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Policy

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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

Libya

The Council took stock of the situation in Libya and the UN-brokered talks between Libyan parties. Ministers also discussed possible further EU support to Libya, once an agreement on a government of national unity and related security arrangements have been achieved. Work on these options, including those involving action under the Common Security and Defence Policy, will continue.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The Council held an in-depth debate on EU relations with Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ministers highlighted the strategic nature of the partnership with Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the solid economic relations. The EU is keen to develop new, innovative ways of cooperating with the states of the region, key allies in the search for multilateral solutions to common global challenges.

Strategic review

The High Representative briefed the Council about ongoing work on the review of the European Security Strategy, including the preparation of a report to the European Council on 25/26 June. A more substantial debate is expected during a joint session of foreign and defence ministers at the Foreign Affairs Council on 18 May.

Iran

Over lunch, the High Representative briefed ministers on recent developments in the international talks about the Iranian nuclear programme.

Yemen

Over lunch, ministers took stock of the situation in Yemen. The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- " 1. The EU is seriously concerned with the rapidly deteriorating political, security and humanitarian situation in Yemen. Recent developments carry grave risks for the stability of the region, in particular that of the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the wider Middle-East. The EU condemns the destabilising unilateral actions taken by the Houthis and military units loyal to ex-President Saleh, urges these forces to end the use of violence immediately and unconditionally and withdraw from areas they have seized, including Sana'a and Aden, and reaffirms its support to Yemen's legitimate authorities. In this regard, the EU welcomes the appointment of Khaled Bahah as the new Vice- President of Yemen by President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi. The EU notes that the President of Yemen informed the President of the Security Council of the United Nations that "he has requested from the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and the League of Arab States to immediately provide support, by all necessary means and measures, including military intervention, to protect Yemen and its people from the continuing aggression by the Houthis". The EU recalls that ultimately the solution to this crisis must be a political one and stands with the international community in its call for an inclusive political process.

2. The EU therefore urges all Yemeni parties, in particular the Houthis, to work towards resolving their differences through dialogue and consultation. In that context, the EU calls on all parties to rapidly engage in a process leading to an expeditious cessation of violence and urges all Yemeni parties to go back to the negotiating table. Furthermore, the EU strongly urges the UN to quickly undertake efforts to resume inclusive negotiations and looks forward to the swift appointment of a new UNSG Special Advisor for Yemen. It welcomes the efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its members to complement these initiatives, fully in line with the framework provided by the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative, the National Dialogue Conferences' (NDC) outcomes and the Peace and National Partnership Agreement. Only a broad political consensus through inclusive negotiations can provide a sustainable solution, restore peace, and preserve the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen. The formation of a Government of National Unity is the only way to finalise the transition process and avoid economic and financial collapse and the deepening of the humanitarian crisis. The EU also calls on all regional actors to engage constructively with Yemeni parties in order to enable a de-escalation of the crisis and avoid further regional instability. The EU further urges all parties to fully implement respective UN-Security Council resolutions, in particular UNSC Resolution 2201 of 15 February 2015, and Resolution 2216 of 14 April 2015.

3. The EU reiterates its firm commitment and determination to tackle the threat of extremist and terrorist groups, such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), to prevent them from taking further advantage of the current situation. The EU condemns in the strongest terms recent terrorist attacks, in particular the ones carried out against mosques in Sana'a and Saada on 20 March.
4. The humanitarian impact of the ongoing fighting between different militias, bombardments and disruption of essential services on the civilian population, in particular on children, is reaching alarming proportions and exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation. The EU calls on all parties to ensure the protection of civilians and refrain from direct targeting of civilian infrastructure notably medical facilities and water systems and from using civilian buildings for military purposes.
5. The EU also urges all sides to urgently give unrestricted access to humanitarian workers and aid relief, so that vital assistance can be immediately delivered to the most vulnerable people. All measures to ensure the respect of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law should be taken. The EU calls for the independent investigation of all alleged violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law. The EU stresses the need for coordinated humanitarian action under UN leadership, and urges all countries to contribute to addressing humanitarian needs.
6. The EU reaffirms its commitment to continue supporting Yemen and the Yemeni people."

