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## OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3404th Council meeting

### Foreign Affairs

Brussels, 20 July 2015

President **Federica Mogherini**  
High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security  
Policy

# P R E S S

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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.

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**ITEMS DEBATED****Iran**

The Council welcomed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, agreed on 14 July in Vienna, ensuring that Iran's nuclear programme will be exclusively peaceful.

The Council approved the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council welcomes the 14 July 2015 agreement reached in Vienna between Iran and China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, with the facilitation of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign and Security Policy, on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). In the context of the long-running diplomatic efforts to reach a comprehensive, long lasting and peaceful solution to the Iranian nuclear issue, this is an historic moment.
2. The Council expresses its appreciation for the coordinating role played by the High Representative, which was instrumental in bringing these negotiations to a successful conclusion and acknowledges the support by the Austrian government in hosting the final round of the talks. The Council acknowledges the role played by France, Germany and the UK since launching the negotiations in Tehran in 2003 with the Tehran Agreement.
3. The Council recognises that the full implementation by Iran of its commitments under the JCPOA, including the Roadmap agreed with the IAEA will contribute to building international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program.
4. The Council endorses the JCPOA and commits to abide by its terms and to follow the agreed implementation plan.
5. The Council fully supports the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015) unanimously adopted on 20 July 2015 endorsing the JCPOA and urging its full implementation.
6. The Council underlines the necessity for all sides to work now towards implementing this JCPOA. The Council requests the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to continue playing a coordinating role during the implementation of the JCPOA. The Council reiterates that EU actions and commitments under the JCPOA related to the lifting of the sanctions will be carried out in accordance with the timeline and modalities specified in the JCPOA; and that the lifting of economic and financial sanctions would come into effect once the International Atomic Energy Agency has verified that Iran has implemented its nuclear-related commitments as stipulated in the JCPOA. The Council notes that the provisions under the Joint Plan of Action agreed in Geneva in 2013 have been extended for a further six months, to cover the period until the IAEA has verified that Iran has taken these actions.

7. The Council acknowledges the important role of the IAEA in the verification of the JCPOA and calls upon all countries to support the IAEA in fulfilling this important task, including through financial means.
8. The Council expresses the expectation that this positive development will open the door to a steady improvement in relations between the European Union, its Member States and Iran, as well as improved Iranian regional and international relations, and that it will constitute a basis for a more stable and secure region.
9. In light of the agreement in Vienna, the Council invites the High Representative to explore ways in which the EU could actively promote a more cooperative regional framework and to report back to the Council in the coming months."

## **Libya**

The Council was briefed by UN Special Representative Bernardino Leon on the initialling of a political agreement by the great majority of Libyan parties. Ministers discussed what more the EU could do to bring the other parties on board and to further support the efforts towards the formation of a government of national accord. The EU stands ready to support such government when formed, both economically and politically.

Aware of the sense of urgency, ministers discussed the possibility of adopting sanctions against spoilers of the dialogue process. The decision to impose such restrictive measures can be taken at any time, if and when needed.

## **Tunisia**

The Council approved conclusions on Tunisia.

Over lunch, ministers reiterated their support to Tunisia Prime Minister Habib Essid and Foreign Minister Taïeb Baccouche.

[Council conclusions on Tunisia](#)

## **Middle East peace process**

The Council discussed what the EU can do to revive the Middle East peace process and adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU reaffirms its commitment to a just and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the two state solution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign, and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security and mutual recognition. The EU reaffirms that there is no alternative to a negotiated two state solution. The regional context, including the ongoing radicalisation and spread of terrorism, makes it even more urgent to end the conflict. The status-quo is not an option, as the viability of the two state solution is constantly being eroded by new facts on the ground. The EU urges both parties to demonstrate their stated commitment to the two state solution through concrete actions. Actions by either side which call into question their stated commitment to a negotiated solution must be avoided. The EU will actively support the parties to restore confidence and create an environment of trust necessary to engage in meaningful negotiations as soon as possible.
  
2. An immediate priority must be to address the grave situation in the Gaza Strip. One year after the conflict, the humanitarian and socio-economic situation in the Gaza Strip remains dire. In light of the urgent needs of the people in Gaza, all international community pledges should be honoured. The EU furthermore expresses its concern over UNRWA's severe lack of funds and, as a leading donor to UNRWA, calls on all concerned donors to step up their funding.

The EU believes that compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law by states and non-state actors, including accountability, is a cornerstone for peace and security in the region.

