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President

Catherine Ashton

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and
Security Policy

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Main results of the Council

Ebola

The Council voiced deep concern about the ongoing spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa and the increasing number of people being infected and dying from it. Joining in the international effort, the EU and its member states have already committed over half a billion euros to provide urgent medical care and to support the affected governments in mitigating the side effects of the outbreak.

To encourage additional health personnel to work on the ground, the EU is providing a guarantee that international health workers who volunteer will be provided with appropriate care, locally or through medical evacuation, within available resources, should they become infected.

The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, said: "Good coordination between everyone involved is essential, so we are preparing terms of reference for a possible EU coordinator who can ensure the most effective engagement between the European Union, member states and the UN."

ISIL / Da'esh crisis in Syria and Iraq

The Council unreservedly condemned the atrocities, killings and human rights abuses perpetrated by ISIL / Da'esh and other terrorist groups in both Syria and Iraq as well as by the Assad regime in Syria. The EU is determined to contribute to the international endeavour to defeat these terrorist groups.

Non-inclusive policies in Iraq, and instability in Syria caused by the Assad regime's brutal war against its own people have allowed ISIL / Da'esh to flourish. As a consequence of its policies and actions, the Assad regime cannot be a partner in the fight against ISIL / Da'esh.

The Council also reinforced EU restrictive measures against the Syrian regime, adding 16 persons and two entities to the list of those subject to sanctions.

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Ms Margot WALLSTRÖM

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Mr Philip HAMMOND

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
(Foreign Secretary)

Commission:

Ms Kristalina GEORGIEVA

Member

Mr Štefan FÜLE

Member

Mr Tonio BORG

Member

ITEMS DEBATED

Ebola

The Council discussed a strengthened EU response to the outbreak of Ebola.

It adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Recalling its conclusions and the European Council conclusions of August 2014, the Council remains deeply concerned about the ongoing spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa and the increasing number of people being infected and dying from it. The number of deaths in the region has exceeded 4500 and the epidemic continues to grow exponentially in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. In addition, the first cases among health workers being infected outside Africa were recently confirmed.
2. The Council renews its deepest condolences, of Member States and European Union citizens, to all those affected by the outbreak, governments and citizens. The Council also expresses its deep appreciation to all humanitarian and health workers in the front line and reaffirms its readiness to examine further ways of assisting them in their efforts.
3. The Council welcomes the efforts of Governments of affected and neighbouring countries, regional organisations and the international community at large in ensuring that victims receive adequate treatment, that support is provided to their families and that all actors involved, including international organisations and relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are given safe and unhindered access to all affected areas. The Council commends the mobilisation of the African Union, its efforts at regional coordination and its solidarity with the countries affected by the outbreak. The humanitarian corridor from Dakar and the coming resumption of regional air services from Abidjan are important steps.
4. The Council recognises that a united, coordinated and increased effort is needed in order to contain the outbreak and provide the necessary and appropriate assistance to the countries affected and also to the neighbouring countries. In this respect, it stresses the importance of reinforcing regional and international cooperation at appropriate levels, as well as providing assistance to lead nations, NGOs and the United Nations (UN), particularly the World Health Organisation (WHO). The EU also looks forward to the quick implementation of the regional operational plan on the fight against Ebola by the Economic Community of West African States. The Council underlines the importance of all actors working together under the UN umbrella and coordinating assistance with the wider UN led effort. It also notes the need to include measures to create resilience in the assistance efforts.

5. The Council welcomes the UN Secretary General's decision to establish the first-ever UN emergency health mission, the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), based in Accra as an important step in the global efforts to contain the outbreak, to assist with the management and coordination of the international response and take a strong leadership role at national levels. It also welcomes the appointment of David Nabarro, as Special Envoy on Ebola, and Anthony Banbury as his Special Representative and Head of UNMEER. The European Union will continue the close cooperation with both of them and coordinate its operational response to the epidemic with UNMEER.
6. The Council recognises that measures to contain the epidemic and to support the affected countries also require urgent additional assistance. In this regard, it calls on all international donors to respond to the UN appeal for \$ 987.8 million, including through the UN Ebola Trust Fund bearing in mind the important needs in the short and medium term. The EU is committed to play an active role in enhancing the international response and, respecting the overall coordinating role of the UN, is ready to coordinate with other international partners the organisation of a High Level Conference on Ebola with wide participation.
7. The European Union and its Member States have already committed over half a billion Euro to provide urgent medical care to those infected by the virus, to help contain the epidemic and to support governments of affected countries in mitigating the effects of the outbreak on their economies and essential services; the European Union is also contributing financially to the African Union ASEOWA mission (AU Support to Ebola Outbreak in West-Africa). Member States have also been providing substantive assistance, including the secondment of specialists, building of hospitals and availability of air lift capacities, and are mobilising resources in the field of medical research. In this regard, the Council welcomes the role of France, the UK and the US in mounting the response in the affected countries. The Council also welcomes the continued airlinks to and from the countries affected and in this respect it urges all countries to follow the relevant WHO guidelines. The European Union will continue to examine needs and provide further assistance to the countries of the region in countering the epidemic, mitigating its short and long-term effects, and enhancing the preparedness of countries in the wider region.
8. The Council fully shares the assessment of UN Security Council Resolution 2177 (2014) that the Ebola outbreak is a threat to international peace and security. The Council will examine at its next meeting the wider political, security and economic implications of Ebola on the most affected and neighbouring West African countries. The Council encourages the EEAS, in cooperation with the Commission and the Member States, to intensify its ongoing diplomatic outreach to African countries and organisations and reiterate the need to isolate the disease but not to isolate countries.

