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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.

ITEMS DEBATED

Belarus

The Council had an exchange of views on Belarus, during which it reiterated that the EU does not recognise the outcome of the August elections in Belarus, as they were neither free nor fair.

Ministers noted the determination and perseverance that the people of Belarus have shown in spite of repression, and expressed strong solidarity with them in their democratic aspirations and their call for new, free and fair elections under OSCE supervision.

Ministers firmly supported the sovereignty and independence of Belarus and called on all international partners not to interfere in its internal affairs.

The issue of sanctions was also discussed and ministers restated the political will to adopt new restrictive measures as soon as possible.

Finally, the Council reviewed the EU's relations with Belarus more broadly and, in this context, it discussed further financial support that could be given to civil society and independent media.

Libya

The Council discussed the latest developments in Libya following the announcements made on 21 August 2020 by the President of the Presidency Council, Fayez al-Serraj, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aguila Saleh, on the way forward out of the Libyan crisis.

Ministers identified as main priorities: reaching a permanent and sustainable ceasefire agreement as part of the UN-led process, lifting the oil blockade across Libya, and resuming political dialogue.

Ministers also touched on the results of the recently launched Operation IRINI in implementing the UN arms embargo.

In addition, the Council adopted new sanctions targeting two people and three entities that are undermining peace and security in Libya, violating the arms embargo or committing human rights abuses.

EU-African Union relations

The Council exchanged views on the EU's relations with its African Union counterparts, and on ways to step up relations with Africa in the medium and long term, both from a political and an economic point of view.

Ministers agreed to develop joint strategic priorities in order to pave the way for cooperation in the next decade, and to focus on tangible results, in the spirit of the 'Team Europe' approach.

In this context the Council was also updated on the state of play of the post-Cotonou negotiations.

Current Affairs

Under current affairs, ministers had the opportunity to be briefed on Venezuela and the results of the latest meeting of the International Contact Group. Ministers agreed that the international community needed to mobilise all efforts to help Venezuelans find a peaceful and democratic solution to the ongoing crisis, and to address the urgent needs of the population.

Concerning Russia the High Representative touched on the poisoning of Mr Navalny and the need to have an urgent international investigation in full transparency and cooperation with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Ministers acknowledged the difficulty of the situation in Lebanon and stressed their solidarity with the Lebanese people, highlighting the need for a new government to be formed quickly.

Ministers were briefed by the High Representative on the EU-China leaders' videoconference of 14 September, with a focus on the state of play of negotiations on the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment and the situation with respect to human rights.

Finally, ministers briefly touched on the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean ahead of the forthcoming **European Council**. While they acknowledged some recent positive steps, they called on Turkey to take further measures to de-escalate the situation.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean agreement with Tunisia

The Council approved the Irish version of the decision on the signing and provisional application of a protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the EU and Tunisia to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the EU.

Annual Progress Report on the implementation of the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The Council endorsed the Progress Report on the implementation of the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, covering activities carried out in 2019.

Support to Peace and Development in Afghanistan

The Council approved the document "Key elements for sustained international support to Peace and Development in Afghanistan" emerging from negotiations with like-minded international donors in Afghanistan such as the UN, the World Bank, Australia, Canada, Japan, the UK US.

European Court of Auditors - EU support to Morocco

The Council approved conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' special report No 09/2019 'EU support to Morocco - Limited results so far'. The report notes the limited effect of the EU's visibility in providing aid to Morocco and calls for a stronger focus in the budget allocated to support to Morocco.

EU-Peru Framework Participation Agreement

The Council adopted a decision authorising the High Representative to open negotiations for an Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Peru establishing a framework for its participation in European Union crisis management operations ('Framework Participation Agreement').

EU - Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue (budget)

The Council adopted a decision amending decision (CFSP) 2020/489 appointing the European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues.

On 2 April 2020, the Council adopted decision (CFSP) 2020/489 appointing Miroslav Lajčák as European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues. The decision takes account of the relaunch of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue in July 2020 and amends the budget accordingly.

Libya - restrictive measures

The Council today decided to impose targeted restrictive measures on two persons responsible for human rights abuses in Libya and three entities involved in violating the UN arms embargo in place for Libya. They will be added to the EU's list of persons and entities subject to restrictive measures related to the Libyan conflict. The sanctions imposed comprise a travel ban and an asset freeze for natural persons, and an asset freeze for entities. In addition, EU persons and entities are forbidden from making funds available to those listed. With these new designations, the EU now has travel bans in place on 17 listed persons and has frozen the assets of 21 persons and 19 entities.

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

Restrictive measures against the Central African Republic - UN transposition

The Council adopted a decision amending decision 2013/798/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against the Central African Republic and a Council regulation amending regulation 224/2014 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in the Central African Republic.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Centrally managed EU interventions for venture capital

The Council adopted conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' special report No 17/2019 'Centrally managed EU interventions for venture capital: in need of more direction'.

GENERAL AFFAIRS

EU classified information - security assessment visits

In accordance with Article 16(1)(c) of the [Council security rules](#), the Council approved an annual security assessment visit programme recommended by the Security Committee.

The aim of the visits is to assess the effectiveness of measures implemented for protecting EU classified information in member states, certain EU bodies, agencies and entities, as well as in third states and international organisations.
