



Council of the
European Union

010321/EU XXVII.GP
Eingelangt am 06/02/20

Brussels, 6 February 2020
(OR. en)

13415/04
DCL 1

ASIE 38
COASI 62
PESC 850
PVD 73

DECLASSIFICATION

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| of document: | 13415/04 RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED |
| dated: | 13 October 2004 |
| new status: | Public |

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|----------|---|
| Subject: | Report of the Asia–Oceania Working Group of 30 September 2004 |
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Delegations will find attached the declassified version of the above document.

The text of this document is identical to the previous version.

RESTREINT UE



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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 13 October 2004

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

To : Delegations

From : General Secretariat of the Council

Subject : Report of the Asia–Oceania Working Group of 30 September 2004

Please find in annex the report of the Asia–Oceania Working Group of 30 September 2004.

I. OPERATIONAL CONCLUSIONS

Afghanistan

1. Presidency and Commission will convene an EU experts meeting on Afghanistan in due course after the presidential elections on 9 October to discuss the EU's future policy towards Afghanistan, in particular with regard to the political process, security issues and counter-narcotics. The Policy Unit will contribute to the preparation of the meeting, in particular with the paper, that PSC requested on 21 September.
2. EUSR Vendrell and EU HOMs in Kabul are invited to make another demarche to President Karzai concerning the recent allegations made by the Minister of Planning against NGOs and on the apparent impunity of the murderers of staff members of Médecins Sans Frontières.
3. Following the presidential elections, the Presidency will consider issuing on 11 October a Presidency declaration in consultation with EUSR Vendrell and the DESM. Thereafter, once the results of the elections will be clearer, the Presidency will consult with all Member States on a more substantial EU declaration to be issued in due course.

India

4. COASI finalised the draft council conclusions for adoption by PSC/Coreper and Council. One member state placed a scrutiny reserve on par 11. The Presidency will circulate a new version of the draft Council conclusions on the Commission's Communication "An EU-India Strategic Partnership" with a view to endorsement by PSC and COREPER and approval by the GAERC on 11 October 2004.
5. The next preparatory meeting with the Indian side for the EU-India Summit will take place on 1 October. At this occasion, the Presidency will present the EU's views on the draft agenda, the draft Press Statement and the draft Declaration on Cultural Co-operation, taking into account the comments made in the discussion. Thereafter, the Presidency will report to PSC and COREPER on the state of play of preparations for the Summit.

Maldives

6. The Presidency will redraft the letter that Foreign Minister Bot will send on behalf of the EU to the Foreign Minister of the Maldives, on the basis of comments received.
7. Member States and the Commission are invited to continue monitoring the further political developments on the Maldives. When the time is ripe, the troika of EU HOMs in Colombo should carry out another visit to Malé to follow up on the commitments made by the Government.

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Indonesia

8. The Presidency will circulate a new version of the draft Council conclusions on Indonesia with a view to endorsement by PSC and COREPER and approval by the GAERC on 11 October 2004.
9. The Group endorsed the COASI Policy Paper on Indonesia (LON/0563/04) and agreed that the paper should be regularly updated, in principle every six months.
10. The Presidency informed Partners on the EU FM troika with Indonesia on 28 October in Jakarta.

ASEM – Information on preparation for SOM (6 October) and Summit (7-9 October)

11. In order to achieve better co-ordination and avoid unnecessary duplications, the Presidency invited delegations to notify other partners about the issues their HOSG planned to address during the Summit.
12. The German delegation announced that its Chancellor intended to address the issue of multilateralism. The future of ASEM would probably be among the issues to be addressed by the Austrian Chancellor.

DPRK – Possible troika of regional directors

13. The Group endorsed the Presidency's suggestion to organise a troika meeting with the DPRK, at regional directors level, possibly around mid-November. The Presidency would soon circulate Terms of Reference for this meeting.

Bhutanese refugees

14. The Presidency will circulate a Coreu suggesting possible actions by the international community on this issue.

South East Asia

15. The Group agreed, with a reservation by Germany, that the EU could announce at the ASEM summit its intention to open negotiations with Thailand and Singapore for individual framework agreements on partnership and co-operation. The German delegation was invited to reconsider the reservation and inform the Presidency as soon as possible.

