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Foreign Affairs

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President

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Policy

P R E S S

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¹ • 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

Gulf region

The Council held a strategic discussion on the EU's approach to the Gulf and how to strengthen the EU's presence in the region.

Ministers acknowledged the key role that Gulf partners could play in foreign policy issues, such as the crisis in Afghanistan. They discussed the need to actively support and accompany the positive momentum in the region in areas that could help to build confidence, while also contributing to the EU's global agenda (e.g. green transition, digital and trade). The Council also focused on the need to support socio-economic reforms and openly discuss issues where there is disagreement, for instance human rights.

The ministerial discussion will feed into preparations for a Joint Communication on a 'Partnership with the Gulf', which is due for adoption in the first quarter of 2022. An EU-Gulf Cooperation council will also take place in early 2022.

Eastern Partnership

Foreign Affairs Ministers exchanged views on the EU's relations with the Eastern Partnership (EaP), in preparation for the ministerial meeting that will take place in November and the EaP summit scheduled for December in Brussels.

Ministers discussed the difficult geopolitical situation faced by some partner countries in the region, and agreed that the EU would keep championing fundamental values such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law and anti-corruption. At the same time the EU will remain focused on long-term socio-economic recovery, making sure it is sustainable and inclusive and delivers real results for the people.

The EU will also support partners with vaccines, vaccine certificates and the fight against disinformation.

Ethiopia

Over lunch the Foreign Affairs Council exchanged views on the situation in Ethiopia, in light of the latest developments in the country and in the Tigray region, one year after the conflict began.

The High Representative announced that the Council would prepare an adequate response, possibly including sanctions, to the upcoming United Nations human rights report expected on 1 November.

Ministers agreed to continue providing humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia. They supported the upcoming mission of the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen, who will travel to Ethiopia together with the EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa, Annette Weber, to convey a clear message on behalf of the EU on the need to implement a ceasefire and start a political process involving all actors.

Nicaragua

Over lunch the Foreign Affairs Council also exchanged views on the situation in Nicaragua. Since 2018, violent suppression of protests has killed at least 328 people.

Ministers reflected in particular on the need to adjust EU policies in relation to the upcoming general elections in the country on 7 November 2021, for which the prospects of a credible and legitimate electoral process are very weak.

The EU will continue to insist on democracy, human rights and the rule of law, such as the release of political prisoners, the return of international human rights organisations and the holding of free and fair elections.

Current affairs

The Foreign Affairs Council discussed the deteriorating humanitarian and economic situation in Afghanistan. They concurred that a minimal EU presence in Kabul was necessary to support the Afghan people and ensure safe passage for Afghans at risk, but that this did not imply any EU recognition of the Taliban government.

Tunisia was also discussed in light of recent developments. Ministers stressed the importance of preserving the democratic acquis, respecting the separation of powers and resuming institutional normalcy. The recent appointment of a new government was seen as an initial, positive step which the EU would keep monitoring closely.

Ministers then touched on the Western Balkans, following on from the recent summit in Brdo and against the background of recent tensions in the north of Kosovo. The EU will continue its strong political engagement in the region, follow through with the important foreign and security policy tasks ensuing from the summit, and facilitate dialogue on the comprehensive normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

In the light of the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), the Council discussed climate diplomacy. Ministers underlined the importance for all countries to submit mitigation plans and long-term zero-emission strategies without delay.

Ministers were then informed about recent developments regarding Varosha, and expressed strong solidarity with Greece and Cyprus concerning the Turkish interventions against vessels operating in their exclusive economic zones. The High Representative underlined that the only long-lasting solution to the issues was a Cyprus settlement in line with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the principles on which the EU is founded.

The Council also had a long discussion on Belarus and the issue of migrants being pushed towards the EU border. Ministers warned against the political use of migrants by the Belarusian regime and underlined that contact with countries of origin and transit would continue, as well as work on an appropriate EU response.

Before concluding the meeting, the Council also touched on Mali. Ministers looked at the EU's financial and political leverage, including the possibility of considering restrictive measures, in support of efforts by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and in line with the conclusions adopted by the European Council in May, against those hindering the transition agenda.