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FOREIGN AFFAIRS****Sahel Regional Action Plan**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council adopts today the annexed Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020 which provides the overall framework for the implementation of the European Union (EU) Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, as adopted and revised in its Conclusions on 21 March 2011 and 17 March 2014, respectively. The adoption of the Action Plan comes at a crucial time for the countries in the Sahel. The Council welcomes the Action Plan, which reaffirms the EU's continued engagement in the Sahel region and its support to sustainable and inclusive political and socio-economic development, the strengthening of human rights, democratic governance and the rule of law as well as resilience, as a response to the multidimensional crisis in the Sahel. The enhancement of security in the region through the fight against terrorism¹, illicit trafficking, radicalisation and violent extremism, remains the key objective of the EU. In the context of its comprehensive approach, including the contribution of the EU Institutions, the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Sahel as well as of EU Member States, the EU reiterates its commitment to support regional and country-led and owned initiatives in the framework of the Action Plan, using all its relevant instruments, in particular the regional and national indicative programmes under the European Development Fund as well as Member States' programmes, and also including the CSDP Missions EUTM Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Sahel Mali, and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.

2. The original strategic objective of the EU Sahel Strategy, emphasising the development-security nexus as well as the four pillars for its implementation, remains fully relevant and provide a comprehensive framework for EU action in the Sahel. The Action Plan provides a solid basis for pursuing the objectives of the Strategy and for reinforcing the EU's focus around four domains highly relevant to the stabilisation of the region, namely prevention and countering radicalisation, creation of appropriate conditions for youth, migration, mobility and border management, the fight against illicit trafficking and transnational organised crime. The EU underlines in particular the importance of fostering closer synergies between countries of the region as well as between the Sahel and neighbouring countries. Given the proximity of the Sahel to the EU and its immediate neighbourhood, it notes the need, in order to better tackle cross-border issues, to explore further a common space for dialogue and cooperation between the Sahel, the Maghreb and the EU in relevant sectors such as security and migration. This should be done in the framework of the existing mechanisms and dialogues such as the Rabat and Khartoum processes on migration and development.

¹ Council Conclusions of 9 February 2015 on Counter-Terrorism

3. The EU reiterates its readiness to continue working closely with the countries of the Sahel region to support their efforts to achieve peace, security and development. The implementation of the Action Plan will be carried out with the full ownership and under the primary responsibility of the countries concerned, and in coordination with key international and regional organisations and other partners, in particular the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the G5 Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the World Bank, as well as with civil society. In this respect, the EU underlines the importance of continuing this close international and regional coordination, including between the EUSR for the Sahel, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Sahel, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Mali and the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, aiming at creating synergies in the implementation of respective strategies.
4. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission and Member States to start implementing the Sahel Regional Action Plan. The Council will revert to the matter as appropriate, and at least once a year."

[Sahel Regional Action Plan](#)

Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council welcomes the Joint Consultation Paper 'Towards a New Neighbourhood Policy' of 4 March 2015 issued jointly by the High Representative and the Commission.
2. The ENP is key for both the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and other areas of the EU's external action. The neighbourhood is a strategic priority and a fundamental interest for the EU. The Council underlines the importance of a special relationship with the EU's neighbours which needs to be as effective as possible in order to develop an area of shared stability, security and prosperity. The Council emphasises the need to work on a revision of the ENP in order to ensure it provides the adequate framework for long term relations with all ENP partners, while making it as well more political and responsive to the diverse challenges in the neighbourhood.

3. The ENP aims to develop a democratic, stable and prosperous neighbourhood, based on a commitment to fundamental values, including the rule of law, protection of human rights and gender equality.
4. The Council stresses the need to ensure EU Member States' full involvement at all stages of the review process. The Council welcomes the consultations by the External Action Service and the Commission services with partner countries, the European Parliament, and with other stakeholders such as civil society, the business community, relevant international organisations, and the public at large.
5. The Council acknowledges that the broader geographical context of our partners and their relations with their neighbours are important considerations, impacting upon the ENP. It is the sole right of the EU and its partners to decide in a sovereign way on how they want to proceed in their relations.
6. The Council affirms the four priority areas that the current ENP review seeks to address: 'Differentiation'; 'Focus' (including inter alia security, economic development and trade, good governance, migration, energy and human rights); 'Flexibility'; and 'Ownership and Visibility'. These areas reflect the key principles that should help define a more streamlined ENP, in line with the EU's political priorities and interests.
7. The Council stresses that a revised ENP should take into account interests and needs of the EU and its neighbours, neighbours' commitment to reforms, the level of ambition of the partnership as well as different challenges and the geopolitical environment. The policy should be capable of responding flexibly to the changing situations in the region, challenges and crises while preserving its continuity and predictability. A demand and interest driven approach should increase partner countries' ownership.
8. Stability and prosperity based on principles of political inclusion, rule of law, the respect of human rights and inclusive economic development in its neighbourhood is a fundamental interest of the EU. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to develop a set of proposals on ensuring coherence of the Policy with the security and foreign policy dimensions of the EU's actions abroad. The policy should contribute to promoting stability in the neighbourhood in line with the comprehensive approach and the external dimension of other relevant EU policies such as the area of Freedom, Security and Justice. The ENP instruments should be used more widely to strengthen partners' capacity to address security threats, notably through security sector reforms. Equally, the on-going ENP review should aim at closer coordination between ENP and wider CFSP/CSDP activities in a comprehensive manner."