3. The EU welcomes recent steps taken by Israel to ease restrictions in Gaza. However, further positive measures are now needed that enable the full delivery of humanitarian aid, reconstruction and economic recovery on a permanent basis. The EU calls for a fundamental change of the political, security and economic situation in the Gaza Strip, including the end of the closure and a full opening of the crossing points, while addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. Recent rocket fire by militant groups is unacceptable and underlines again the danger of escalation. All stakeholders must commit to non-violence and peace. The EU calls on all parties to agree on a durable ceasefire that prevents a return to conflict, strengthens Gaza, as it is an integral part of a future Palestinian state, and reinforces the link between Gaza and the West Bank.

4. The EU urges all Palestinian factions to find common ground, based on non-violence and reconciliation, and to work together to address the needs of the Palestinian population. Intra-Palestinian reconciliation is an important element for reaching the two state solution. In that regard, the EU calls on the Palestinian factions to make reconciliation and the return of the PA to Gaza a top priority. The PA must take greater responsibility in this regard and assume its government function in the Gaza Strip, including in the field of security, civil administration and through its presence at the Gaza crossing points. The EU is ready to provide full support to these efforts, including through the rapid reactivation and possible extension in scope and mandate of its EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS missions.
5. The EU is committed to working with all sides, including through implementation of existing agreements, to allow the socio-economic development of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and empower Palestinian institutions in preparation for statehood, based on the rule of law and respect for human rights. The EU stresses that actions such as the easing of restrictions must be part of a fundamental change of policy with regard to the occupied Palestinian territory. It calls on Israel to enable accelerated Palestinian construction, as well as social and economic development in Area C. Such actions will serve to strengthen the prosperity and security of both Israelis and Palestinians. It further calls on Israeli authorities to halt plans for forced transfer of population and demolition of Palestinian housing and infrastructure in the Susya and Abu Nwar communities.
6. The preservation of the viability of the two state solution is at the core of EU policy and will remain a priority. In this regard, and recalling that settlements are illegal under international law, the EU reiterates its strong opposition to Israel's settlement policy and actions taken in this context, such as building the separation barrier beyond the 1967 line, demolitions and confiscation – including of EU funded projects – evictions, forced transfers including of Bedouins, illegal outposts, settler violence and restrictions of movement and access. These actions seriously threaten the two state solution. Settlement activity in East Jerusalem seriously jeopardizes the possibility of Jerusalem serving as the future capital of both states. The EU will continue to closely monitor developments on the ground and their broader implications and remains ready to take further action in order to protect the viability of the two state solution. The EU and its Member States reaffirm their commitment to ensure continued, full and effective implementation of existing EU legislation and bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products. The EU expresses its commitment to ensure that - in line with international law – all agreements between the State of Israel and the EU must unequivocally and explicitly indicate their inapplicability to the territories occupied by Israel in 1967.



7. Securing a just and lasting peace will require an increased common international effort. The EU, notably through the action of its recently appointed Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process, will work actively on a renewed multilateral approach to the peace process in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including partners in the Quartet, notably the US, in the region and the United Nations Security Council. The establishment of an International support group is a possible way to contribute to this end; the Council asks the High Representative to explore options for implementation of this initiative with regional and international actors and to report back in early September. The EU's position on parameters, as set out in the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of July 2014, provides a basis for achieving consensus on the way forward. The EU is ready to engage in joint work with regional partners on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative, and welcomes ongoing efforts of the Quartet in this regard."

### **EU action plan on human rights and democracy**

The Council adopted the new EU action plan on human rights and democracy for 2015 to 2019 "Keeping human rights at the heart of the EU agenda".

The Council approved the following conclusions:

- "1. Welcoming the Joint Communication *"Keeping human rights at the heart of the EU agenda"*, as presented by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission, the Council adopts a new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for the period 2015-2019. With this Action Plan, the Council reaffirms the European Union's commitment to promote and protect human rights and to support democracy worldwide.
2. Based on the Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy and the 2012-2014 Action Plan, the European Union has made considerable progress in improving the impact and coherence of its actions on human rights and democracy. The EU has further developed guidelines on key human rights issues, enhanced the effectiveness of bilateral human rights and democracy work, successfully promoted action at the multilateral level, and improved the mainstreaming of human rights across the EU's external action. The Council also welcomes the important work of the EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis, who greatly contributes to the effectiveness, coherence and visibility of EU human rights policy, and expresses full political support for his work.

