds all states that UN resolutions 1267 and 1989, on the basis of which sanctions have been imposed on ISIL, should be applied and implemented.
4. The EU congratulates the Iraqi people for holding the third democratic elections to the Iraqi Council of Representatives within the constitutional deadline. It pays tribute to the courage of the many Iraqi citizens who went out to cast their votes, in spite of the security risks, and in so doing underlined their commitment to democracy in Iraq. The EU shares the assessment of the elections by the Election Expert Mission (EEM) deployed by the EU and encourages the Iraqi authorities to implement their recommendations.
5. The EU calls on all the elected representatives to honour the Iraqi citizens' commitment to democracy and treat the elections as an opportunity for national reconciliation and genuine dialogue. In view of the present circumstances, it urges all political leaders and the judiciary to make sure that the constitutional provisions and deadlines are met and an inclusive government, representative of the will of the Iraqi population, is formed as a matter of urgency, so that it can address the challenges which Iraq faces. The EU emphasises that the new government must take decisive measures to promote an inclusive approach, respect the rule of law and human rights and address the needs and legitimate aspirations of all components of Iraqi society, which are prerequisites for the stability and security of the country and the region. The EU also calls on the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to work together in that aim. It encourages them to take this opportunity to find a swift and sustainable agreement on all pending subjects, including energy exports and oil revenue sharing, respecting Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

6. The EU also calls on all regional actors to contribute to efforts to promote stability in Iraq and the region. It notes the close link between the situation in Iraq and the situation in Syria, in particular the flow of foreign fighters which contributes to exacerbating tensions in both countries, and reiterates the urgency to move towards a genuine political transition in Syria.
7. The EU reaffirms its commitment to strengthen its relationship with Iraq and looks forward to working with the new government to advance cooperation including through the implementation of the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). The EU will also continue to assist Iraq in promoting democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law, including by building on the experiences of the EUJUST LEX Iraq mission."

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FOREIGN AFFAIRS****Thailand**

The Council adopted the following conclusions on Thailand:

- "1. The European Union and Thailand are bound together by strong and longstanding ties, ranging from trade, tourism, investments and culture, to people to people contacts.
2. It was therefore with extreme concern that the Council has followed recent developments in Thailand. It called on the military leadership to restore, as a matter of urgency, the legitimate democratic process and the Constitution, through credible and inclusive elections. The Council also called on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms must be upheld. Furthermore the Council urged military authorities to free all political detainees, to refrain from any further arrests for political reasons and to remove censorship.
3. The military leadership's recent announcement falls short of the credible roadmap for a return to constitutional rule which the situation requires. Fully functioning democratic institutions must be brought back to ensure the protection and welfare of all citizens.
4. Against this background, the EU is forced to reconsider its engagement. Official visits to and from Thailand have been suspended; the EU and its Member States will not sign the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Thailand, until a democratically elected government is in place. Other agreements will, as appropriate, be affected. EU Member States have already begun to review their military cooperation with Thailand.
5. Only an early and credible roadmap for a return to constitutional rule and the holding of credible and inclusive elections will allow for the EU's continued support. The Council decided that the EU will keep its relations with Thailand under review and will consider further possible measures, depending on circumstances."

Afghanistan

The Council adopted the following conclusions on Afghanistan:

- "1. The European Union welcomes the second round of the presidential elections held on 14 June. The democratic transition to a new president will be a historic moment for Afghanistan. The Council pays tribute to the courage and bravery of the Afghan people, and in particular Afghan women, in their determination to have their rightful say in the election.
2. It will be vital that the will of the people is reflected. The Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) must ensure that their workings are transparent, in particular the timely online publication of results from individual polling stations and the consistent application of its guidelines for the recounting and auditing of votes. It is important that both candidates act responsibly and direct any complaints through the appropriate mechanisms. Statements that prematurely claim victory or risk inflaming tensions should be avoided.
3. The EU has made an exceptional commitment to Afghanistan over the past 12 years to work with Afghans and the wider international community to support the development of a state that could better control its territory, reduce the threat posed by terrorism, address the needs and fulfil the rights of its people. Real progress has been made. But there are still considerable challenges to be overcome to help Afghanistan become a stable and functioning democracy able to offer the sort of future to its people that they want and deserve. The EU supports an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process as a foundation for peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region.
4. The EU remains committed to Afghanistan for the long-term. Afghanistan continues to receive more than €1 billion a year in aid from the EU and Member States, making it the largest beneficiary of EU assistance in the world. This commitment is in line with the international aid pledges made at the Tokyo conference. To benefit from the full extent of those pledges requires a reciprocal and lasting commitment. The EU calls on the new Afghan authorities to take ownership and enact the political and economic reforms set out in the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF).
5. The EU calls on the new president to reach out to all Afghans and neighbouring countries to invite them to contribute to the development of a stable, prosperous and fully sovereign Afghanistan, including through intensifying engagement in the Heart Of Asia process. The new president will face a number of significant challenges. Two of the most urgent challenges are security and the economy. Early conclusion of the Bilateral Security Agreement with the United States and the Status of Forces Agreement with NATO remain vital to ensuring a conducive security environment for economic growth and ongoing international support. The Council agrees in principle to an extension of EUPOL Afghanistan until the end of 2016. Urgent action to restore economic confidence, establish a platform for growth and jobs, and maximise revenue collection is imperative. The Council calls on the new president to send a clear, early signal of his commitment to ethnic and religious diversity, good governance, human rights, in particular the rights of women, and systemic action on drug trafficking and corruption.

6. The EU wants to work in close cooperation with the new government and international partners, including the UN and NATO, to maintain the progress that has been made and support and incentivise urgently needed reforms. The EU remains committed to a comprehensive approach in deepening its long-term partnership with Afghanistan. The Council calls for the early finalisation of the Cooperation Agreement for Partnership and Development (CAPD). The annexed strategy and implementation plan set out our goal of supporting the development of Afghanistan's institutions to provide the resilience needed to safeguard progress to date and provide the platform for a more effective and ultimately sustainable Afghan state, focusing on the objectives of: promoting peace, security and regional stability; reinforcing democracy; encouraging economic and human development; and fostering the rule of law and human rights."

For the strategy and implementation plan, see [here](#).

The Council also approved the seventh implementation report of the EU action plan for Afghanistan.

Responsible sourcing of minerals

The Council adopted the following conclusions on the Union's approach on responsible sourcing of minerals:

- "1. The Council recalls that trade in minerals holds great potential for development. However, when minerals are sourced from conflict-affected and high-risk areas their trade can intensify or perpetuate violent conflict and undermine development, stabilization efforts, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. Breaking the links between conflict and minerals extraction is a complex challenge and one that is critical to stability and peace.
2. The Council welcomes the presentation of the integrated approach by the High Representative and the Commission. Its objective is to stop profits from the trade of minerals being used to fund armed conflict and to promote responsible sourcing from conflict-affected and high-risk areas based on the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High Risk Areas.
3. The Council recalls that the OECD Guidance is based on the concept of due diligence as developed by the United Nations Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Council reaffirms its support for the implementation of the OECD Guidance. The Council notes that while the trade of conflict minerals is relatively well documented for the Great Lakes Region, responsible sourcing is also a matter of concern in other countries and regions.