9. The Council welcomes the close coordination of the assistance provided by the Member States and the EU institutions and the establishment of the Task Force on Ebola within the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC). Ensuring synergies in our common response is of the highest priority. The Council also encourages the involvement of the private sector as part of the international health community as exemplified by the on-going works of World Health Summit (Berlin, 19-22 October). The Council underlines also the importance of continuous consultations and information sharing, at the appropriate level, on issues and measures to be taken to protect the EU and its citizens from potential contamination. The EU underlines the need for continuous objective public information on the Ebola virus to prevent possible stigmatisation.
10. The Council welcomes agreement amongst Member States and the Commission to guarantee appropriate care for international health responders within available resources to receive the treatment they need, in line with clinical advice, via treatment in country to an appropriate standard or medical evacuation supported by means of a specialized commercial aircraft or member states capabilities on a case by case basis. This will be coordinated through the EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre. The evacuation operation is eligible for financing of up to 100% from the EU budget. The Council also calls for an increase in EU Medevac capacity.
11. The Council takes note of the Commission/EEAS EU Comprehensive Response Framework for the Ebola Virus Outbreak in Western Africa as requested by the European Council in its conclusions of 30 August. It invites the Commission and the EEAS to pursue their cooperation on this issue and to inform rapidly the Council of the progress made in the implementation of the Comprehensive Response Framework. The Council also takes note of the ongoing work in enhancing the collective EU response to the Ebola crisis, including its wider political, security and economic implications, and tasks the EEAS and the Commission to present options with regard to all available tools at the EU's disposal, in preparation of its next meeting.
12. The Council acknowledges the need to establish a clearing house/ reserve pool of health experts from member states on voluntary basis for quick and targeted deployment in health crises, welcomes all efforts to enhance medical and pharmaceutical R&D especially on tropical and neglected diseases, and calls for a tailoring of the EU's development cooperation to the specific needs of the countries in the region affected by Ebola in order to strengthen the resilience of their health systems and governance.

13. Following the High level co-ordination meeting of Health Ministers held on 16th October 2014, the Council calls on the Commission services, with WHO, to audit the effectiveness of the screening systems at point of exit in the affected countries and to assist in reinforcing them as necessary. It stresses the importance of continuous consultations and information sharing on measures to protect the EU and its citizens. The Council underlines the need to ensure objective information to promote public awareness and preparedness on Ebola, including at all entry points. The Council stressed the importance of more consultations with a view to co-ordinating national measures at entry points and calls on the Commission to lead work which could result in common protocols and procedures as appropriate. It also calls on Member States to consider to use in full the potential of visa information systems and transport carriers' information to anticipate potential arrivals of disease infection. The Council also welcomes Commission's work on the organisation of a workshop on best practices in infection control in healthcare settings, on the setting up of a voluntary network of clinicians for the treatment of Ebola at EU level and on the feasibility of Joint Procurement for protective gear for health professionals treating Ebola patients and possible medical treatment."

Libya

During lunch, ministers discussed the situation in Libya as well as ongoing UN mediation efforts with Bernadino León, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya.

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU is concerned by the situation in Libya and its impact on the civilian population, which threatens the possibility of achieving the aspirations of the Libyan people of a peaceful political transition and is having a negative impact across North Africa and the Sahel region and is of concern for the EU as well.
2. The EU strongly condemns the ongoing violence, all human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed across the country. The EU urges all parties to urgently observe an unconditional ceasefire. The EU is convinced that there is no military solution to this conflict. Only a political solution can provide a sustainable way forward and contribute to peace and stability in Libya.

3. In this regard, the EU fully supports, including through the action of European Special Envoys, the efforts of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to secure a negotiated settlement and the work of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). The EU welcomes the UN facilitated dialogue between members of the House of Representatives initiated in Ghadames on 29 September and continued in Tripoli on 11 October in presence of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki – moon and the Italian Foreign Minister Federica Mogherini. It calls on all parties to fully cooperate with the UN-led initiative by engaging in a peaceful political process to resolve the ongoing crisis, abstaining from actions that risk undermining it.
4. The EU welcomes the agreements reached so far, and calls upon all parties to respect and implement them and to remain constructively engaged in this political process. The EU and Member States are exploring with UNSMIL ways to support the confidence building measures.
5. The EU underscores the legitimacy of the House of Representatives as the sole legislative authority in Libya. It urges Libya's government and all elected members of the House of Representatives to reach out to all parties and engage constructively in an inclusive political dialogue, also to find a solution to the institutional crisis, as the country cannot afford to be divided. Libya needs a strong government of national unity.

It encourages the Constitutional Drafting Assembly to continue to pursue its work on a constitutional text that will enshrine and protect the rights of all Libyans.

The EU does not recognise any parallel authority or entity outside of the legal and democratic institutional framework.

6. The EU stresses the importance that the international community acts in a united manner on Libya on the basis of the principles and understandings agreed at recent meetings, namely in New York and Madrid. It supports complementary efforts of Libya's neighbours and partners, including EU Member States that promote inclusivity, national consensus and reconciliation and their efforts to address Libya's crisis. The EU emphasises that all initiatives should feed into the overall UN-led mediation process. It also encourages all partners to refrain from actions which might exacerbate current divisions and undermine Libya's democratic transition.

7. The EU calls on all parties in Libya to ensure the protection of civilians and the facilitation of assistance to people in need, and supports all efforts made to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation, notably the displacement of people and disruption of access to basic services. The EU has immediately mobilised funds to address the most pressing needs but the rapidly declining conditions will require additional international support to respond to the displacement and needs of the affected population.
8. The EU stands ready to implement UNSCR 2174 in order to address threats to Libya's peace and stability, including violations of the arms embargo. Those responsible for violence and those who obstruct or undermine Libya's democratic transition must be held accountable.
9. The EU calls on all Libyans to unite in the fight against terrorism. Libya's hard fought freedom is at risk if Libyan and international terrorist groups are allowed to use Libya as a safe haven. Libya will only stand a chance to address this threat, weapon proliferation and trafficking, if all armed forces come under the control of one central authority which reports to a democratic and inclusive parliament.
10. The instability in Libya poses a direct threat to the EU, through terrorism, increased irregular migration and trafficking of illicit goods, including arms. The EU reiterates its commitment to continue supporting Libya in sectors like security, migration, civil society, protection of vulnerable groups and promotion of human rights. The EU stands ready to assist Libya in the field of border management, including as already being provided through EUBAM.
11. The EU remains strongly committed to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya."