3. Today's complex crises and widespread violations and abuses of human rights and fundamental freedoms require ever more determined efforts by the EU. This Action Plan should enable the EU to meet these challenges through more focused action, systematic and co-ordinated use of the instruments at its disposal, and enhanced impact of its policies and tools on the ground. The EU will put special emphasis on ownership by, and co-operation with, local institutions and mechanisms, including national human rights institutions, as well as civil society. The EU will promote the principles of non-discrimination, gender equality and women's empowerment. The EU will also ensure a comprehensive human rights approach to preventing and addressing conflicts and crises, and further mainstream human rights in the external aspects of EU policies in order to ensure better policy coherence, in particular in the fields of migration, trade and investment, development cooperation and counter terrorism.
4. The EU remains committed to implementing the entire human rights and democracy agenda as reflected in the 2012 Strategic Framework for Human Rights and Democracy, which continues to guide the Union's actions, and in the EU human rights guidelines, Council Conclusions and strategy papers. The EU will continue to promote and defend the universality and indivisibility of all human rights in partnership with countries from all regions, in close cooperation with international and regional organisations, and with civil society. The EU will step up its efforts to promote a safe and enabling environment in which civil society and independent media can flourish. The EU emphasises the key contribution that civil society actors and human rights defenders make to peace and security, stability and prosperity.
5. The Council commends the important role played by the High Representative/Vice-President and the European Commission in promoting a consistent and coherent implementation of the EU's human rights policy. The Action Plan will be implemented with the close involvement of the European Parliament and regular consultation with relevant stakeholders, in particular civil society organisations. The EU is committed to improve public diplomacy and communication on its human rights actions. A mid-term review of the Action Plan will be undertaken in 2017 which will coincide with the mid-term review of the external financing instruments in order to ensure greater coherence. The Council invites all partners to contribute to the success of this Action Plan and to promote human rights and democracy around the world."

Read the action plan [here](#).

**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED****FOREIGN AFFAIRS****Migration**

The Council approved the following conclusions on migration:

- "1. The Council supports an active, comprehensive and geographically balanced EU external migration policy in accordance with the European Agenda on Migration and European Council conclusions of 25 and 26 June. A broader foreign and security policy approach is essential to strengthen cooperation with countries of origin and transit aiming at addressing root causes of and preventing irregular migration, including smuggling and trafficking, protecting persons in need of international protection, respecting the right to seek asylum, ensuring effective return and readmission, and maximising the development impact of well-managed migration and mobility. This requires working more closely with partners to stabilize fragile countries, tackling conflict, political violence, human rights violations, dire socio-economic situation and lack of good governance which fuel irregular migration and forced displacement. Such cooperation must be based on dialogue, ownership and shared responsibility.
2. Accordingly, the Council welcomes preparations for the Valletta Summit on 11 and 12 November, in close cooperation with African partners, and the high level conference addressing the pressing challenges of the Western Balkans route, taking note of the Hungarian offer to host this conference in Budapest. It will further contribute to the ongoing preparation of these meetings at its next session, following an update from the High Representative. The Council welcomes ongoing contacts and high-level dialogues with key partners on migration issues, including the recent meeting of the High Representative with the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the G5 Sahel. The Council also recalls its decision to step up cooperation with key countries and regional and international partners, including the UN, along the major migratory routes. It underlines the role EU delegations and Member States' missions play in presenting EU migration policy and enhancing cooperation on these matters.
3. The Council reiterates that migration priorities should be further mainstreamed into relevant European Union instruments and policies, including in the framework of the development and European neighbourhood policies. Coherence and synergies between different policy fields, such as Common Foreign and Security Policy/Common Security and Defence Policy, justice and home affairs, human rights, development cooperation, trade and employment, is key. It also stresses the importance of adequate funding with a view to ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of the implementation of relevant policies. The impact that migration has on the EU and countries of origin, transit and destination needs to be adequately reflected and addressed in the implementation of the European external policy.

4. The Council notes that the implementation of a comprehensive migration policy is a joint undertaking and shared responsibility for EU institutions and Member States. The Council is ready to work together with the High Representative and the Commission in their efforts to carry forward a more active, comprehensive and effective external migration policy of the European Union.
5. It calls on the High Representative and the Commission to report back to the October Foreign Affairs Council with concrete proposals to support the implementation of the external dimension of the European Agenda on Migration, taking into account the European Council statement of 23 April and its conclusions of 25 and 26 June, and ensuring coherence between internal and external policies to best effect."

