



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 16 November 2020
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ASIE 27
COASI 40
PESC 620
PVD 55

DECLASSIFICATION

of document: ST 11052/04 RESTREINT UE
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Subject: Report of the Asia–Oceania Working Group of 8 July 2004

Delegations will find attached the declassified version of the above document.

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

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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

To : Delegations
From : General Secretariat of the Council
Subject : Report of the Asia–Oceania Working Group of 8 July 2004

Please find in annex the report of the Asia–Oceania Working Group of 8 July 2004.

I. OPERATIONAL CONCLUSIONS

India

1. Member States are invited to circulate via coreu, by the end of July 2004, their comments on the Commission Communication on an EU-India strategic partnership (doc. 10773/04 + ADD1). COASI on 22 July will pursue the discussion on the Commission communication. On the basis of all these elements (and taking into account, if available by then, a response formulated by India), the Presidency will elaborate draft Council conclusions for consideration at the COASI meeting on 2 September 2004. The Council will be seized of the matter in due time before the EU-India Summit in The Hague, 14 October 2004.
2. The Commission will consider favourably the idea of convening an informal meeting of EU experts on India, possibly by the end of September 2004.

Bhutan

3. The Presidency and the Commission will participate in a briefing on the refugee situation in Bhutan/Nepal to be organised by the UN Secretariat in New York, possibly in July 2004, following the recent mission made by UN-ASG Samuel on behalf of UNSG Annan. COASI will discuss the issue again at its next meeting in the light of information gathered in New York.

Pakistan

4. With regard to the proposed Agreement on non-proliferation of WMD and counter-terrorism (SEC/1264/04 COR 1), the Presidency will pursue consultations with colleagues from CONOP, the Council Secretariat/Legal Service and others on the legal and horizontal aspects of the file and present proposals on the way forward to COASI on 2 September 2004.

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5. The Group agreed that, notwithstanding the disappointing results of the second round of negotiations on a readmission agreement (COM/250/04), the EU should for the time being refrain from making a formal linkage between successful negotiations on readmission, on the one hand, and upgrading the political dialogue (HAG/372/04) and implementing the 3rd Generation Co-operation Agreement, on the other. It should, however, be made unmistakably clear in contacts with the Pakistani side that a positive development of the overall relationship can only be achieved in a climate of good faith and respect for earlier commitments to conclude a readmission agreement.

Afghanistan

6. The Presidency will circulate via coreu draft Council conclusions for the GAERC on 12 July 2004.
7. The Presidency will convey to HOMs in Kabul the positive and supportive comments made on their proposals for EU support to the political process in Afghanistan (HAG/373/04). Delegations are invited to circulate via coreu any specific comments on this document.

Burma illegal logging

8. The Presidency will reflect with the Commission on possible ways of addressing this issue, including through UN involvement.
9. Coasi will revert to this matter at one of its forthcoming meetings.

(AOB) Sri Lanka

10. Presidency and Commission will pursue their efforts to reach agreement with the other Co-Chairs of the peace process in Sri Lanka (US, Norway, Japan) on issuing a joint declaration condemning the recent suicide bomb attack in Colombo and expressing concern about the current state of the peace process.

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(AOB) Hong Kong

11. HOMs in Hong Kong are invited to prepare an analysis, with recommendations for EU action, on recent incidents concerning democratic activists.

II. OTHER POINTS

Presentation of the Dutch Presidency programme for Asia/Oceania

12. The Group took note, without further comments, of a presentation by the Presidency on its programme for Asia/Oceania.

Afghanistan

13. On the basis of information by the Presidency that a decision on the dates for elections was imminent, the Group had an in-depth discussion on the political, logistical and financial implications of splitting presidential and parliamentary elections. It was agreed that the main message emanating from the GAERC on 12 July 2004 should be to reaffirm the EU's full support to the electoral process. At the same time, a debate was now needed on how best to make full use of the remaining time and to push forcefully on all the issues at stake: elections, security, DDR, drugs. It was felt that the ideas put forward by HOMs in Kabul (HAG/373/04) were very useful in this respect.

India

14. The Group heard a presentation by the Commission of its Communication on EU-India relations and had a first exchange of views on the matter. All those who took the floor commended the Commission for the excellent document and shared its approach to take a fresh look at India today and at EU-India relations and to be more ambitious in our relationship with the country. Several delegations recommended to devise a process similar to the one with China. The Group welcomed information according to which the Indian Government would present in July or early August its own Communication on how it sees relations with the EU developing.