Iraq/Syria/ISIL

Over lunch, ministers discussed the situation with regard to the "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL) in Syria and Iraq.

The Council adopted the following conclusions on the ISIL/Da'esh crisis in Syria and Iraq:

- "1. The EU is seriously concerned about the humanitarian and security situation in Syria and Iraq and condemns unreservedly the attacks, atrocities, killings and abuses of human rights perpetrated by ISIL / Da'esh and other terrorist groups in both countries as well as by the Assad regime in Syria. The EU is determined to contribute to the international endeavour to defeat those terrorist groups. A Syrian led political transition and inclusive political governance in Iraq are crucial to sustainable peace and stability in the region.
2. The situation in Ayn al Arab / Kobani and in other areas under siege and experiencing fierce fighting against ISIL / Da'esh is a matter of serious concern. The EU appreciates efforts by Turkey to shelter refugees from Kobani and calls on Turkey to open its border for any supply for the people of Kobani.
3. The EU is committed to tackling in a comprehensive and coordinated manner the regional threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism and addressing the underlying instability and violence which has given ISIL / Da'esh and other terrorist groups a foothold. The EU supports efforts by more than sixty States to tackle the threat from ISIL / Da'esh, including military action in accordance with international law. It notes that military action in this context is necessary but not sufficient to defeat ISIL / Da'esh and it is part of a wider effort comprising measures in the political/diplomatic, counter-terrorism and terrorism funding, humanitarian and communication field. The EU calls on all partners to enforce relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, including 2170 and 2178 and to step up efforts at national level to deny ISIL / Da'esh the benefits of illicit oil sales and other goods.

Non-inclusive policies in Iraq, and instability in Syria caused by the Assad regime's brutal war against its own people, massive human rights violations and systematic obstruction against democratic reforms, have allowed ISIL / Da'esh to flourish. As a consequence of its policies and actions, the Assad regime cannot be a partner in the fight against ISIL / Da'esh.

4. The EU approved today further sanctions against the Assad regime, designating individuals and entities linked to the regime to be subject to restrictive measures. The Council also agreed today to impose an export ban on jet fuel and relevant additives being exported to Syria as they are being used by the Assad regime's air force, which undertakes indiscriminate air attacks against civilians. The EU will continue its policy of imposing additional measures targeting the regime, as long as repression continues.
5. The EU reiterates its firm commitment to counter the serious problem of foreign fighters who have joined the ranks of ISIL / Da'esh and other terrorist groups. The Council endorses the EU counter terrorism / foreign fighters strategy, which is an integral part of the response to the August 2014 European Council Conclusions and to United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2170 and 2178. The Council calls for its well-coordinated implementation as a matter of highest priority. The EU is determined to take immediate and long term action to deny ISIL / Da'esh the benefits of its sources of funding and supply, and to enhance its counter terrorism and security cooperation with countries neighbouring Syria and Iraq in line with the EU counter terrorism / foreign fighters strategy. The EU supports the work undertaken by the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator in this regard.
6. International efforts to achieve a Syrian-led transition remain a priority in order to maintain the country's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity while preserving its multi-ethnic and multi-religious character. The EU will continue to provide political and practical support to the moderate opposition. There cannot be lasting peace in Syria if the legitimate grievances of all ordinary Syrians, including those belonging to ethnic and religious groups, are not addressed. The EU is determined to support all efforts for a political solution by mutual consent based on the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012 and in line with relevant UNSC Resolutions. The EU calls on all parties to engage constructively in negotiations and it expresses its full support to the UN special envoy Staffan de Mistura and his ongoing efforts. The EU recognises that the active engagement of regional and international actors will be required to deliver a viable transition and calls on them to play a constructive role in this regard.
7. The EU is appalled by and firmly condemns the indiscriminate killings, human rights abuses, including systematic sexual and gender based violence, perpetrated in Syria and Iraq by ISIL / Da'esh and other terrorist organisations, in particular against Christian and other religious and ethnic groups, women and children.

The EU reiterates also its condemnation of the gross, widespread and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by the Assad regime.

The EU is seriously concerned about the human rights abuses and sectarian violence that are being committed in Iraq.

8. The EU welcomes the 8th report of the independent international Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic published on 27 August 2014. The EU strongly condemns the actions of ISIL / Da'esh amounting to crimes against humanity and war crimes. The EU recalls that all responsible for abuses and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law must be held accountable and that there can be no impunity for them. The EU reiterates its call to the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court and its call of Iraq to accede to the Rome Statute. The EU welcomes efforts by actors working on the ground to ensure that human rights abuses and violations are being documented and evidence preserved.
9. The EU welcomes the formation of a new Iraqi government on 8 September and its commitment to address current challenges by pursuing inclusive policies which meet the needs and aspirations of all components of Iraqi society. Failure to do so may compromise efforts to combat ISIL/Da'esh, hamper the government's efforts to promote Iraq's national reconciliation, and further intensify sectarian tensions. It welcomes the appointment to the key posts of defence and interior ministers, as well as the other ministerial appointments and the fact that the Kurdish ministers have taken up their posts in the government. It calls on the Iraqi government and the government of the Kurdistan Region to find a lasting solution to their differences.
10. The EU reiterates its firm commitment to Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. It welcomes the coalition's efforts, including the decision by individual Member States to provide military material and expertise to Iraq, to reduce ISIL/Da'esh's capacity to attack civilian populations, which come in response to an explicit request for support by the Iraqi government. Ultimately, however, the solution to the crisis can only be political. It calls on the government to reach out to all components of Iraq society and to pursue, without delay, a process of national reconciliation. The EU urges all components of Iraqi society to unite in the fight against ISIL/Daesh and to support a process of national reconciliation.
11. The EU expresses its readiness to closely cooperate with the Government of Iraq in addressing its challenges, and to support it in pursuing the necessary reforms across a broad spectrum of sectors, including the security sector and the judicial system which need to be reinforced along non-sectarian lines, in cooperation with UNAMI and in compliance with Iraq's international obligations, in order to enhance good governance and rule of law.