9. The Council encourages the High Representative and the Commission to streamline procedures to make EU support under the ENP instruments more flexible and responsive to changing situations on the ground and continues to encourage effective donor coordination, including with non-EU donors.
10. The EU needs to present more effectively the impact the ENP is making on people's lives. The Council stresses the importance of a clear narrative and the need for strategic communication efforts on the EU's engagement in the region, including its values and objectives. Further efforts should be taken to strengthen EU visibility as a whole, and communicate European foreign policy and the wide range of sector cooperation activities towards the countries of the region. In this context, the Council underlines the need to broaden the EU's engagement with civil society and the business community.
11. The Council reiterates the importance to further develop integration and dialogue under the specific regional dimensions of the ENP, and underlines the central role of the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean. In this context, it recalls the importance of other regional initiatives with the EU and Member States involvement. Further strengthened regional cooperation would contribute to an atmosphere of equal partnership, improve the EU's neighbours sense of co-ownership, and reinforce the policy as a whole.
12. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to present reform proposals for Council's consideration by autumn 2015 and remains seized of the matter. It welcomes the recent consultations with Southern partners held in Barcelona and looks forward to consultations with Eastern partners in Riga. The Council stresses the need to ensure ENP partners' ownership and involvement in the review process in order to improve the effectiveness of the policy and its individualised approach."

Consular protection for EU citizens

The Council adopted new rules setting out how EU member states will work together to ensure that EU citizens who are not diplomatically represented in a third country can receive consular protection from other member states. For more details, see [press release](#).

Relations with Chile

The Council approved the EU position for the sixth EU-Chile Association Council, to take place on 21 April 2015 in Brussels. One of the items on the agenda will be the preparation of the EU-CELAC summit on 10-11 June 2015 in Brussels.

Fight against the proliferation of nuclear weapons

The Council adopted the following conclusions on the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons:

- "1. The Council recalls that the European Union is united in regarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the NPT and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. The Council reaffirms that the EU is committed to upholding and preserving the NPT as a key priority, and as a multilateral instrument for maintaining and reinforcing international peace, security and stability.
2. The Council welcomes the upcoming Ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons which will be held from 27 April to 22 May 2015 at UN Headquarters in New York and underlines its importance as a key milestone in global non-proliferation and disarmament issues.
3. Bearing in mind the current severe security environment, the Council reiterates the European Union's unwavering support for all three pillars of the Treaty and to the implementation of all commitments assumed under it or undertaken during previous Review Conferences.
4. The Council reaffirms that the European Union continues to promote a comprehensive, balanced and substantive full implementation of the 2010 Action Plan, which includes concrete steps on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy and which is the common roadmap towards the 2015 Review Conference when the implementation to date of the 2010 Action Plan across all three pillars will be assessed.
5. The Council wishes to underline that ensuring the implementation of the 64 actions in the 2010 Action Plan is a collective responsibility shared by all States Parties to the NPT without exception.

6. The Council reaffirms the EU Member States' commitment to pursue nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, and stresses the need for concrete progress in this field, especially through an overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons.
7. The Council welcomes the considerable reductions made so far taking into account the special responsibility of the States that possess the largest arsenals. In this context, it also welcomes their indications of progress in implementing the New START Treaty and strongly encourages them to seek further reductions in their nuclear arsenals, including strategic, non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed weapons. It welcomes and encourages the holding of the P5 Conferences on the follow-up to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, including confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and discussions on reporting.
8. The Council remains committed to treaty-based nuclear disarmament and arms control and stresses the need to renew multilateral efforts and revitalize multilateral negotiating bodies, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, looking in this regard into possibilities such as its future enlargement. Its ongoing stalemate, including its persistent failure to agree on a Programme of Work, remains a source for concern.
9. The Council reiterates its call for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a Treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein.
10. The Council considers the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to be of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and its entry into force remains a top priority for the European Union. The Council continues to promote this objective through diplomatic and financial engagement which amounts to more than EUR 15.5 million transferred to the CTBT Organisation since 2006.
11. The Council notes the severe consequences associated with nuclear weapons use and emphasizes that all States share the responsibility to prevent such an occurrence from happening. The Council further notes, in this respect, the ongoing discussions on the consequences of nuclear weapons, in the course of which different views are being expressed, including at an international conference organized by Austria, in which not all EU Member States participated.