### **Climate diplomacy**

The Council approved the following conclusions on climate diplomacy:

- "1. Recalling its conclusions of July 2011 and June 2013 and the Foreign Affairs Council discussion of January 2015 which endorsed the Climate Diplomacy Action Plan, the Council adopted the following conclusions:
2. Climate change, as underlined by the latest scientific findings by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is a decisive global challenge which, if not urgently managed, will put at risk not only the environment but also world economic prosperity, poverty reduction, sustainable development and, more broadly, peace, stability and security. A worldwide transition towards a safe, sustainable and climate resilient low-carbon development path is a precondition for a secure and stable future.
3. Addressing the risk-multiplying threats of a changing climate, including potential conflict and instability, related to reliable access to food, water and energy, requires effective foreign policy initiatives and responses at the global and EU level. The Council is committed to addressing the security dimension of Climate Change, including by building up its climate diplomacy component, as an inherent part of its foreign policy, and welcomes the publication of the G7 report "A new Climate for peace" as commissioned under the UK G7 Presidency and completed under the German G7 Presidency, as well as the debate in the UN Security Council on June 30 initiated by Spain on the role of Climate Change as a threat multiplier for Global Security. In this context the Council looks forward to an update of the 2009 Secretary General Report "Climate Change and its possible Security Implications".

4. The Council recalls that COP21 in Paris needs to deliver a legally binding agreement applicable to all Parties that is universal, robust, inclusive, dynamic and ambitious, with a strong transparency and accountability framework to ensure trust between the parties. It also reaffirms that the Paris agreement needs to address in a balanced manner mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology, capacity building, transparency of action, as well as to support and reflect the world's evolving geopolitical and economic realities and challenges.
5. Although political mobilization at the highest levels is strong and although an increasing number of countries have submitted Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), the Council notes with concern the slow progress of the UNFCCC negotiation process. The Council welcomes the INDCs already submitted and urges all other Parties, in particular major economies, to come forward with ambitious INDCs as soon as possible. In view of accelerating the pace, the Council welcomes the mobilisation of the current Peruvian and incoming French COP presidencies in support of the international climate negotiations and the early involvement of ministers in order to help address key elements of the negotiation and use every international forum to close the gap between the high-level political momentum and the negotiation process.
6. In this regard, the Council welcomes the Leaders' Declaration of the G7 Summit in June and that climate change has been addressed as a priority during recent summits, such as for instance the EU-CELAC and EU-China summits. It underlines the importance of keeping climate change high on the agenda for upcoming summits.
7. The Union underlines its strong engagement to cooperate with developing and emerging countries on both adaptation and mitigation, highlighting its significant contributions in terms of climate finance, including through the Green Climate Fund, and other means of implementation and its commitment to give particular attention to the needs of those countries with least capabilities.
8. The Council emphasises the need to further intensify the joint efforts in EU climate diplomacy. For the Union to facilitate further progress in the negotiation, the Council continues to communicate the fairness, credibility and ambition of its common position and notes with appreciation the activities undertaken in the EU and in partner countries in support of the Climate Diplomacy Action Plan, including the European Climate Diplomacy Day. The Council welcomes the role of the EU Green Diplomacy Network and close collaboration of all EU actors, contributing to strengthening the EU voice and efforts internationally in the fight against climate change. It encourages the EU and its Member States to reach out to partner countries making full use of their relations.
9. The Council looks forward to the conclusions of the upcoming Environment and ECOFIN Councils to set out in detail the EU's position in view of the COP21.

10. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission, in their respective role and competence, to continue coordinating and working closely with Member States, in implementing EU climate diplomacy through joint and mutually reinforcing initiatives.
11. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to report back in early 2016 the outcome of the COP21 and its implications for climate diplomacy as well as propose further actions."

## **Energy diplomacy**

The Council approved the following conclusions:

- "1. The Communication "A Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy" of 25 February 2015 and the European Council Conclusions of 19-20 March 2015 recognised the importance of the external dimension of the Energy Union. The objectives of the Energy Union can only be met if the external and the internal dimensions of energy policy, in particular a fully functioning Internal Energy Market, are mutually reinforcing.
2. EU policy objectives defined in the EU Energy Union should be supported by a coherent EU foreign and energy policy action, taking into account geopolitical developments. The Council, in line with the Energy Union's implementation roadmap and building on existing EU foreign policy engagement on energy and climate diplomacy, welcomes, as a basis for further work, the annexed EU Energy Diplomacy Action Plan presented jointly by the High Representative and the Commission. It also reaffirms the right of Member States to decide their own energy mix.