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Pakistan

15. The Group discussed the proposed EU-Pakistan Agreement on non-proliferation of WMD and Counter-Terrorism and took note of the results of the 2nd round of negotiations on a readmission agreement as well as of a Presidency proposal on strengthening the political dialogue with Pakistan.
16. On the proposed agreement on non-proliferation and counter-terrorism, the Council's Legal Service stated that the expressions "interdependent" and "indissociable", contained in the UK suggestion for an amended declaration (LON/382/04), were not in conformity with article 47 TUE.
17. One delegation suggested to include "readmission" as a subject for political dialogue with Pakistan.
18. Finland and Sweden reported on the recent visit by President Musharraf to their countries.

Indonesia

19. The Presidency shared its assessment of the first round of presidential elections in Indonesia and drew delegations' attention to the statement it had issued on 6 July (HAG/360/04). The Group also noted that the EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) had issued a preliminary statement in Jakarta on 8 July 2004, calling the elections "peaceful and historic", but "overshadowed by a serious technical problem". The Commission informed the Group that the EOM would prolong its stay in Indonesia in order to cover the second round of voting in September 2004.

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ARF

20. The Presidency and the Council Secretariat debriefed delegations on the 11th ARF held in Jakarta on 1-2 July 2004. The situation in Burma and the fight against terrorism were amongst the main topics addressed at the ARF. On Burma, it was underscored that Japan and South Korea had voiced some criticism about the National Convention, although the final text on Burma in the ARF Chairman statement was weaker than in 2003. ARF Ministers had shown commitment to combat terrorism and agreed that the ARF was an appropriate forum for this. Since radical Islam was at the basis of many terrorist actions, several Ministers underscored the importance of teaching moderate Islam at schools.

ASEM

21. The Presidency debriefed delegations on the ASEM co-ordinators meeting held at ministerial level in Jakarta on 2 July in the margins of the ARF, with participation of the Japanese and Vietnamese FMs, HR Solana and Commissioner Patten.
22. The Presidency also informed that, in preparation for the 12 July GAERC, it had presented to Coreper on 7 July a proposal to appoint a Special Envoy of the Presidency to consult with partners in ASEM capitals in order to map out an acceptable and feasible compromise solution to the problem of Burma and ASEM enlargement.
23. Several delegations expressed the wish to find a solution to the enlargement problem at the earliest date possible, and pleaded for flexibility from all sides. They stressed that, as agreed at GAERC in June, the ASEM process should not be sacrificed because of the Burma problem. Some delegations stressed that the issue of the internal situation in Burma should not be linked to the enlargement of ASEM. One delegation mentioned that the incertitude about the Summit is putting Vietnam, the organizer, in a very difficult position since it will soon have to enter into legal obligations with companies ensuring logistic support for the Summit.
24. Delegations welcomed the appointment of a Special Envoy.

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25. The Commission informed that it would present to COASI on 22 July an informal paper in preparation of the substance of the Summit. Several delegations welcomed this announcement and underscored the need to properly prepare the Summit on the assumption that it would take place.

Burma illegal logging

26. Delegations discussed on the problem of illegal logging in Burma on the basis of the HOMs report (DUB/0821/04) and proposals from Denmark (COP/0126/04). Although a number of delegations found the proposals in these two documents useful and called for their early implementation, the Group felt that addressing illegal logging in Burma would be a long-term issue, since many legal aspects needed careful consideration. It was agreed that the Presidency and the Commission would further reflect on the best way to address the issue, including through UN involvement.

III.A.O.B.

Singapore – visit by Commissioner Patten

27. The Commission briefed the Group on the visit of Commissioner Patten to Singapore at the end of June, in his way to the ARF in Jakarta. The Commission proposed to Singapore a Partnership and Co-operation Agreement. Singapore eventually agreed to this proposal (on 7 July), although it had initially requested a Free Trade Agreement. Terrorism and piracy in the Malacca Strait were also addressed, and avenues for co-operation are being identified. On ASEM enlargement, however, Singapore did not show much flexibility.

China arms embargo

28. Several delegations pleaded for an early lifting of the embargo. The Presidency announced its intention to discuss the issue at PSC in July.