12. The EU welcomes the various and complementary initiatives taken on Iraq, in particular the conclusions of the Conference on Peace and Security in Iraq held in Paris on 15 September, as well as the UNSC meeting on Iraq held on 19 September. The EU calls on countries in the region and the international community to work together to help Iraq tackle its sectarian tensions and restore peace and stability.

13. The EU is deeply concerned, particularly in view of the approach of winter, by the humanitarian predicament of the millions of Syrians and Iraqis who have been forcibly displaced both internally and to neighbouring countries. The EU and its Member States are leading the international response to the crisis. To date, around €2.9 billion has been mobilised for relief and recovery assistance to those in need in Syria and Iraq as well as to refugees and their host communities. The EU will continue to support the humanitarian relief efforts, including for people in areas that are difficult to reach, provide assistance to support the resilience of refugees and host communities in countries affected by the crisis and calls on the international community to do the same. It will also continue to insist on the importance of abiding by humanitarian principles and international human rights law.

Regarding Syria, the EU condemns the Assad regime's continued intransigence on humanitarian access and the use of administrative procedures to hinder the rapid and sustained delivery of aid. The EU reiterates its call on all parties, in particular the Assad regime to implement in full the provisions of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2139 and 2165. The EU will continue to implement those Resolutions to deliver cross-border and cross line assistance. The EU is also deeply concerned that ISIL has significantly affected the presence and operation of humanitarian agencies and actors in northern Syria, thus compromising their humanitarian function.

Regarding Iraq, the EU calls on the government of Iraq to do more to contribute to the humanitarian relief effort across the country and deliver on its duty of care and protection vis-à-vis all Iraqis.

14. In all the neighbouring countries hosting Iraqi and Syrian refugees, the EU will continue to provide assistance to refugees and vulnerable host communities in close coordination with national authorities and development actors, whose efforts contribute to reducing tensions with host communities and to the stabilization of these countries in line with their national plans.

The EU is fully aware of the immense social and security challenges that the current developments in Syria and Iraq pose in particular to Lebanon and Jordan. The EU is determined to seek ways to further enhance its support to both countries to meet those security challenges.

The EU is looking forward to the Berlin Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation of 28 October 2014.

15. The Council calls on the High Representative/Vice President to develop an EU comprehensive regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL / Da'esh threat."

Ukraine

The Council took stock of the situation in Ukraine. It adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Recalling its conclusions of 15 August and the European Council conclusions of 30 August, the Council welcomes the Minsk Protocol of 5 September and the Minsk Memorandum of 19 September, agreed in the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group, as a step towards a sustainable political solution of the crisis, which needs to be based on the respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Council takes good note of the decreased overall level of violence as a result of the agreed ceasefire but regrets and condemns the continued numerous violations of it. The Council welcomes the releases of hostages so far and calls for all the remaining hostages to be released. It commends Ukraine's efforts to implement its commitments, in particular through the adoption by the Verkhovna Rada of the laws on amnesty and on interim local self-governance. The Council reiterates the important role of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in implementing the Minsk Protocol and the Minsk Memorandum and the need to provide the Mission with the resources needed to comply with the tasks. The Council reminds all parties concerned of their responsibility for a safe environment for the OSCE monitors. The EU and Member States stand ready to provide increased financial and in kind support to the OSCE SMM.
2. The Council expects the parties' full engagement and swift implementation of all other commitments under the Minsk documents. The Council underlines the Russian Federation's responsibility in this context, and calls for the withdrawal of illegal armed groups, military equipment, fighters and mercenaries, as well as for the securing of the Ukrainian-Russian border with permanent monitoring under OSCE verification. The Council supports swift expansion and extension of the OSCE Observer Mission to Russian checkpoints to ensure effective and full control of the border by Ukraine and calls on the Russian Federation to do the same.

It also expects the unwavering practical commitment by the parties to the holding of the early local elections in parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in full conformity with Ukrainian law and international standards, as foreseen by the Minsk Protocol and by the law on interim self-governance. The Council encourages the Government of Ukraine to invite OSCE/ODIHR to observe these elections and calls on all parties to ensure safe and secure conditions for such an Election Observation Mission, should it take place. The holding of "presidential" and "parliamentary" elections, called by the self-appointed authorities, would run counter to the letter and the spirit of the Minsk Protocol and disrupt progress towards finding a sustainable political solution in this framework. The EU would not recognise them.

3. The Council reiterates its call upon all States and actors in the region to ensure safe and unrestricted access to the crash site of MH17, to allow resumption of the investigation onsite and complete repatriation of the remains and belongings of the victims still present at the site. Those directly and indirectly responsible for the downing of MH17 should be held accountable and brought to justice as soon as possible.
4. The European Union is concerned by the increasingly serious humanitarian impact of the crisis in eastern Ukraine. The Council calls on all parties to fully respect international law, to protect civilians and humanitarian workers and to ensure unhindered access for humanitarian organisations. The EU is committed to support the population affected by the conflict, as well as the efforts of the Ukrainian government to that end. In this respect, the Council welcomes the efforts by the European Commission and the EU Member States to provide support to the population in need, amounting to EUR 63 million so far. The EU and the Member States remain committed to scale-up their assistance to the crises-affected population through additional funding or through targeted and coordinated in-kind assistance. The Council furthermore recognises the importance of an enhanced coordination within the European Union and with other international donors.
5. The Council looks forward to the holding of early national parliamentary elections on 26 October in full conformity with international standards and welcomes the deployment of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission to this effect. Ukrainian officials and voters should be unimpeded in preparing for the elections, and all candidates should be ensured safe and secure conditions to campaign freely, across the whole country. The Council condemns the recent incidents of beating and intimidation of some candidates and underlines the need for proper campaigning conditions for all candidates.