4. The Council underscores the need to reduce the opportunities for armed actors to resort to trade in minerals in conflict-affected and high-risk areas, to promote the practice of due diligence by EU operators and to create the conditions for companies to source responsibly from conflict-affected and high-risk areas. In this regard, the Council notes that supply chain due diligence must be encouraged in a way that is proportionate and in line with EU industrial and raw material policies while preserving legitimate and responsible mining activity and related trade in and from conflict-affected and high-risk areas.
5. The Council stresses that breaking the links between conflict and minerals extraction requires a broad range of policies and actions, including appropriate incentives for EU companies, capacity building and outreach activities, to be deployed in a strategically coherent way in order to effectively tackle the root causes of conflict and fragility.
6. The Council acknowledges that the Commission and the High Representative will continue to promote a strong, comprehensive and coherent EU raw materials diplomacy, addressing the security-development nexus in a joined-up and strategic manner. The ongoing mapping exercise on raw materials projects in third countries should increase the EU's capability to address the foreign and security policy aspects of raw materials in a comprehensive way. Such exercise should include the identification of areas of added value of EU action in relation to Member States' action on foreign and security policy aspects of raw materials, thus ensuring synergies and a coherent and effective use of EU instruments.
7. The Council welcomes the Commission and the High Representative call for action by Member States to support due diligence efforts at national level through appropriate instruments.
8. These Council Conclusions relate to the Union integrated approach on responsible sourcing of minerals originating in conflict-affected and high-risk areas and are without prejudice to the appropriate examination of the legislative proposal mentioned therein or its subsequent review."

Kidnap for ransom

The Council adopted the following conclusions on kidnap for ransom:

- "1. The Council strongly condemns the use of kidnapping for ransom by terrorist groups and unequivocally rejects the payment of ransoms and political concessions to terrorists. It expresses its grave concern about the threat posed by kidnapping for ransom by terrorist groups, in particular in West Africa, Yemen and Syria.
2. Kidnapping for ransom is a source of terrorist funding and strengthens their ability to attack our interests. Terrorist groups use the money they secure through kidnapping to strengthen their operational capability, carry out illegal trafficking, recruit new operatives and buy weapons and equipment to launch and plan new attacks. Payments and political concessions to terrorists only incentivise future incidents of kidnapping and increase the risk to our citizens and interests.

3. The Council welcomes the recent adoption of UNSCR 2133 which sets out a political commitment reinforcing previous UN Security Council resolutions, 1373 (2001), 1904 (2009), 1989 (2011), 2083 (2012) which require all UN members to prevent terrorists from benefitting directly or indirectly from the payment of ransoms. It reaffirms the commitment of Member States to uphold these resolutions, in particular the requirement to prevent terrorists designated under the UN Al Qaeda sanctions regime from benefitting from ransom payments, including through the freezing of funds and other assets.
4. The Council fully supports efforts by Member States to prevent kidnapping and to secure the safe release of their hostages without ransom payments, including through working with private sector partners to adopt relevant guidelines. It recognises the need to support those affected by incidents of kidnapping for ransom, and to give careful consideration to protecting the lives of hostages. The Council emphasises the role of CSDP missions and EU agencies in building the capacity, expertise and human rights compliance of law enforcement authorities in third countries, which can be used to prevent kidnappings. The Council also supports capacity-building initiatives to help states prevent and prepare to respond to future terrorist kidnaps, and to combat money laundering and terrorist financing networks, for example through tracking financial flows, as part of wider counter-terrorism programmes."

EU guidelines on human rights defenders

The Council adopted the following conclusions on the 10th anniversary of the EU guidelines on human rights defenders:

- "1. On the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the EU Guidelines on human rights defenders, the Council reiterated its strong support to human rights defenders all over the world and paid respect to their efforts to promote and protect human rights in often difficult environments. The right of every individual to exercise their freedom of expression, opinion, association and assembly to promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms is indisputable.
2. Human rights defenders play an important role at the local, national, regional and international levels in the promotion and protection of human rights, but frequently find themselves the target of oppression and coercion. The EU will therefore intensify its political and material support to human rights defenders and step up its efforts against all form of reprisals, and will actively support the strengthening of UN monitoring in this regard. The EU is particularly committed to improve its support to vulnerable and marginalised human rights defenders. The EU will intensify outreach to those operating in remote and rural areas. Particular attention is paid to women human rights defenders.

