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Foreign Affairs

including Defence issues

Brussels, 13 November 2017

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

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ITEMS DEBATED

EU-Africa relations

The Council discussed EU-Africa relations in preparation for the 5th African Union - EU Summit, taking place on 29-30 November in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Ministers welcomed the focus on youth and underlined the importance of broad participation in the Summit.

In their discussion, ministers mentioned many of the common challenges foreseen to be discussed at the Summit, including job creation, climate change, peace and security, and migration and mobility.

[Fifth AU-EU Summit, 29 and 30 November 2017](#)

Strategic communication

Foreign ministers took stock of the current work on EU strategic communications, in particular as regards outreach to the **Eastern Partnership** region, the Southern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans.

They agreed to enhance further the work and expressed their support for the development of three task forces. Member states underlined the importance of conveying positive EU messages in the EU's neighbourhood, as well as the need to counter disinformation where and when needed.

Security and defence cooperation

Over lunch, foreign affairs ministers and defence ministers discussed the implementation of the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence. The Council then adopted conclusions on security and defence in the context of the EU Global Strategy.

[Security and defence cooperation: Council highlights the significant progress made \(press release and link to Council conclusions\)](#)

EU-NATO cooperation

The Council met in defence format and discussed EU-NATO cooperation together with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. Ministers noted in particular the fact that the work within the EU framework, in particular on PESCO and on military mobility, will benefit both organisations.

In the margins

Permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) notification

Ministers from 23 member states signed a joint notification on the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and handed it over to the High Representative and the Council.

The possibility of the Permanent Structured Cooperation in the area of defence security and defence policy was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty. It foresees the possibility of a number of EU member states working more closely together in the area of security and defence. This permanent framework for defence cooperation will allow those member states willing and able to jointly develop defence capabilities, invest in shared projects, or enhance the operational readiness and contribution of their armed forces.

The member states who signed the joint notification are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. It is possible for other member states to join at a later stage.

The joint notification is the first formal step to set up the PESCO. It sets out:

- the principles of the PESCO, in particular underlining that the "PESCO is an ambitious, binding and inclusive European legal framework for investments in the security and defence of the EU's territory and its citizens"
- the list of "ambitious and more binding common commitments" the member states have agreed to undertake, including "regularly increasing defence budgets in real terms in order to reach agreed objectives",
- proposals on PESCO governance, with an overarching level maintaining the coherence and the ambition of the PESCO, complemented by specific governance procedures at projects level.

The Council now has to adopt a decision establishing PESCO by reinforced qualified majority. This could take place at the next Foreign Affairs Council (11 December).

A first list of projects to be undertaken within the PESCO framework should be agreed by the participating member states once PESCO has been established. These could cover areas such as training, capabilities development and operational readiness in the field of defence.

[Joint notification by member states to the High Representative and to the Council on PESCO](#)

[Permanent structured cooperation factsheet \(EEAS\)](#)

European Defence Agency steering board

Ministers of defence met in the European Defence Agency (EDA) Steering Board under the chairmanship of Federica Mogherini in her capacity as Head of the Agency. All EU member states except Denmark participate.

The European defence agenda issued a press release: [Outcome of EDA Ministerial Steering Board of 13 November 2017](#)

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FOREIGN AFFAIRS****Venezuela**

The Council adopted conclusions on Venezuela and targeted sanctions in view of the situation.

Council conclusions on Venezuela:

- "1. The European Union (EU) recalls its Council conclusions of July 2016 and May 2017 and reaffirms that constructive dialogue and negotiation are the only sustainable way to address the current crisis and to respond to the pressing needs of the people of Venezuela. Therefore it stands ready to support a credible negotiation involving all relevant actors that can lead to shared solutions to the multiple challenges in the country.
2. Recently, the 15 October Gubernatorial elections took place amidst reported numerous irregularities and the results were not recognised by a large part of the opposition. The EU calls for full transparency on the results of these elections through a comprehensive and independent audit. In order to regain the people's trust in elections, it is important to ensure credible electoral processes and a more balanced composition of the National Electoral Council. The EU also expresses its concern about the lack of respect for the constitutionally established mechanisms in the appointment and functioning of the new Governors, including the disqualification of the Governor-elect of Zulia State.
3. These developments have accentuated the political polarisation in the country. The setting-up of an all-powerful Constituent Assembly further eroded the democratic and independent institutions. The EU reiterates that it cannot recognise the Constituent Assembly or its acts because of serious concerns about its legitimacy and representativeness. The EU recalls the importance of the respect for the prerogatives of the National Assembly and its Members and the independence of the judiciary. Reports, including by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms are an additional reason for alarm, as are the increasing urgent needs of the population that are affecting their rights, such as the right to food and the right to health.