6. The Council supports the Commission's efforts in seeking an interim agreement for the resumption of gas supplies by Russia to Ukraine and recalls the urgency for the sides to reach an agreement on the basis of the Protocol proposed at the latest trilateral meeting. Such an agreement, as well as urgent and long-term measures to improve energy efficiency in Ukraine, are critical for safeguarding the security of supply and transit this winter. The Council encourages the Government of Ukraine to maintain the momentum on energy sector reforms, in line with its commitment under the Energy Community Treaty, in particular to further advance on the restructuring of the natural gas sector.
7. The Council welcomes the recent adoption by the Verkhovna Rada of the laws on prosecution and anti-corruption, and encourages Ukraine to continue the process of envisaged reforms and economic modernisation, including those foreseen in the Association Agenda, in accordance with its international commitments. Constitutional and decentralisation reforms, as well as ensuring rights of persons belonging to national minorities in line with the relevant standards of the Council of Europe, are of particular importance. Based on the mandate given in the properly conducted parliamentary and local elections, an inclusive national dialogue should be resumed, as foreseen in the Minsk Protocol. In coordination with other donors and international financial institutions, the European Union stands ready to support implementation of the comprehensive reform package as well as rebuilding of Ukraine's economy.
8. The Council approves the Operational Plan of the EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform (EUAM Ukraine) in response to its conclusions of 23 June, which further emphasises the commitment of the EU to support Ukraine and in particular in assisting the Ukrainian authorities in meeting the urgent needs to effectively address Civilian Security Sector Reform. The Council reiterates the importance of coordination and coherence with other EU efforts, with the OSCE, and with other international actors.
9. The European Union does not recognise the local elections held on 14 September in the illegally annexed Crimea and Sevastopol. The Council reiterates its call on UN Member states to consider non-recognition measures similar to those pursued by the EU in line with the UNGA Resolution 68/262. In that respect, the Council fully supports the continuation of the missions of the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and expects all parties to provide them with full, free and unrestricted access to the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea. The Council condemns the deterioration of the human rights situation on the peninsula, in particular the persecution and intimidation of the Crimean Tatar community, including the cases of kidnapping, torturing and killing of young male Crimean Tatars, the eviction of the Mejlis from its premises in Simferopol and interrogations of its activists.

10. The Council welcomes the ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement by the Ukrainian Parliament and the consent given by the European Parliament, enabling the provisional application of the relevant provisions of the Association Agreement as of 1 November. It calls upon Ukraine to continue the process of envisaged reforms and economic modernisation, including the adequate preparation for the implementation of Title IV of the Association Agreement, in line with the timeframe specified in the Council Decision, taking into account Ukraine's international commitments. The Council also welcomes the Commission proposal for an extension of the autonomous trade preferences for Ukraine in line with the Joint Ministerial Statement of 12 September on the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement/DCFTA and looks forward to its swift adoption. It underlines the importance for all parties to strictly abide by their commitments in the Joint Ministerial Statement, which is part and parcel of a comprehensive peace process in Ukraine, respecting Ukraine's territorial integrity and the right of Ukraine to decide on its destiny. It recalls that the Association Agreement is a bilateral agreement and any adaptations to it can only be made at the request of one of the parties and with the agreement of the other."

Middle East Peace Process / Gaza

The Council discussed the situation in Gaza, including prospects for a durable cease-fire, the reconciliation between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas and recent announcements of Israeli settlement activities.

The High Representative briefed ministers on the outcome of the donor's conference for Gaza on 12 October in Cairo, which she co-chaired. The EU and its member states pledged more than €450 million for the reconstruction of the Gaza strip on that occasion.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1 The Council welcomes the overall orderly conduct of the elections which took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 12 October, underlines the crucial importance of swift government formation, and calls on Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders to act immediately to ensure this takes place. The Council recalls its Conclusions of April 2014 and reiterates its call for the leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina to engage immediately on a broader set of issues in order to address the challenges that the country faces as it progresses towards the EU. The Council reaffirms its determination to actively and intensively engage in support of this process.
2. The Council welcomes the continued presence of Operation Althea, focusing on capacity-building and training while also retaining the capability to contribute to the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities' deterrence capacity if the situation so requires. In this context, as part of the overall EU strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Council confirms the EU's readiness to continue at this stage an executive military role to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities to maintain the safe and secure environment, under a renewed UN mandate.
3. It reiterates its agreement to keep the operation under regular review, including on the basis of the situation on the ground, with a view to making progress on the conditions conducive to the delivery of its mandate.
4. The EU at the same time encourages the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the support of the international community, to accelerate their efforts to address the disposal of excess ammunition and other outstanding issues."

Yemen

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU welcomes the appointment of Mr. Khaled Bahah as Yemen's new Prime Minister, and positively notes that his appointment was unanimously approved by the panel of presidential advisors. The EU urges the swift formation of a new inclusive government, and calls upon all political actors to engage constructively and support President Hadi in his efforts.
2. The EU reaffirms its commitment to continue supporting Yemen in its transition, and calls on all regional actors to contribute positively to this process. The EU welcomes the signature of the Peace and National Partnership Agreement on 21 September and of its security annex, which offer a way out of the current crisis. State institutions, political parties and social groups must work together to ensure the swift implementation of all parts of the Agreement, in line with the National Dialogue Conference's (NDC) outcomes and the GCC Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism. The EU is concerned that slow progress in the implementation of NDC recommendations has significantly hampered Yemen's ability to tackle its pressing security, economic, and humanitarian challenges.
3. Security is an essential prerequisite for the success of the transition. The EU therefore unreservedly condemns the recent violence that has taken place in Sana'a, Saada, Al-Jawf, Amran, Mareb, and Hadramawt. Those engaged in armed confrontation must lay down their weapons and act in keeping with the law and with state authority. The EU also renews its firm commitment to support Yemen in its fight against terrorism.
4. The EU calls on the Constitutional Drafting Committee to quickly deliver a draft Constitution, which preserves the unity, sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Yemen. Preparatory steps for the constitutional referendum and for transparent and credible elections must urgently be taken forward, including a transparent voter registration process.
5. The EU continues to be concerned by the actions of spoilers and recalls that UN Security Council Resolution 2140 includes provisions on targeted sanctions measures against individuals or entities engaging in or providing support for acts that threaten the peace, security, or stability in Yemen. It is a clear signal to those who aim at undermining state institutions and the transition process.

