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President

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High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security
Policy

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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

Current affairs

The High Representative informed the Council about the stalemate in Lebanon, and announced a political understanding that a sanctions regime would be established against those responsible for the situation.

Ministers also addressed the situation in Afghanistan, in light of the withdrawal of US and NATO troops and the increase in ethnically motivated targeted attacks. In this context, the High Representative emphasised the need to urge the Taliban to engage in substantive and inclusive peace negotiations, and to reach out to countries in the region and the broader international community to play a constructive role in support of the Afghan peace process.

Geopolitics of new digital technologies

The Foreign Affairs Council had a first discussion on the external and geopolitical impact of new digital technologies. These technologies are crucial for EU societies and economy, but are increasingly becoming a driver of geopolitical competition and global influence, being used by foreign actors to manipulate the information environment, influence the public debate, and interfere in democratic processes.

Ministers stressed the need to use the EU's capacity as a regulatory power to influence global norms and standards in this field, and to ensure that the system remains open, human-centred and based on the rule of law. When doing so, Ministers expressed their wish to work together with like-minded partners, ranging from the US to the Indo-Pacific area, from Africa to Latin America.

Strategic Compass

Foreign Affairs Ministers exchanged views for the first time on the Strategic Compass - the EU initiative intended to better prepare the EU for future crises, reinforce the EU's resilience against threats, including in cyber space, reinforce the EU's partnerships to meet common challenges, and develop a common strategic culture.

A first draft of the Strategic Compass is due to be presented to member states in November 2021, with a view to finalisation in March 2022.

Ethiopia

The Council had an opportunity to have a discussion on the situation in Ethiopia and Tigray where, despite the ceasefire, there is a serious humanitarian crisis, populations face the risk of famine, and violence and rape are widely used against civilians as a weapon of war.

Ministers were informed about the initiative to create a humanitarian air bridge to bring support to the population of the Tigray region, and discussed the political priorities on which the EU should focus: ensuring humanitarian access and respect for international humanitarian law, consolidating the ceasefire and working towards a full cessation of hostilities by all parties, ensuring the withdrawal of foreign forces from Ethiopian territory, immediately stopping human rights violations, and launching a national dialogue on reconciliation in order to preserve the integrity and political unity of Ethiopia.

Working lunch

Over lunch, foreign affairs ministers had an informal discussion with the new Israeli Foreign Minister, Yair Lapid, focusing on bilateral relations, but also on the situation in the region.

In relation to the Middle East Peace Process, ministers once more stressed that the EU firmly stands for Israel's security and condemns terrorism. At the same time, the EU expects Israel to offer a political perspective of ending the conflict, and remains ready and willing to support Israel and the Palestinians in their efforts to rebuild a meaningful political process.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

European Peace Facility procedures paper

The Council approved the European Peace Facility (EPF) procedures paper, which comprises guidelines on the preparatory and decision-making process for assistance measures under the EPF, with a view to the operationalisation of the assistance measure pillar.

On 22 March 2021, the Council adopted Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 establishing a European Peace Facility, and repealing Decision (CFSP) 2015/528. The EPF replaces the African Peace Facility and the Athena mechanism.

Council decision concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine

The Council decided to prolong the sanctions targeting specific economic sectors of the Russian Federation for a further six months, until 31 January 2022.

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

Council decision setting up a European Union Military Training Mission in Mozambique

The Council adopted a decision setting up an EU military training mission in Mozambique (EUTM Mozambique). The aim of the mission is to train and support the Mozambican armed forces in protecting the civilian population and restoring safety and security in the Cabo Delgado province.

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

Two ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Statements

The Council approved the entering into negotiations on two non-binding instruments for the upcoming ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting on 1-5 August 2021 in Brunei Darussalam.

The statements in question are:

- the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) statement on promoting the youth, peace and security agenda, which calls on ARF members, in a spirit of solidarity, to make progress on the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, and
- the ASEAN Regional Forum Statement on preventing and combating cybercrime, which calls on ARF members to promote international cooperation on this issue - making good use of the existing cooperation mechanisms and platforms - and to enhance sharing of information, knowledge, best practices and strategies.

After consultation and negotiation with all ARF members, agreed texts will be presented at the ARF ministerial meeting (Brunei Darussalam, 1-5 August 2021) for adoption by consensus.

Council decision on the conclusion of the protocol to the EU-Central America agreement to take account of the accession of Croatia

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of a Protocol to the Agreement establishing an association between the European Union and its member states, on the one hand, and Central America on the other, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the EU ([6048/20](#)).

EU priorities at the United Nations during the 76th United Nations General Assembly

The Council approved conclusions setting out the EU's priorities at the United Nations during the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (September 2021 – September 2022).

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

GENERAL AFFAIRS

COVID-19: Temporary derogation from the Council's Rules of Procedure

The Council adopted a Decision further extending the temporary derogation from the Council's Rules of Procedure introduced by Decision (EU) 2020/430, in view of the travel difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Union ([10144/21](#)).

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Commission Delegated Regulation on regulatory technical standards for the contractual recognition of write down and conversion powers

The Council confirmed that it has no intention of objecting to the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) supplementing Directive 2014/59/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to regulatory technical standards for the contractual recognition of write down and conversion powers. The Council received the act on 31 May 2021. During the consultation procedure, no delegation indicated an intention to object to this delegated act. Unless the European Parliament objects, the delegated act will be published and enter into force ([9719/21](#), [9408/21](#)).

Regulation on public sector loan facility under the Just Transition Mechanism

The Council approved the European Parliament's position on the regulation on public sector loan facility under the Just Transition Mechanism and adopted this act. On 24 June 2021 the European Parliament adopted its position at first reading on the Commission proposal, as set out in [PE-CONS 33/21](#). The public sector loan facility constitutes the third pillar of the Just Transition Mechanism, which aims to support investments by public sector entities, given the key role of the public sector in addressing market failures.

INTERNAL MARKET AND INDUSTRY

REACH for N,N-dimethylformamide

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of the Commission Regulation concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) as regards N, N-dimethylformamide ([10069/21](#), [8758/21](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

Standardised access to vehicle on-board diagnostics information

The Council does not intend to raise objections to the Commission Delegated Act on the standardised access to vehicle on-board diagnostics information and repair and maintenance information, and the requirements and procedures for access to vehicle security information ([10072/21](#), [8978/21](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

ePrivacy Directive

The Council today adopted a regulation on a temporary derogation from the ePrivacy Directive.

The derogation concerns the use of technologies by providers of number-independent interpersonal communications services for the processing of personal and other data for the purpose of combating online child sexual abuse ([10582/21](#), [PE.CON 38/21](#)).

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency - public access to documents

On 12 July 2021, the Council adopted the reply to confirmatory application No 25/c/01/21 ([10004/21](#)).