The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to ensure the follow-up of the EU Energy Diplomacy Action Plan, in close consultation and coordination with the Member States and in accordance with their respective roles and competences as determined by the Treaties.

3. In particular, the Council invites the High Representative and the Commission, while ensuring coherence with the EU's climate diplomacy, to strengthen strategic guidance on energy diplomacy, notably through regular engagement of the Council and its relevant preparatory bodies; to support the establishment of new and further development of existing energy cooperation and dialogues, particularly in support of the EU's diversification efforts and initiatives that promote sustainable energy markets; to support objectives to enhance the global energy architecture and multilateral initiatives; and to develop specific proposals for common EU messages on energy diplomacy in order to further strengthen the ability of the EU to speak with one voice, while fully respecting the membership and rules of international organisations.

4. The Council considers the following issues as key priorities for the follow-up of the Action Plan:

On diversification of sources, suppliers and routes: diplomatic support should focus on the Southern Gas Corridor, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia; the strategic potential of the Eastern-Mediterranean region; the Euro-Mediterranean energy cooperation in the Southern Neighbourhood; the wider Middle East region; new energy sources in the Americas, Africa and Australia, including the potential of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

On energy partnerships and dialogues: foreign policy instruments and channels for engagement should be used to open up opportunities for cooperation with increasingly important producing and transit countries particularly in our Neighbourhood, including the need to ensure, in line with the ongoing trilateral talks, the long-term energy supplies to and transit through Ukraine, also in the context of potential new infrastructure projects, and to further strengthen the Energy Community, notably by promoting energy reforms, including energy efficiency, among all its members; with established key EU partners such as the US, Norway and Canada as well as other major interlocutors, notably China, India, Brazil and other important countries particularly those identified in the Energy Union Framework Strategy. When the conditions are proper, the EU will proceed accordingly in reframing the energy relationship with Russia, based on a level playing field in terms of market opening, fair competition, environmental protection and safety, for the mutual benefit of both sides.

Energy partnerships and dialogues should be coherent with relevant foreign and external policy goals – including climate goals - and promote safe and sustainable low-carbon and energy efficiency technologies including with a view for business opportunities for EU companies. They should also ensure that sovereignty and sovereign rights of Member States to explore and develop their natural resources are safeguarded.

On nuclear safety: the EU remains committed to the promotion and continuous improvement of the highest level of standards in third countries.

On energy architecture and multilateral initiatives: EU energy diplomacy should support strategic engagement with relevant energy architecture and key multilateral initiatives relating to energy such as relevant G7/G20 and UN initiatives, including SE4ALL and post-2015 sustainable development goals; the International Energy Agency Association Initiative; the Energy Charter modernisation and outreach process and the efforts of IRENA to promote renewable energy.

5. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to regularly report back on the progress made on the follow-up to the EU Energy Diplomacy Action Plan."

Read the Energy Diplomacy [action plan](#).

## **Afghanistan**

The Council approved the following [conclusions on Afghanistan](#).

## **Pakistan**

The Council approved [conclusions on Pakistan](#).

## **Central African Republic**

The Council approved [conclusions on the Central African Republic](#).

## **Mali**

The Council adopted the following [conclusions on Mali](#).

## **Main aspects and basic choices of the common foreign and security policy**

The Council endorsed the annual report from High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the common foreign and security policy.

## [Common foreign and security policy](#)

## **Restrictive measures - Belarus**

The Council amended the statement of reasons for certain persons subject to restrictive measures against the Belarusian regime. These sanctions, which include a travel ban and an asset freeze, were imposed and are maintained in view of the continued violation of human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law.



## **EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction**

The Council endorsed the six-monthly progress report on the implementation of the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

## **Common position on arms exports and the implementation of the arms trade treaty**

The Council adopted [conclusions](#) relating to the review of common position on arms exports and the implementation of the arms trade treaty and endorsed a revised user's guide to the Council common position defining common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment.

## **EU position within Association Councils established by the Euro-Mediterranean agreements with South partners**

The Council adopted the EU position within Association Councils established by the Euro-Mediterranean agreements with certain countries to take account of the Regional Convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin. The Council adopted decisions on the EU position within Association Councils with Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Tunisia. The Council also adopted the EU position within the joint committee established by the Euro-Mediterranean interim Association Agreement on trade and cooperation between the EU and the Palestine Liberation Organization for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza strip on the same matter.

