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OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

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Foreign Affairs

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President **Josep Borrell**
High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security
Policy

P R E S S

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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

Current affairs

The Foreign Affairs Council was informed about the recent visits that the High Representative paid to the Western Balkans, the Middle East region – notably Jordan and Iran – and the United States. In this context, ministers had an opportunity to discuss the Middle East Process, including the recent US proposals, the role of the EU and how best to relaunch a political process that is acceptable to both parties, building on internationally agreed parameters, equal rights and international law.

The Council then touched on the unfolding crisis in north-west Syria, where the military offensive by the Syrian regime and its allies has resulted in a humanitarian crisis in Idlib, and risks undermining the wider regional stability.

Lastly, ministers referred to Venezuela and to the Sahel.

EU-African Union relations

The Council discussed EU-African Union relations, with a view to providing political orientations on future strategic priorities with Africa, and to coordinating outreach to African partners ahead of important forthcoming meetings.

These include the meeting of AU-EU ministers of Foreign Affairs and the upcoming 6th EU-African Union Summit to be held in Brussels in October 2020.

The European Commission is due to present a joint communication “Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa” on 4 March 2020.

Libya

The Council was debriefed about the outcome of the recent follow up meeting on the Berlin process in the margins of the Munich Security Conference, and had an exchange of views on Libya.

In this context, ministers reached a political agreement on the launch of a new operation in the Mediterranean, aimed at implementing the arms embargo imposed by the UN Security Council. Secondary tasks may include fighting the organised crime responsible for migration, and training the Libyan coast guard and navy.

The new operation will comprise aerial, satellite and maritime assets and its area of operations will be defined in accordance with the agreed mandate.

Ministers agreed that the potential impact on migration flows would be monitored carefully and could, in some cases, lead to the withdrawal of maritime assets from the relevant area.

Working lunch on EU-India relations

During an informal lunch, foreign affairs ministers and the minister of External Affairs of India, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, had a discussion ahead of the 15th EU-India Summit that is expected to take place on 13 March in Brussels.

The main focus of the exchange was on multilateralism and upholding the rules based global order, climate change and environmental protection, foreign policy issues and regional security, as well as, trade and investment, sustainable modernisation and connectivity.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Common Military List of the European Union

The Council adopted the updated Common Military List of the European Union referred to in the Common Position 2008/944/CFSP and decided to have it published in the "C" Series of the Official Journal of the European Union.

Common Position 2008/944/CFSP defines common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment.

South Sudan restrictive measures: review

The Council decided to maintain the existing restrictive measures against one person in view of the situation in South Sudan.

On 7 May 2015, the Council adopted Decision (CFSP) 2015/740 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in South Sudan. Council Regulation (EU) 2015/735 gives effect to measures provided for in Decision (CFSP) 2015/740.

These measures have to be reviewed at regular intervals and at least every 12 months.

The Council agreed to publish the related notices in the Official Journal of the European Union ("C" Series).

Solomon Islands to the EU-Pacific Interim Partnership Agreement

The Council decided on the accession of Solomon Islands to the Interim Partnership Agreement between the EU on one side, and the Pacific States on the other side ([9405/19](#) + [ADD 1](#)). The Council also informed the European Parliament of the adoption of the Council decision, and ordered its publication in the Official Journal.

On 29 April 2019, the Commission submitted to the Council a proposal for a Council decision on the accession of Solomon Islands to the Interim Partnership Agreement together with a [market access offer](#).

EU position the EU-Armenia Partnership Council and other Bodies

The Council decided on the position to be taken on behalf of the EU within the Partnership Council established by the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the EU and the European Atomic Energy Community on one side, and the Republic of Armenia on the other. This regards the adoption of the Rules of Procedure of the Partnership Council and those of the Partnership Committee, subcommittees and other bodies set up by the Partnership Council.

The Council agreed to publish the Council decisions in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Conclusions on Zimbabwe

The Council adopted conclusions on Zimbabwe restating the EU's continued support for economic and political reforms in the country. The conclusions note the ongoing acute humanitarian crisis in the country, and renew the EU's support for the people of Zimbabwe in various sectors, such as economic development, primary health care, resilience building, as well as through humanitarian assistance.

For more details, see [press release](#)

Restrictive measures - Zimbabwe

The Council adopted a decision amending decision [2011/101/CFSP](#) concerning restrictive measures against Zimbabwe, which will be extended until 20 February 2021 for four persons and one entity. The restrictive measures have been suspended for one person and renewed for three persons. The Council also adopted a regulation amending [Regulation \(EC\) No 314/2004](#), concerning sanctions towards Zimbabwe.

Council Regulation (EC) No [314/2004](#) gives effect to the freezing of funds and economic resources of certain natural or legal persons, entities and bodies.

Restrictive measures - Belarus

The Council adopted a Council decision amending decision [2012/642/CFSP](#), extending restrictive measures against Belarus until 28 February 2021.

For more details, see [press release](#)

EU Integrated Resolve 2020 Exercise Specifications

The Council endorsed the specifications advised by the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM) and the EU Military Committee (EUMC) regarding the parameter setting procedures for EU planning and conduct of military and civilian operations. This falls within the context of the proposed EU Integrated Resolve 2020 (EU IR20), an initiative to better coordinate the EU's military training exercises and information sharing with other partner countries and international organizations.