12. The Council recognizes the serious nuclear proliferation challenges which continue to be a threat to international security, and the need to find peaceful and diplomatic solutions to them, and stresses that the international community needs to remain vigilant and to be ready to face up to these challenges and to address them in a resolute way. The Council also recognizes that the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) safeguards system is a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and plays an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT. The Council underlines the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council in cases of non-compliance.
13. The Council condemns the nuclear test of February 2013 conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as the DPRK's threat of another nuclear test in outright violation of the DPRK's international obligations, in particular under UN Security Council Resolutions 1718, 1874, 2087 and 2094 urging DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons programme and return to the NPT and IAEA Safeguards at an early date.
14. The Council welcomes the ongoing diplomatic efforts between the E3/EU+3 and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and highlighting their continued commitment to negotiations on a comprehensive settlement that would guarantee the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme; it urgently calls on Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA regarding all outstanding issues, including those of the Possible Military Dimensions and calls on Iran to implement the modified Code 3.1 of the Subsidiary Arrangements General Part to its Safeguards Agreement and to bring into force its Additional Protocol as in the absence of this, the Council notes with regret that the IAEA is unable to provide credible assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran.
15. The Council deeply regrets that Syria has still to remedy its non-compliance with its Safeguards Agreement by cooperating as a matter of priority and transparently with the IAEA to resolve all outstanding issues and calls on Syria to sign, bring into force and implement in full an Additional Protocol with the IAEA as soon as possible.
16. The Council reaffirms the commitment to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East; it regrets that it has not been possible so far to convene a Conference on the establishment of such a zone to be attended by all States of the region; it fully supports the ongoing preparations and commends the co-conveners, and particularly, the Facilitator and his team for their tireless efforts in this regard, including the series of informal meetings held in Switzerland; and it calls on all States in the region to urgently and proactively engage with the Facilitator, the co-conveners and each other with the aim of convening the Conference as soon as possible, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at between the States of the region.

17. The Council calls on NPT States Parties to recommend that the 2015 Review Conference supports the concept of the responsible development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy taking place under the best safety, security, and non-proliferation measures.
18. On the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the Council reaffirms its support for the inalienable right of all Parties to the NPT to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with the Treaty.
19. The Council reaffirms that strengthening nuclear security is a longstanding priority of the European Union and remains an important element in facilitating international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Nuclear Security Summit process laid an important groundwork aimed at strengthening nuclear security, reducing the threat of nuclear terrorism and securing all vulnerable nuclear material in the coming years. The Council remains committed towards these goals. It fully recognizes the leading role played by the IAEA and its highly valued work in strengthening the nuclear security framework. The financial support provided by the European Union to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund has been substantive: 40 million EUR since 2004.
20. The Council encourages all States to engage constructively in discussions about the safety objective of preventing nuclear and radiological accidents and, should an accident occur, mitigating its effects and avoiding off-site contamination.
21. The Council recalls that during the current review cycle the European Union together with its Member States supported the implementation of the 2010 NPT Action Plan not only through diplomatic means and initiatives, but also through practical training and assistance, thus becoming one of the most important contributors to the strengthening of the Treaty.
22. The Council reaffirms the importance of universalizing the NPT and calls upon States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states and, pending their accession, to adhere to its terms.
23. The Council encourages all States parties of the NPT to work towards a successful conclusion and a substantial outcome to the 2015 Review Conference."

Restrictive measures - Zimbabwe

The Council amended legislation implementing EU sanctions against Zimbabwe (regulation 314/2004) to take account of changes in the relevant Council decision adopted on 19 February 2015.

Restrictive measures - Côte d'Ivoire

Following a review, the Council removed one person from the list of those subject to an EU travel ban and asset freeze in view of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. It also adjusted the restrictions to changes made at UN level to the international restrictive measures.

Restrictive measures - Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Council amended the EU restrictive measures against the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to take account of UN Security Council resolution 2198 (2015).

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Exercise specifications for the EU Crisis Management Military Exercise in 2015

The Council approved the exercise specifications for the EU crisis management military exercise in 2015 (MILEX 15).

EU support to security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The Council approved the crisis management concept for the EUSEC RD Congo micro-mission. The crisis management concept sets out the parameters for the transformation of the current EU mission to provide advice and assistance for Security Sector Reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (EUSEC RD Congo) into a EUSEC RDC micro-mission. After the closure of EUSEC RD Congo on 30 June 2015, the micro-mission will continue to provide strategic advice and support to education in military schools, whilst ensuring a smooth handover of all other tasks to the European Development Fund programme PROGRESS, the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo or other partners.