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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

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Subject: Council conclusions on Mali

At its meeting on 20 July 2015, the Council adopted the conclusions on Mali set out in the annex to this note.

Council conclusions on Mali

1. The signature on 15 May and 20 June by all parties of the Mali Peace Agreement is an important milestone on the road to peace and stability in Mali and the wider Sahel Region. The Agreement is a crucial step in restoring peace, stability and security, helping to improve the living conditions of the population, and rebuilding mutual trust that will promote national reconciliation. The first step, however, must be an absolute and durable respect of the current ceasefire agreement.
2. The EU fully welcomes the Agreement and commends Algeria, the United Nations, other members of the Mediation team, the Government of Mali and the coalitions of armed groups for their unstinting efforts to conclude these negotiations successfully. The Council notably welcomes the commitment of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Sahel throughout the negotiations. The priority is now for the swift and comprehensive implementation of the Agreement. A transparent process is key, and all parties must stand by their commitments if the Malian people are to experience a tangible peace dividend. This includes progress on governance, rule of law, reform of the justice and security sectors and the bringing to justice of those responsible for abuses or violations of human rights. The EU stresses the importance of durable and inclusive peace building and therefore underlines the need for full involvement of both women and men in the implementation of the agreement. The EU also underlines the particular importance of promoting opportunities for youth as part of wider peace building efforts. The primary responsibility for delivering these commitments rests with all Malian parties themselves. The EU reaffirms its commitment to support the process, alongside the other members of the Mediation and the international community, through all appropriate means and instruments at its disposal and by playing an active role in the follow-up mechanism.

3. Despite the signature by all parties, the situation on the ground remains fragile as shown by the recent attacks on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) forces. The EU condemns all terrorist attacks and underlines the importance of bringing the perpetrators to justice, stressing that all parties must ensure the protection of civilians, including UN personnel and humanitarian workers. It reiterates its full support to MINUSMA which has a leading role, within its renewed mandate to support and oversee the implementation of the peace agreement. It also emphasises the importance of the continued close coordination between the EU and the UN.
4. Recalling the Council Conclusions of 16 March 2015, the EU reaffirms its comprehensive approach to facilitate peace, security and development in the country. It highlights the important ongoing role being played by its CSDP Missions EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali in promoting security sector reform. This essential work is continuing to play an important role in contributing to building inclusive, effective and accountable national armed and security forces. The EU underlines its proactive contribution to the country's recovery through joint programming, including EU Member States instruments and Mali's National Indicative Programme under the 11th European Development Fund and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.
5. The EU emphasizes the importance of the regional dimension in assuring Mali's security and prosperity. What happens in one country impacts all the region and neighbouring countries. In this context, the Council welcomes the initiation by the High Representative on 17 June 2015 of a political dialogue with the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the G5 Sahel and the permanent secretary of the G5 Sahel. The Council invites the HR, the EUSR and the Commission to seek the most coherent approach between this dialogue and the implementation of the relevant parts of the EU Sahel Regional Action Plan with its four priorities areas; prevention and fight against radicalisation; creating appropriate conditions for youth; migration and mobility; border management and fight against illicit trafficking and transnational organised crime, in close cooperation with all the countries of the Sahel region and its international partners.