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China

16. The Commission is invited to seek clarifications from the Chinese side as to whether China would be politically interested in a new framework agreement to replace the Economic Co-operation Agreement of 1985 and as to whether China could accept, in principle, the substance of the "standard clauses".

Other points

Afghanistan

17. The Group discussed the political situation in Afghanistan, especially the electoral process, and the implementation of the recommendations by EUSR Vendrell in SEC/1858/04. The Group welcomed the activities and reports so far of DESM. It also noted that a considerable number of EU Embassies in Islamabad and Teheran would be involved, in co-ordination with DESM, in monitoring the out-of-country voting of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran. The Commission apologised for the fact that certain statements by individual DESM members may have created some confusion. The official line was that the Commission and DESM were unequivocally and actively encouraging Member States to participate in the monitoring of out-of-country voting.

India

18. The Group noted the results of the EU-India expert meeting of 17 September (COM/357/04).

Indonesia

19. The Group welcomed the successful and democratic presidential elections. Several delegations felt that the EU should wait until the official inauguration ceremony on 20 October to officially congratulate the winning candidate, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.
20. The Commission regretted the issuing of a Presidency statement on the elections one day before the publication of the evaluation of the EU Electoral Observation Mission, in contradiction with the EU guidelines on electoral observation.
21. The Group welcomed the COASI Policy Paper on Indonesia and suggested some further ideas for forthcoming revisions of the paper, such as exploring the possibility of a Third Generation agreement with Indonesia and seeking regular contacts with moderate Islamic organisations.
22. The Indonesian authorities had approached the Presidency and the UK in order to organise a conference on moderate Islam. The EU side might use the opportunity of the forthcoming Hanoi Summit to brainstorm on this topic with Asian partners. The Presidency will share some ideas with Member States by Coreu.

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23. The Presidency informed Partners that an expert meeting on JCLEC will be organised mid October.

ASEM – Information on preparation for SOM (6 October) and Summit (7-9 October)

24. The Group took note that the Prime Minister of Luxembourg would replace the Prime Minister of the Netherlands at the Summit for the EU Presidency functions. The Netherlands Foreign Minister would participate in the meeting as head of the Dutch delegation. An updated list of Heads of Delegation was circulated in the room (Doc. 138/04). It was confirmed that the Burmese Head of Delegation was a representative of the Prime Minister's office.
25. The Presidency and Commission had prepared a consolidated text including EU comments to the Chairman's statement, which had been circulated by Coreu (HAG 1035/04) and handed over to the Vietnamese host. It was expected that this text, as well as the draft Declaration on closer economic partnership and the draft declaration on cultures and civilisations would be finalised at the SOM in Hanoi on 6 October.
26. The Polish delegation announced that a conference on dialogue among civilisations would be organised in Warsaw in 2005. Details of the initiative would be provided at the Hanoi SOM. It asked for this initiative to be officially added to the ASEM programme for 2005.
27. The Presidency also announced that an informal "ad-hoc" meeting would take place in Hanoi on 7 October with the Prime Minister of Vietnam. The Luxembourg Prime Minister would represent the Presidency.

AOB

Nepal

28. The Group took note of the briefing by the Commission on the EC-Nepal Joint Commission Meeting on 21 September 2004.

Bangladesh

29. The Group took note of information by the Commission on logistics and agenda for the expert meeting on Bangladesh on 21 October 2004 (COM/355/04).

COASI Semestrial report

30. The Commission asked delegations for feedback on the report (on formats, possible improvements etc.). The Presidency suggested that the report could be discussed as a formal agenda item at the next COASI meeting in regional directors format.

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China

31. The Presidency and the Commission briefed the Group on the latest session of the human rights dialogue with China (Beijing, 24 September) and the visit of the EU troika of human rights experts to Tibet (Lhasa, 20-23 September), cf. SEC/1969/04 and SEC/1968/04. The Presidency also informed that GAERC on 11 October would adopt conclusions on the evaluation of the human rights dialogue.
32. The Presidency also explained that during the GAERC lunch of 11 October, Ministers would be invited to take stock of work done in the China arms embargo dossier, with no specific decision expected.
33. The Commission informed the group on latest developments concerning the readmission/visa facilitation talks with China. Further to recent meetings of the SCIFA and the Visa Groups, the Presidency will draft an inventory of EU main interests, to be used in forthcoming visa facilitation talks. The Commission reminded delegations that readmission is a key Summit deliverable for the EU.

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