## **DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

### **Agreement on trade, development and cooperation between the EU and South Africa**

The Council adopted a decision adding a protocol to the agreement on trade, development and cooperation between the EU and South Africa to take account of the accession of Croatia to the EU.

## **COHESION POLICY**

### **Flat rate for net revenue-generating projects**

The Council decided not to object to a Commission regulation establishing a flat rate for net revenue-generating projects funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds in the research, development and innovation sector ([10044/15](#)). The flat rate determines in advance the potential net revenues of such projects and allows for the establishment of the eligible expenditure.

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. This means that now that the Council has decided not to object to it, the act can enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects to it.

## **TRADE POLICY**

### **Kazakhstan - Accession to the World Trade Organization**

The Council adopted a decision in favour of the accession of Kazakhstan to the World Trade Organization.

Kazakhstan started its process of accession to the WTO in 1996.

## **ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**

### **Requirements applying to institutions exposed to securitisation risk**

The Council decided not to object to the adoption by the Commission of a regulation correcting regulation 625/2014, which supplements regulation 575/2013 by way of regulatory technical standards specifying the requirements for investor, sponsor, original lenders and originator institutions relating to exposures to transferred credit risk ([10540/15](#)).

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. It can now enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects.

**ENVIRONMENT****Quality of water for human consumption**

The Council confirmed that there are no grounds for opposing the draft measures ([8991/15](#) + ADD1) proposed by the Commission amending annexes II and III to the 1998 Council Directive on quality of water intended for human consumption.

This implies that, unless the European Parliament opposes them, the Commission may adopt the proposed measures.

**FISHERIES****Conservation of migratory sharks - Council conclusions**

The Council adopted conclusions on the position of the EU and its member states with a view to the second Meeting of the Signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MoU). One conclusion concerns the decision-making procedures and the other a technical update of a list of species.

The Sharks MoU is a non-legally binding instrument, the purpose of which is to address the conservation of shark species as marine biological resources. The EU and several member states (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom) are signatories to the Sharks MoU which was signed in November 2011, following the conclusions adopted by the Council on 28 June 2011 ([12025/11](#)).

**ENLARGEMENT****EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association agreement - Croatia's accession to the EU**

The Council authorised the conclusion of a protocol to the EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association agreement to take account of the accession of Croatia to the EU on 1 July 2013.

The European Parliament gave its consent on 8 July 2015.

**AUDIOVISUAL****Conditional access to audiovisual services**

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the European Convention on the legal protection of services based on, or consisting of, conditional access ([7597/1/14 REV 1](#)). It also decided to enter the statements contained in [10645/15 ADD 1](#) in the minutes of the meeting.

The decision on the signing of the Convention was adopted by the Council on 14 April 2014 ([OJ L 128, 30.4.2014](#)) and the European Parliament gave its consent on 19 May 2015.

The Convention of the Council of Europe entered into force on 1 July 2003 ([OJ L 336, 20.12.2011](#)). It establishes a regulatory framework for combating illicit devices which allow unauthorised access to television services offered against payment. This framework is almost identical to that set out in Directive [98/84/EC](#)<sup>1</sup>, the current EU legislation in this field, covering both television and radio broadcasting services and transmission by Internet.

The conclusion of the Convention will contribute to extending the application of those provisions beyond the borders of the Union, and to create common and effective legislation for the protection of services based on conditional access.

**APPOINTMENTS****European Economic and Social Committee**

The Council appointed Mr Gustavs NORKĀRKLIS (Latvia) a member of the European Economic and Social Committee for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 20 September 2015.

**New member of the European Court of Auditors**

The Council appointed Ms Bettina Michelle Jakobsen (Denmark) a member of the European Court of Auditors for the period from 1 September 2015 to 28 February 2018. Ms Jakobsen replaces Mr Henrik OTBO who died on 1 February 2015 for the remainder of his term of office.

The European Court of Auditors is the EU's independent external auditor. Its task is to check that EU funds are correctly accounted for, are raised and spent in accordance with the relevant rules and have provided value for money. The Court is composed of 28 members, one from each member state. The members are appointed by the Council, after consultation with the European Parliament, for a renewable term of six years.

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<sup>1</sup> [OJ L 320, 28.11.1998,](#)