6. The EU congratulates Yemen for concluding an ambitious agreement with the International Monetary Fund and calls on the Government to maintain its course on the necessary economic reforms, including by taking action to improve fiscal sustainability and fighting corruption in the public administration. More resolve is still needed urgently to alleviate the implications of these reforms on the most vulnerable part of the population.
7. The EU remains deeply concerned that more than half of the population of Yemen is affected by the humanitarian crisis. It urges all parties in Yemen to cooperate to protect civilians and to ensure immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access. The magnitude of the humanitarian crisis calls for immediate short-term assistance; in the longer term, it can only be addressed by tackling its structural root causes through economic reforms. The EU urges all donors to contribute to addressing humanitarian needs."

Afghanistan

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council welcomes the formation of a Government of National Unity. The presidential and provincial elections demonstrated the clear will of the Afghan people for democracy. Future elections should be credible and transparent. It is critical that the Afghan authorities take the necessary steps to remedy the shortcomings, starting with next year's parliamentary elections. The European Union stands ready to assist in this endeavour.
2. The EU reiterates its long-term commitment to Afghanistan and reaffirms the comprehensive strategy agreed by the Council in June. It looks forward to working in close cooperation with the new government and international partners to safeguard the advances Afghanistan has made over the last thirteen years and to support and incentivise urgently needed reforms. The EU recognises the important future role to be played by UNAMA in Afghanistan.
3. The Council welcomes the finalisation of the Multiannual Indicative Programme for Afghanistan, which sets out the EU's commitment to provide up to €1.4 billion in assistance for the period up to 2020. This funding complements the development assistance provided bilaterally by Member States. The EU restates its willingness to finalise the Cooperation Agreement for Partnership and Development. This can provide the basis for a wide-ranging long-term partnership between the EU and Afghanistan. The EU also restates its commitment to the extension of the EU police mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL) until the end of 2016.

4. The Council welcomes the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement with the United States of America and the Status of Forces Agreement with NATO. These agreements provide the basis for the continued international military presence to support the Afghan National Security Forces in providing security in Afghanistan. Lasting peace and security will require strong leadership from the Government of Afghanistan as well as consistent and constructive engagement from neighbouring countries. The EU welcomes the 'Heart of Asia' ministerial on 31 October in Beijing. The ministerial has the potential to play an important role in putting in place the required regional economic and security architecture. The Council calls for all Central Asian countries to set aside their differences and use the opportunity to promote longterm stability and prosperity both in Afghanistan and in the wider region.
5. The Council calls for a clear and unequivocal commitment to respect human rights, in particular to implement fully existing statutes for the rights of women and girls. The EU reiterates its strong and principled position against the death penalty in any and all cases and in all circumstances.
6. It is now imperative that the Government of Afghanistan enact the reforms necessary to restore economic confidence, promote job creation and increase revenue generation. Action is also needed to reform the judicial system, tackle the twin threats from corruption and narcotics and improve the accountability of the state to ordinary Afghans, including the establishment of decentralised decision-making bodies at provincial and district level. The London conference on 24-25 November will provide the opportunity both for the government to set out its reform commitment in these areas and for the international community to restate its long-term commitment to support Afghanistan."

Sudan

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The European Union remains deeply concerned at the ongoing conflicts in Sudan, notably in Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile and the accompanying violations of humanitarian and human rights law, as well as a serious humanitarian emergency all of which continue to cause enormous human suffering and internal displacements and pose a risk to regional stability. There can be no military solution to conflicts in Sudan. The EU therefore supports the African Union Peace and Security Council's repeated call for a holistic approach to Sudan's multiple challenges and the need to tackle comprehensively the political, economic and social causes of persisting conflict.

2. The initiated National Dialogue process is currently the best opportunity to make progress towards this goal and to pave the way towards internal peace, reconciliation and democratic governance. The EU welcomes recent signs of a political momentum, in particular the Agreements on the National Dialogue and Constitutional Process signed in Addis Ababa on 4 September 2014. It calls on all groups to renounce violence as a means for political change and to seize this opportunity for a political solution to Sudan's challenges through dialogue and negotiation without delay.

3. The EU considers that for the National Dialogue to succeed and to achieve legitimate results, it should be
 - inclusive: Space should be given for a meaningful participation of the opposition parties and armed movements as well as civil society, including women's, groups. The dialogue should include stakeholders from all of Sudan's regions and reflect the full ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of Sudan;

 - comprehensive: To address Sudan's internal conflicts, issues such as socio-economic marginalisation, unequal distribution of resources, political exclusion and lack of access to public services need to be tackled. The dialogue should provide mechanisms for the way forward for peace and development in all regions in conflict. It should provide for a platform on which to discuss issues of national importance, including identity and social equality, agree new and inclusive governance arrangements, a definitive constitution and a roadmap for the holding of national elections;

 - held in a conducive environment: The freedoms of expression, of media, of association and assembly must be guaranteed. Political prisoners must be released, and practices of arbitrary detention - like those across the anniversary of the September 2013 protests - stopped;

 - accompanied by confidence-building measures: These should include, first and foremost an immediate, sustained and verifiable cessation of hostilities and free and unhindered humanitarian access to all civilians in the conflict areas. This is of relevance both to the Government of Sudan and to the armed movements;

 - transparent about the process, the objectives, the timeframe and the way forward, so that the Sudanese people at large can own the process and accept its outcomes.