4. In this context, in addition to its political and diplomatic efforts in support of a peaceful negotiated way out of the political crisis, the Council has today decided by unanimity to adopt restrictive measures, underscoring its concerns with the situation in the country. These consist of an embargo on arms and on related material that might be used for internal repression, as well as a legal framework for a travel ban and assets freeze.
5. These measures will be used in a gradual and flexible manner and can be expanded, by targeting those involved in the non-respect of democratic principles or the rule of law and the violation of human rights. The measures can be reversed depending on the evolution of the situation in the country, in particular the holding of credible and meaningful negotiations, the respect for democratic institutions, the adoption of a full electoral calendar and the liberation of all political prisoners. These measures were designed not to harm the Venezuelan population whose plight the EU wishes to alleviate.
6. The primary responsibility for ending the crisis in Venezuela lies in the country. The EU calls upon the government to urgently restore democratic legitimacy, including through free and fair elections, and on the opposition to continue engaging in a united manner towards a negotiated solution to the current tensions, in the interest of the country. The EU reiterates its full support to regional and international efforts to find a lasting solution to the crisis."

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army (FARC)

The Council adopted the legal acts providing for the removal of FARC from the EU list of individuals and entities subject to restrictive measures to combat terrorism (Common Position 2001/931/CFSP).

FARC's inclusion on the EU terrorist list has been suspended since September 2016, following the signing of the initial Peace Agreement between the Government of Colombia and FARC. As the demobilisation and disarmament process in Colombia is being completed, and as the peace agreement is being implemented, the Council decided to proceed with the full delisting of FARC, which ceased to exist as an armed group on 1 September 2017.

Council conclusions on resilience in EU's external action

The Council adopted conclusions on a strategic approach to resilience in the EU's external action. The EU strategy for resilience building aims at moving from crisis containment to a more structured and long-term approach to global challenges. It places particular emphasis on anticipation, prevention and preparedness.

The Council invited the High Representative, the Commission and the member states to take forward the work on the four building blocks proposed in the joint communication by the High Representative and the Commission of 7 June 2017 by:

- improving the shared analysis of risk at country and regional level
- more dynamic monitoring of external pressures
- integrating the resilience approach into current EU programming and into reflections on the future of financing EU external action
- developing international policy and practice on resilience

This work forms one of the major pillars of the implementation of the EU Global Strategy.

[Read the full text of the Council conclusions](#)

EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia

The Council appointed Toivo Klaar as EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia. His task will be to contribute to a peaceful settlement of conflicts in the region, namely the crisis in Georgia and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as well as to encourage regional cooperation. In particular, the Special Representative co-chairs and participates on behalf of the EU in the Geneva International Discussions on the consequences of the 2008 conflict in Georgia.

See the [press release](#)

North Korea

The Council adopted a regulation reviewing the list of luxury goods subject to an import and export ban with regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

[EU restrictive measures on the North Korea](#)

Relations with Jordan

The Council adopted a decision to open negotiations on a Missions Framework Participation Agreement with Jordan. The agreement will aim at making possible the participation of Jordan in EU crisis management operations.

[EU delegation to Jordan](#)

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

EU requirements catalogue 2017

The Council approves the requirements catalogue 2017 which identifies the military capability requirements for the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) stemming from the EU Level of Ambition as agreed by the Council in November 2016, taking into account the three strategic priorities deriving from the EU Global Strategy. The three strategic priorities are: responding to external conflicts and crises, building partners' capacities and protecting the EU and its citizens.

The requirements catalogue for 2017 is broader than it was previously, and also takes into account new threats. Work will continue in implementing the catalogue's recommendations as regards the identification and assessment of the EU's military capability shortfalls, with a view to identifying priorities for EU capability development.

European Defence Agency report

The Council endorsed the European Defence Agency (EDA) report.

Guidelines for the work of the European Defence Agency in 2018

The Council adopted the guidelines for the work of the European Defence Agency in 2018 ([14189/17](#)).

WESTERN BALKANS

EU - Albania Stabilisation and Association Council

The Council established the EU position ahead of the ninth meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Council between the EU and Albania which will take place on 15 November in Brussels.

ENLARGEMENT

EU - Serbia Stabilisation and Association Council

The Council established the EU position ahead of the fourth meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Council between the EU and Serbia which will take place on 16 November in Brussels.