Council conclusions

The Council approved conclusions on Bosnia and Herzegovina and EUFOR's Operation Althea.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Restrictive measures on arms in the Central African Republic

The Council adopted a decision and a regulation amending the current restrictive measures against the Central African Republic in view of its situation. The amendments are a transposition of UN Resolution [2588 \(2021\)](#), which extends the exemptions to the arms embargo and broadens the scope of the restrictive measures.

Staff Regulations of the European Union Satellite Centre

The Council adopted a decision concerning the Staff Regulations of the European Union Satellite Centre (SATCEN), which will be aligned with the Staff Regulations of Officials, the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the EU, and the Staff Regulations of the European Defence Agency. The SATCEN Staff Regulations will provide for the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union to rule on disputes between SATCEN and its staff members.

Restrictive measures in Burundi

The Council adopted a decision regarding restrictive measures in Burundi in view of the situation there. The sanctions regime was renewed for one year, until 31 October 2022. The Council decided that the persons and entities subject to restrictive measures should continue to be included in the list.

African Union – European Union Foreign Affairs Ministerial Meeting

The Council approved a draft joint communiqué prepared by the EU and the African Union (AU). The joint communiqué analyses various matters, including investments in human capital (education, science, technology and skills development), strengthening resilience, peace, security and governance, migration and mobility. Furthermore, it includes a section on the mobilisation of investments for African structural sustainable transformation and cooperation on the global scene. The AU and the EU will continuously monitor the implementation of the proposals.

European Security and Defence College's budget

The Council adopted a decision establishing the European Security and Defence College's budget, which is EUR 1 975 752.04. The financial reference amount refers to the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.

Barents Euro-Arctic Council – Tromsø Declaration

The Council approved the text of the draft Barents Euro-Arctic Council's Tromsø Declaration. The declaration underlines the importance of regional cooperation for stability and people-to-people contact, notes the serious challenges of climate change and recognises the importance of developing viable Barents communities.

EU POSITIONS IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) – EU coordination

The Council approved the text of an information note and endorsed the recommended EU position contained in it. The information note can now be used as the basis for interventions of representatives of the EU member states that are members of the ICAO council at the ICAO council's 224th session (12291/21 + ADD 1).

EU-Jordan partnership and the EU position's regarding the definition of 'origination products'

The Council decided to amend Protocol 3 of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, which concerns the definition of the concept of 'originating products' and methods of administrative cooperation. Furthermore, minor technical changes may be agreed upon by the EU representatives in the Association Council without a further decision of the Council.

Extension of the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities

The Council adopted a decision ([12252/21](#)) regarding the association between the European Communities and their member states, and the Arab Republic of Egypt. The validity of the EU-Egypt partnership priorities will be extended until such time that new updated partnership priorities are adopted by the Association Council.

Extension of the EU-Algeria Partnership Priorities

The Council adopted a decision ([12251/21](#)) regarding the association between the European Communities and their member states, and the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. The validity of the EU-Algeria partnership priorities will be extended until such time that new updated partnership priorities are adopted by the Association Council.

Extension of the EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities

The Council adopted a decision ([12261/21](#)) regarding the association between the European Communities and their member states, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The validity of the EU-Jordan partnership priorities will be extended until such time that new updated partnership priorities are adopted by the Association Council.

Extension of the EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities

The Council adopted a decision ([12263/21](#)) regarding the association between the European Communities and their member states, and the Republic of Lebanon. The validity of the EU-Lebanon partnership priorities will be extended until such time that new updated joint documents are adopted by the Association Council.

Extension of the EU-Tunisia Strategic Priorities

The Council adopted a decision ([12255/21](#)) regarding the association between the European Communities and their member states, and the Republic of Tunisia. The validity of the EU-Tunisia strategic priorities will be extended until such time that new updated strategic priorities are adopted by the Association Council.

TRANSPORT

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) – High-Level Conference on COVID-19

The Council approved the text of a draft ministerial declaration for the ICAO High-Level Conference on COVID-19, with respect to areas of the EU's exclusive competence. It also agreed that if adjustments to the text are required in order to ensure the consensus of all participating states, the text may be adapted accordingly, provided that the changes do not affect the substance and intent of the text (12323/21; 12408/21).