4. The EU stands ready to support a National Dialogue process as set out above and encourages all stakeholders inside and outside Sudan to join efforts towards such a process.
5. The EU reiterates its full support to the work of the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) and commends its chairman President Mbeki on his recent efforts to promote a genuine National Dialogue process on a broad basis. The EU calls on all international stakeholders to rally behind the AUHIP to reinforce its role and strengthen its voice. The EU supports current efforts to create a comprehensive platform for the facilitation of the National Dialogue that will integrate the different peace and dialogue processes for Sudan's regional conflicts.
6. Sudan stands at an important crossroad. A genuine National Dialogue would help enhance confidence between Sudan and international partners such as the EU. It would also create a peaceful environment in which tangible and sustained progress in addressing Sudan's main political and economic challenges, needed to secure debt relief under the HIPC process, could be achieved. The EU therefore calls on the Government of Sudan, the opposition and the armed movements to rise to the occasion and demonstrate the leadership necessary to put Sudan on a path to peace, prosperity and justice. In this respect, the EU recalls the importance of fighting impunity.
7. In the face of the worsening humanitarian situation the EU is very concerned by access restrictions still imposed for international humanitarian agencies and organisations. It reiterates its call on the Government of Sudan, as well as on armed movements to guarantee safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access to all areas by humanitarian agencies, in particular in conflict-affected areas in line with international humanitarian principles. Civilians, humanitarian staff and assets must be protected.
8. The EU reiterates its commitment to support Sudan and the Sudanese people in their transition to an internally reformed democracy, living in peace with itself and with its neighbours."

Somalia

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU welcomes the political and security progress made in Somalia since the signing of the Somali Compact during the Brussels New Deal Conference for Somalia in September 2013. The Somali Compact has since provided the framework for the reconstruction of Somalia and has become an important tool to establish the rule of law and security, and promote socio-economic development.

2. The EU welcomes the steps taken to implement the Government's 'Vision 2016: Framework for Action' plan, laying the foundations of a new Somalia and realising the Somali Compact. While the EU welcomes recent progress, further efforts will be needed if the ambitious timeline is to be met. The EU therefore urges the Federal Government of Somalia to maintain momentum, unity of purpose and build on the positive gains made to date. The EU emphasises the importance of establishing interim regional administrations by the end of 2014 and the need for an ongoing and inclusive dialogue between the Federal Government and all regions, that includes participation of civil society and women, and that also tackles more effectively and transparently the fundamental issues of power and resource sharing. This should apply in particular to resource-generating economic sectors, such as infrastructure, extractives and fisheries. The National Independent Electoral Commission and the Boundaries and Federation Commission should be established this year and steps should be taken to deliver the constitutional referendum and conduct a legitimate and inclusive electoral process in 2016. This requires the Parliament to fulfil its legislative duties.

3. The EU underlines that inclusive and accountable political processes are critical to further progress and supports the objective of holding peaceful and transparent national elections in 2016. National reconciliation in Somalia is crucial and the EU welcomes the efforts of the Federal Government and the emerging interim regional administrations, with the support of IGAD and its member states, to support inclusive reconciliation processes at regional level. It urges all political leaders to demonstrate the value of working in partnership. The EU also welcomes the important contribution made by the Somali civil society and diaspora and underlines that women, youth and minority groups must all play an important role in shaping the future of Somalia.

The EU remains concerned by continuing reports of humanitarian law and human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, violence against women and children, recruitment and use of children, attacks against journalists and arbitrary detentions. The fight against impunity for these crimes is essential. The EU encourages the Federal Government of Somalia to take concrete measures to implement fully its human rights roadmap adopted in August 2013 and to continue implementing its action plans on children and armed conflict.

4. The EU welcomes the successful outcome of the London security conference on September 18 on the reform of the Somali National Army, and the strong impetus for its further development into a professional, mobile, inclusive and integrated multi-regional force. A plan and timetable for this process are essential. At the same time, the EU welcomes the mapping out of a process for the integration of regional militia into the Somali National Army. Security and stabilisation of the country is of paramount and immediate importance as it is a prerequisite for state-building and development. It is therefore important that the security architecture reflects the political structure and that suitable arrangements are agreed to ensure local law enforcement.

The EU further recognises the importance of the establishment of a properly resourced and comprehensive disengaged combatants' programme that is consistent with international human rights standards.

5. The EU commends the work of the EU Training Mission (EUTM) in Somalia, which undertakes advisory, mentoring and training activities, with the aim to developing the Somali National Armed Forces' structures and their training capacity in Somalia itself. Despite a challenging security situation, the Mission is now fully established in Mogadishu and has trained and mentored 4600 soldiers of the Somali National Army since 2010.
6. The EU commends AMISOM's efforts alongside the Somali National Army in Operation Indian Ocean which has resulted in significant gains, most recently in the liberation of the Al Shabaab stronghold of Baraawe. It praises the commitment and bravery of both AMISOM and the Somali security forces - both of whom continue to pay a high price extending security in Somalia. The EU recalls its continued strong political and financial support since 2007 to AMISOM's essential contribution to Somalia's longer-term peace and security. The EU reiterates its strong and urgent call on other partners to seriously contribute to the sustainable and predictable funding of AMISOM and the Somali security forces. It underlines the importance of the Federal Government taking on an increased responsibility and ownership of the security sector. Furthermore, the EU underlines that it is essential that military operations be followed immediately by national efforts to establish or improve governance structures in the recovered areas and by the delivery of basic services, including security and notes that these stabilisation efforts are an essential part of AMISOM's eventual exit strategy.

