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3742nd Council meeting

Foreign Affairs

Brussels, 20 January 2020

President

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High Representative for the Foreign Affairs and Security
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.

ITEMS DEBATED

Current affairs

The Foreign Affairs Council was informed about the outcome of the Berlin conference on Libya of 19 January. The Council discussed how the EU can engage more forcefully in the process towards a political solution, in particular to help implement the agreed ceasefire and enforce the UN arms embargo.

The Council then touched on the situation in Bolivia. Ministers restated their support for the process that will lead to general elections on 3 May 2020.

Ministers also referred to Venezuela, following a further escalation of the crisis related to recent events in the National Assembly. They restated their support for Juan Guaidó as President of the National Assembly.

Finally the High Representative briefly reported on his trip to New Delhi, India, where he participated in the Raisina Dialogue and discussed with the Indian authorities preparations for the upcoming 15th EU-India Summit, scheduled for 13 March.

[The Berlin Conference on Libya: Conference conclusions](#)

[Joint Statement by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the High Representative/Vice-President, Josep Borrell Fontelles, on the Berlin conference, 19 January 2020](#)

[Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the situation in Bolivia, press release 15 November 2019](#)

[Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the latest developments on the National Assembly of Venezuela, 9 January 2020](#)

Sahel

The Council exchanged views on the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel and the role the EU can play as leading partner and donor in the region, following the France-G5 Sahel summit that took place in Pau on 13 January.

The Council expressed support for renewing and scaling up the existing Sahel Strategy with a view to increasing the impact of EU's action in support of security, stability and development. Ministers emphasised the importance of an integrated approach ensuring maximum synergies between the different actors involved and resources deployed, as well as ensuring ownership of the G5 Sahel countries.

In their interventions, ministers also touched on the upcoming meeting with the G5 Sahel, which the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, intends to organise in the margins of the March 2020 European Council.

[G5 Sahel – Pau Summit – Statement by the Heads of State, 13 January 2020](#)

[Council conclusions on the Sahel, press release 13 May 2019](#)

Climate diplomacy

The Council discussed ways to step up and enhance its climate diplomacy, and adopted conclusions on the matter.

Ministers referred in particular to possible concrete actions to effectively reach out to third countries, generate more climate ambition at global level and enhance implementation from key partners and emitters.

[Climate diplomacy: Council renews the EU's commitment to place climate action at the centre of external policy, press release 20 January 2020](#)

[European Council Conclusions, press release 12 December 2019](#)

Middle East peace process and the wider region

Over a working lunch, EU foreign ministers informally discussed the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) and the wider Middle East. These discussions built on the outcome of the 10 January 2020 extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council, which focused on the current situation in Libya and Iraq. In this context ministers also touched on the future of the JCPoA, the Iran nuclear deal. The High Representative stressed that he would continue to engage with all relevant actors in the region.

[Statement by High Representative Borrell as Coordinator of the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Dispute Resolution Mechanism](#)

[Middle East Peace Process \(EEAS\)](#)

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FOREIGN AFFAIRS****EU-Ecuador Dialogue on Human Rights: Terms of Reference**

The Council approved the Terms of Reference for the EU-Ecuador Dialogue on Human Rights.

Since 2014 the European Union and Ecuador have met at least once a year to review the state of their relationship and discuss issues of common interest. Under this bilateral consultation mechanism the topic of human rights has been addressed, alongside others issues of common interest.

EU-Kazakhstan: Council Decision on the conclusion of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and its member states, on the one hand, and the Republic of Kazakhstan, on the other ([12409/16](#)). The Council decision will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union in accordance with Article 17(1)(a) of the Council's Rules of Procedure.

17th EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Council on 20 January 2020: Establishment of the EU position

The Council approved the position to be taken by the European Union at the 17th meeting of the EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Council that took place on 20 January 2020 in Brussels.

GENERAL AFFAIRS**Renewal of the Committee of the Regions**

The Council appointed 120 members and 114 alternate members to the Committee of the Regions for its new five-year term running from 26 January 2020 to 25 January 2025 ([14986/19](#)).

The members and alternate members of the committee are appointed by the Council in accordance with the proposals made by each member state.

The Committee of the Regions currently consists of 350 representatives of regional or local bodies who either hold a regional or local authority electoral mandate or are politically accountable to an elected assembly. The size of the committee will be reduced to 329 members once the UK leaves the EU.

The Council made a first batch of appointments for the committee's new term on 10 December 2019 ([14233/19](#)). The remaining appointments will be made at a later date.

TRANSPARENCY

Public access to documents

The European Council approved on 15 January 2020 the reply to confirmatory application No 39/c/01/19 ([EUCO 35/19](#)).

On 20 January 2020, the Council adopted by written procedure the reply to confirmatory application No 38/c/01/19 ([14533/19](#)).