3. The Council called upon all states to create a safe and enabling environment in which human rights defenders can operate free from hindrance and insecurity. The Council expressed its particular concern about the introduction of legal and administrative provisions in some countries, which have hindered or unduly limited the legitimate work of human rights defenders and endangered their safety. The Council noted with regret the shrinking space for civil society in an increasing number of countries. Online surveillance methods are often abused by governments to undermine the work of human rights defenders. An independent, diverse and pluralistic civil society is indispensable for building peaceful, prosperous and democratic societies.
4. The Council noted with satisfaction that the EU's policy on human rights defenders has become more effective and coherent since the adoption of the Guidelines. Through the High Representative/Vice President, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights and EU Delegations and Member State embassies on the ground, the EU actively engages with human rights defenders, issues demarches and statements, observes trials, visits prisons, and supports human rights defenders that have been arbitrarily arrested and detained.
5. The Council highlighted the crucial role of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) in the effective implementation of the Guidelines and noted with satisfaction the effective use of emergency EIDHR grants for human rights defenders at risk, which since 2011 has become a swift and efficient tool for addressing the needs of human rights defenders under imminent threat. Through projects worth more than 150 million euro since 2007 the EIDHR has supported both individuals and organisations. The Council welcomed the strengthened focus of the renewed EIDHR for 2014-2020 on Human Rights and their Defenders where they are the most at risk.
6. The Council stressed the need to further raise awareness about the purpose and operational utility of the Guidelines among all relevant stakeholders. EU institutions and Member States will step up their efforts in training their staff on the Guidelines and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, in close co-operation with civil society.
7. The Council highlighted the importance of the role of international human rights mechanisms in promoting and protecting the work of human rights defenders, notably the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organisation of American States and the African Union. The EU pays particular tribute to the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and the crucial role this mandate has played in implementing the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and enhancing the protection of human rights defenders throughout the world. The EU welcomes the recent adoption of the OSCE Guidelines for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and stands ready to assist the OSCE in follow-up activities to promote the Guidelines. The EU also calls upon all states to refrain from reprisals against human rights defenders engaging with international human rights protection mechanisms.
8. The Council invited the Council Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM) to continue to regularly review the implementation of the Guidelines."

Restrictive measures - Central African Republic

The Council amended EU restrictive measures against the Central African Republic in the light of UN Security Council resolution 2127 (2013). It targeted three persons with an asset freeze and a ban on entering the EU. An arms embargo against the Central African Republic, imposed in December 2013, remains in place.

Restrictive measures - Transnistria

The Council extended the restrictive measures against the leadership of the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova until 31 October 2014.

Restrictive measures - Libya

The Council amended EU restrictive measures in view of the situation in Libya. Changes were made to implement UN Security Council resolution 2146 (2014) authorising UN member states to inspect designated vessels on the high seas. The resolution also provides for the possibility for further measures that may be imposed by the UN Sanctions Committee in relation to the designated vessels. At the same time, the Council reviewed the EU autonomous sanctions against Libya and decided that there were no more grounds for targeting two entities with restrictive measures.

Report on human rights and democracy

The Council adopted the EU's annual report on human rights and democracy in the world in 2013.

For more details, see press release [11226/14](#). The full report can be seen in [11107/14](#).

EU priorities for the UN General Assembly

The Council approved the EU priorities for the 69th UN General Assembly, as set out in [10856/14](#).

The EU and/or its member states will inter alia focus on the promotion of peace and security, by supporting the reinforcement of EU-UN operational cooperation in crisis management and enhancing support to UN peacekeeping. It will also support the work of the International Criminal Court and push for working towards a successful outcome of the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

Climate change will also be addressed by the EU, with attention to the follow-up and implementation of the Rio+20 outcome and the work on sustainable development goals.