The EU is, however, concerned by allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by African Union Forces in Somalia and firmly condemns all crimes of sexual violence in situations of conflict, of whatever nature. It welcomes the commitment of the African Union and the troop contributing countries to investigate these allegations and ensure accountability of their troops. It also underlines the need for AMISOM troops to receive appropriate information and pre-deployment training in relation to human rights principles, including gender equality and sexual violence and be properly informed of the sanctions in place should any abuse be perpetrated.

Furthermore, the EU urges AMISOM to finally establish a Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis and Response Cell (CCTARC) as called for repeatedly by the UN Security Council, most recently in its Resolution 2158(2014) of 29 May 2014.

7. The EU welcomes the significant decline in piracy activity in the Gulf of Aden and Western Indian Ocean and encourages the Federal Government to further increase its contribution to this success. However, networks supporting piracy are still operating and the threat of piracy remains. The EU continues to assume its leading role in the fight against piracy and contributing to tackling its root causes, including through its CSDP missions as well as in its capacity as Chair of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) in 2014. The EU intends to continue the deterrence and disruption of piracy through Operation EUNAVFOR ATALANTA until December 2016. The CSDP Mission EUCAP Nestor, in cooperation with other actors, including the Maritime Security Programme and the Critical Maritime Routes Programme, is also playing an important role in reinforcing maritime security capacities in the region and in Somalia, including by contributing to a pertinent rule of law framework in Somalia, thus reflecting the EU's comprehensive approach to maritime security.

The EU is deeply concerned by the news of the recent release of a pirate leader, in Mogadishu, and reiterates the urgent need for the Somali authorities to end impunity of piracy network leaders and strengthen the rule of law. The prosecution of piracy leaders remains a prerequisite for the disruption of piracy networks' operational capabilities. Therefore the EU calls on Somali authorities to take concrete measures towards the establishment of such legislative framework pertaining to piracy and maritime crime. The EU also looks forward to obtaining more clarity on the National Maritime Coordination Committee.

The EU also notes that new threats such as trafficking in human beings and drugs, illegal trade in charcoal, smuggling of migrants and proliferation of small arms and light weapons require increasing attention. It welcomes efforts in the UN to tackle them and invites the Federal Government of Somalia and other actors in the region to act in support of these efforts. The EU calls upon charcoal importing countries to ascertain its origin.

8. The EU urges the Federal Government to fight corruption and tighten financial governance procedures in order to improve transparency and accountability of the government's finances which will increase public and donor confidence. In this context, it welcomes the establishment of the Financial Governance Committee and calls for its urgent strengthening. The EU welcomes the establishment of funds under the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility (SDRF) as an important step towards the objective of achieving greater alignment of international financing with the Compact priorities and increased Somali ownership. The EU further reiterates its support to the efforts of strengthening the Somali Government's Public Financial Mechanism Systems as an important building block in establishing a roadmap for future budget support.
9. The EU expresses deep concern at the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Somalia due to drought, continued conflict, restricted flow of commercial goods into areas affected by military operations and surging food prices. and urges all parties to allow safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access to all areas by humanitarian agencies.

In addition to responding to the urgent humanitarian situation, the international community should consider ways to support longer-term resilience-building and development in Somalia, that would generate employment, improve livelihoods and contribute to sustainable peace and security.

10. The EU commends the efforts of the UN SRSG to Somalia in coordinating and facilitating a comprehensive international response. The EU also commends the work of the EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa and his role in galvanising engagement from Somalia's neighbours.
11. The EU looks forward to the first Ministerial High Level Partnership Forum on Somalia in Copenhagen in November, to take stock of joint progress and challenges since the New Deal Conference in Brussels and agree on the necessary actions and steps required to achieve the Somali Compact goals by 2016. The EU stresses the continued importance of the Somali Compact and its implementation for the reconstruction of Somalia and reiterates that the EU remains committed to supporting the development of a stable, accountable and prosperous Somalia over the long term."

EU action against trafficking of small arms

The Council approved the seventeenth progress report on the implementation of the EU strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition covering the EU's activities from 1 January to 30 June 2014.

Restrictive measures - Somalia

The Council amended the EU sanctions against Somalia. Following a decision at the UN, it added two additional persons to the list of those targeted by the measures, which consist in an asset freeze, a travel ban and an arms embargo.

Restrictive measures - Syria

The Council reinforced EU restrictive measures against the Syrian regime. For more details, see [press release](#).

Restrictive measures - Libya

The Council amended the EU restrictive measures in view of the situation in Libya to take account of changes approved at the UN. These include an extension of the designation criteria for travel restrictions and asset freezes, an amendment of the arms embargo as well as a technical update of the list of those subject to sanctions.

Restrictive measures - Republic of Guinea

The Council extended the EU restrictive measures against five persons from the Republic of Guinea. A travel ban and an asset freeze will continue to apply until 27 October 2015 to five individuals identified by the International Commission of Inquiry as responsible for the events of 28 September 2009 in Guinea.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Operation ALTHEA

The Council approved the High Representative's report on the twentieth six-monthly review of Operation ALTHEA. The mission provides capacity-building and training support for the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) while retaining the capacity to intervene to support the BiH efforts in maintaining a safe and secure environment.

EU civilian advisory mission in Ukraine

The Council adopted the concept of operations and the operational plan for the EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine), which is being established to advise on efficient, trusted and democratically controlled civilian security services in Ukraine. For details, see [press release](#).

EUCAP Sahel Mali

The Council approved the concept of operations for the EU Common Security and Defence Policy mission in Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali). EUCAP Sahel Mali is currently being set up and aims to support the Malian state in ensuring democratic order and the conditions for lasting peace as well as in maintaining its authority throughout the entire territory. The mission will deliver training and strategic advice on the reform of the three internal security forces, i.e. the police, Gendarmerie and Garde nationale.

EUCAP Nestor

The Council allocated a budget of € 17.9 million for activities of the EU mission on regional maritime capacity building in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP Nestor) for the period from 16 October 2014 to 15 October 2015.