Conclusions on EU Priorities in UN Human Rights Fora in 2020: Adoption

The Council adopted conclusions on the priorities that the EU should follow in the United Nations human rights fora, including the Human Rights Council, the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council. In its conclusions, the Council restated its commitment to actively upholding, defending and promoting the UN human rights system as a priority of its external action throughout 2020, the year marking the 75th anniversary of the entry into force of the UN Charter.

For more details, see [press release](#).

Restrictive measures against Syria - new listings

The Council added eight prominent businessmen and two entities linked to those businessmen to the list of persons and entities subject to the sanctions against the Syrian regime and its supporters. Their activities directly benefitted the Assad regime, including through projects located on lands expropriated from persons displaced by the conflict.

For more details, see [press release](#).

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Single Resolution Board appointments

The Council adopted a Decision on the appointment of the following persons as full-time members of the Board for a term of office of five years as from 1 March 2020:

- Mr Jan Reinder DE CARPENTIER, as Vice-Chair
- Mr Jesús SAURINA, as Director of Resolution Planning and Decisions
- Mr Pedro MACHADO, as Director of Resolution Planning and Decisions

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Commission on Narcotic Drugs - EU positions

The Council adopted two Decisions on the positions to be adopted on behalf of the EU in the 63rd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs regarding the international scheduling of new psychoactive substances and of cannabis.

Eurodac - Norway, Iceland

The Council adopted a Decision ([15791/18](#)) on the conclusion of the protocol extending the agreement on Eurodac between the EU and Norway and Iceland to access for law enforcement purposes ([15792/18](#)).

This protocol aims to strengthen cooperation with these countries on the prevention, detection and investigation of terrorist offences and other serious criminal offences. It will allow designated law enforcement authorities to request the comparison of fingerprint data transmitted to Eurodac.

AGRICULTURE**Listed and emerging diseases**

The Council decided not to raise objections to a Commission Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards rules for surveillance, eradication programmes, and disease-free status for certain listed and emerging diseases. The new act concerns certain listed and emerging diseases of terrestrial, aquatic and other animals as provided for in Regulation (EU) 2016/429 ([15265/19](#)).

Terrestrial animals and hatching eggs

The Council decided not to raise objections to a Commission Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council, as regards animal health requirements for movements within the Union of terrestrial animals and hatching eggs. The new act supplements the rules for the prevention and control of animal diseases transmissible to animals or to humans laid down in Article 5(1) of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 as regards movements within the Union of kept terrestrial animals, wild terrestrial animals and hatching eggs ([15206/19](#)).

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY**Number and title of the variables for the income and living conditions domain**

The Council decided not to object to a Commission Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council by specifying the number and title of the variables for the income and living conditions domain. The new act sets the number and titles of the variables for the data set in the income and living conditions domain ([15199/19](#) + [15199/19 ADD 1](#))

Multiannual rolling planning

The Council decided not to object to a Commission Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council by establishing a multiannual rolling planning system.

To implement Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 in 2021, this delegated Commission Regulation defines the first system of multiannual rolling planning to be used for the eight years from 2021 ([15200/19](#) + [15200/19 ADD 1](#))

Number and title of the variables for the labour force domain

The Council decided not to object to a Commission Delegated Regulation supplementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council by specifying the number and title of the variables for the labour force domain. The new act sets the number and title of the variables for the data set in the labour force domain ([15201/19](#) + [15201/19 ADD 1](#)).

Council Recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area

The Council decided to approve the employment- and social-policy-related aspects of the euro area Recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area. The Recommendation is addressed to euro area member states. It suggests that they take, individually and collectively, certain action within the Eurogroup, in the period 2020-2021 ([5608/20](#)).

INTERNAL MARKET AND INDUSTRY

Exemption for lead compounds

The Council decided not to object to a Commission Delegated Directive amending Annex II to Directive 2000/53/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on end-of-life vehicles as regards the exemptions for lead and lead compounds in components.

The Directive amends the wording and/or the review date of exemptions regarding the use of lead and lead compounds in components of vehicles approved before a given date.

The Directive is a delegated act pursuant to Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. It can now enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects ([15229/19](#) + [15229/19 ADD 1](#)).

Exemption for hexavalent chromium

The Council decided not to object to a Commission Delegated Directive amending Annex II to Directive 2000/53/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on end-of-life vehicles as regards the exemption for hexavalent chromium as anti-corrosion agent of the carbon steel cooling system in absorption refrigerators in motor caravans.

The Directive amends the wording of the exemption regarding the use of hexavalent chromium in materials and components of vehicles put on the market after 1 July 2003 in order to align it with similar exemptions provided for in other EU legal acts. Furthermore, in the light of technical and scientific evidence indicating that that suitable alternatives to the use of hexavalent chromium may become available in the future, the Directive splits the current exemption into three sub-entries and sets an expiry date for two of these sub-entries

The Directive is a delegated act pursuant to Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. It can now enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects ([15218/19](#) + [15218/19 ADD 1](#)).

TRANSPORT

Air services agreement with China

The Council adopted a Decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the EU, of the agreement between the EU and China on certain aspects of air services that was signed on 20 May 2019 ([5296/20](#), [11033/19 REV1](#), [9685/18](#)). The agreement is the result of negotiations aimed at bringing member states' existing bilateral aviation agreements with China into line with Union law.

TRANSPARENCY

Public access to documents

On 17 February 2020, the Council approved the replies to confirmatory applications:

- No 40/c/01/1 - ([15212/19](#))
- No 01/c/01/20 - ([5070/1/20 REV 1](#))