In terms of human rights, the EU remains committed to the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It also seeks the strengthening of the international humanitarian system, the promotion of humanitarian principles and relevant international law and the preparation of the upcoming world humanitarian summit. The EU's priorities also include strengthening the effectiveness of the UN.

EU Special Representatives

The Council extended the mandate of two EU Special Representatives until 28 February 2015 and agreed on the budget for their activities:

- Mr Stavros Lambrinidis will remain EU Special Representative for Human Rights and will have at his disposal a budget of €550 000 for the period from 1 July 2014 until the end of February 2015.
- Mr Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin will stay EU Special Representative in Afghanistan and will have €3.76 million available for the period until 28 February 2015.

EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Council approved a budget of €5.25 million for the activities of the EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr Peter Sørensen, for the period from 1 July 2014 until 30 June 2015. His mandate currently runs until 30 June 2015.

Relations with the Republic of Moldova

The Council approved the Association Agenda between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova. It covers the period from 2014 to 2016 and is intended to help the country prepare for the implementation of the Association Agreement, including a deep and comprehensive free trade area, which will be signed on 27 June 2014.

Relations with Georgia

The Council adopted the Association Agenda between the European Union and Georgia for the period from 2014 to 2016. It is designed to assist the preparations for the implementation of the Association Agreement, including the deep and comprehensive free trade area, that will be signed on 27 June 2014.

Association Agreement with Central America

The Council approved the EU position for the first meeting of the Association Council with Central America. It relates to decisions in the Association Council on the rules of procedure of the Association Council and those of the Association Committee, on the rules of procedure governing dispute settlement under Title X and the code of conduct for members of panels and mediators, on the list of panellists and on the list of trade and sustainable development experts.

Replacement of protocol 3 to the EEC/Switzerland agreement

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken by the EU within the joint committee as regards the replacement of protocol 3 to the agreement EEC/Switzerland, concerning the definition of the concept of 'originating products' and methods of administrative cooperation, by a new protocol which, as regards the rules of origin, refers to the regional convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin ([9959/14](#)).

Replacement of protocol 3 to the EEC/Iceland agreement

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken by the EU within the joint committee as regards the replacement of protocol 3 to the agreement EEC/Iceland, concerning the definition of the concept of 'originating products' and methods of administrative cooperation, by a new protocol which, as regards the rules of origin, refers to the regional convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin ([9962/14](#)).

Replacement of protocol 3 to the EEC/Norway agreement

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken by the EU within the joint committee as regards the replacement of protocol 3 to the agreement EEC/Norway, concerning the definition of the concept of 'originating products' and methods of administrative cooperation, by a new protocol which, as regards the rules of origin, refers to the regional convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin ([9965/14](#)).

Amendments to protocol 31 to the EEA agreement

The Council adopted two decisions on the position to be adopted, on behalf of the EU, in the EEA joint committee concerning amendment to protocol 31 to the EEA agreement:

- in order to allow for the inclusion of regulation (EU) No 1287/2013 establishing a programme for the competitiveness of enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) (2014 - 2020) in the EEA agreement ([9624/14](#)).
- in order to allow for the inclusion of cooperation concerning free movement of workers, coordination of social security systems and measures for migrants, including migrants from third countries, in the EEA agreement ([9794/14](#)).

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Role of the private sector in development

The Council adopted the following conclusions on the role of the private sector in development:

1. Recalling its Conclusions on the “Agenda for Change” and on the “EU common position for the First High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation”, the Council recognises that the private sector is the key driver of employment, growth, investment, trade and innovation and that it has a central role to play in achieving poverty reduction, sustainable development and inclusive growth.
2. In this context, the Council welcomes the principles and priorities of the Commission’s Communication on “A stronger role of the private sector in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth in developing countries”, which outlines proposals for how the EU and its Member States can work together with other development partners, by supporting private sector development in partner countries and by engaging with the private sector to boost the development impact of its activities.
3. The Council underlines that EU and Member States’ support for private sector development should be based on the Busan principles for effective development cooperation. It should also be in line with a rights-based approach to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights, and should also be in line with internationally recognised guidelines and principles including, inter alia, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises as well as with the UN Global Compact.
4. The Council stresses that investment, trade and business activities in and with partner countries should respect human and labour rights, safeguard children’s rights, promote decent work and sustainable development and contribute to the economic and social empowerment of youth and of the poorest and most vulnerable, in particular of women and girls. These activities should also promote social dialogue and adhere to the principles of corporate social, fiscal and environmental responsibility, transparency and accountability and should be in line with the aforementioned internationally recognised guidelines and principles. In this respect, the Council calls on the Commission to develop a successor to the EU Strategy 2011-2014 for Corporate Social Responsibility, with a strengthened external dimension. Moreover, the Council underlines the importance of combating corporate tax evasion and avoidance and of promoting fair and ethical trade. The Council stresses that EU and Member States’ policies related to private sector development should be consistent with the principles of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD).

5. EU support should aim at boosting poverty reduction efforts and decent job creation, spurring market development, supporting improved access to markets, including regional markets, generating tax revenues, contributing to the transformation towards an inclusive and green economy and ensuring a fair distribution of risks, costs and returns, while at the same time promoting untied aid and avoiding market distortions. Taking into account the diversity of private sector actors and of local, national and regional contexts, the Council notes the need for a differentiated and context-specific approach to private sector development.
6. Efforts to address key challenges for private sector development in partner countries, including in fragile and conflict-affected states, should be reinforced by appropriate policy and political dialogue aimed at fostering an enabling environment and institutions for sustainable business and investment activities and to create a level playing field for improved competitiveness, building on comparative advantages. In this regard, the Council underlines the importance of good governance, the rule of law and transparency, the fight against corruption and illicit financial flows, as well as of legal and regulatory reforms and the administrative capacity of local and national authorities, notably on trade, investment, taxation, and the ability to enforce property and land rights. Private sector development efforts in both Low and Middle Income Countries should be conducive to a stable, pro-business environment which provides incentives for transition from the informal to the formal economy, with a view to reducing poverty and inequality.
7. The Council calls for increased focus on support to micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), as well as to social enterprises and cooperatives, in both the formal and informal sectors. The Council recognises the need to place particular emphasis on women's and youth entrepreneurship and employment and their ability to access resources and participate in decision-making. Technical and vocational education and training is crucial and should be effectively linked to the local labour market and skill needs.
8. Financial inclusion and access to finance of the private sector, including MSMEs, in partner countries should be enhanced through the use of a broad spectrum of financial services and innovative financial instruments and mechanisms, which are important means for leveraging additional resources for development. With respect to blending activities, the Council looks forward to receiving a report by the Commission on the work of the EU Platform for Blending in External Cooperation (EUBEC).
9. The Council notes the need to strengthen the private sector's engagement for development, including through innovative and soundly framed and managed public-private partnerships, notably with a meaningful role for CSOs. It also underlines the importance of inclusive business models and enhanced dialogue between national and local authorities, private enterprises, social partners, the civil society and academia, in light of their joint responsibility in achieving development objectives. The Council recognises the important role that diasporas can play in this context. Moreover, interaction between private enterprises in the EU and partner countries should also be strengthened.

10. The EU will continue to support and promote an active role of the private sector as a strategic and accountable partner in the formulation and implementation of an ambitious, universal and transformative post-2015 agenda.
 11. The Council calls on the Commission and the EEAS to continue to monitor, measure and evaluate the impact of projects and programmes related to private sector development in partner countries, including through the EU development and cooperation results framework, once finalised, and looks forward to regular reports on progress achieved in strengthening the role of the private sector and its impact on development.
 12. The Council looks forward to continued discussions on tools and modalities in view of the operationalisation of the actions set out in the Communication, paving the way for the comprehensive application of the principles and criteria proposed by the Commission."
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