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Policy

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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

Ukraine

The Council reviewed the situation in Ukraine. The Council expressed its strong commitment to support the Ukrainian reform agenda, through continued and significant financial support, as well as through the EU Advisory Mission (EUAM Ukraine). Ministers underlined that Ukraine has taken important positive steps in many areas, in particular in socio-economic development and the fight against corruption. The Council encouraged full implementation of these reforms as well as further progress in areas such as constitutional, judicial and electoral reform, public administration, and the energy sector.

In light of the recent resurgence of violence in eastern Ukraine, foreign ministers expressed their concern, in particular with regard to the humanitarian situation. They discussed how to increase EU support for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. The Council reiterated the EU's backing of the Normandy format discussions and recognised the important work done by the OSCE special monitoring mission to Ukraine.

Libya

The Council discussed the political situation in Libya. EU foreign ministers reaffirmed the importance of Libya regaining its stability through an inclusive political settlement under the framework of the Libyan political agreement. They underlined the important role of regional actors and organisations could play in this regard. The EU will join the United Nations, the League of Arab States and the African Union to form a Quartet bringing together mediation efforts. A stable and peaceful Libya is important not only for its neighbours - the EU included, but for the Libyans themselves, as well as for migrants currently in Libya.

The Council adopted the following conclusions on Libya:

- "1. Efforts to stabilise Libya are now more important than ever, and the EU will do its utmost to contribute to that objective. The EU remains committed to an inclusive political settlement under the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), and to supporting the Presidency Council (PC) and the Government of National Accord (GNA), headed by Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj, and backed by the United Nations. It welcomes their efforts to restore unified governance, prosperity and security to Libya. Recalling UNSCR 2259 and subsequent resolutions, the EU recognises the PC and the GNA as the sole legitimate government authorities under the LPA that we fully support as the framework within which to find concrete solutions to current issues in Libya. The EU commends ongoing efforts to bridge political differences and make the Libyan institutions more representative, efficient and capable of delivering. The EU underlines the Libyan ownership of the political process and the importance of its inclusiveness, notably through the continued participation of political and local actors, women and civil society. Political leaders in Libya bear the responsibility for the wellbeing and security of their own citizens. All Libyan actors are called upon to avoid actions that undermine the political transition in Libya and must engage constructively in a meaningful dialogue. The EU will make use of its instruments of support, as well as it stands ready to amend its restrictive measures as necessary to help support peace, stability and security in Libya.
2. The EU underlines the urgent need to unite all armed forces under the control of the legitimate civilian authorities as set out in the LPA to ensure stability and preserve the country's unity and territorial integrity. There can be no military solution to the conflict, and in this respect the EU underlines the need to implement UNSCR 2278. The EU welcomes the creation of the Presidential Guard and the recent deployment of its first units as a major step to protect the institutions created by the LPA, and diplomatic missions in Tripoli. It is ready to explore the possibility of support to the Presidential Guard.

3. The EU reaffirms its full support to the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and to the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General, Martin Kobler. It welcomes the engagement by Libya's neighbours and by regional organizations, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States, as positively illustrated in recent meetings in Cairo and Brazzaville, to accompany and facilitate the Libyan political process in line with the LPA. The EU, as one of Libya's neighbours, will join the efforts of those regional organizations to support the UN mediation. All Libya's neighbours have the responsibility to play a key constructive role in the resolution of the Libyan crisis. The EU will intensify its dialogue with them, including on their initiatives, in this regard. The EU welcomes the growing international presence in Tripoli following the recent reopening of some embassies.
4. The EU commends the courage and determination shown by Libyans in combating terrorism and pays tribute to the sacrifice of those who lost their lives in the fight against terrorist groups. It remains concerned about the threat that terrorism poses to Libya and neighbouring countries. It calls on all Libyans to unite against terrorism, underlines the importance of prevention and reiterates its support to the legitimate authorities in their fight against radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism. The EU is committed to contribute to the stabilisation and rehabilitation of the most affected areas throughout Libya.
5. The EU welcomes progress made at recent Libyan economic dialogue meetings. It calls on all participants, especially the GNA and the Central Bank, to fully implement their agreement to keep the legitimate economy functioning, ensure the necessary funds for government activities, bring the budget under control and end the liquidity crisis. It calls for urgent measures to reform the economy, reduce wasteful public expenditure and improve delivery of basic services to respond to the most urgent needs of the Libyan people. The welcomed increase in oil production should enable the Libyan government to provide the population with more public goods and services, including security, education and humanitarian assistance. The EU calls on all Libyans to preserve the oil infrastructure, and it recalls the UNSC resolutions which state that exports of Libyan oil must remain under the exclusive control of the GNA and the National Oil Company and condemn illegal oil exports.
6. The EU is concerned about the humanitarian situation in Libya, where some 1.3 million people are in need of emergency assistance. It calls for access for humanitarian workers to the people in need and the respect for International Humanitarian Law. More progress needs to be made on ensuring full respect for human rights, strengthening justice, accountability and due process.

7. The EU condemns human rights violations and abuses against migrants and urges Libyan authorities to redouble their efforts to improve the protection and promotion of human rights, especially in migrant detention centres, with particular regard to persons in a vulnerable situation. It calls on all parties to ensure unhindered and secure access to the centres for aid workers. To enhance the protection of migrants, help improve the conditions in detention centres, ensure adequate reception facilities, look for alternatives to detention and increase assisted voluntary return from Libya, the EU will use, amongst others, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and will step up cooperation with IOM and UNHCR. It will work with Libyan municipalities to promote alternative livelihoods and support the resilience of local communities hosting migrants, refugees and people in need of international protection.

8. In line with the declaration of the informal meeting of Heads of State or Government of 3-4 February in Malta and the HR/Commission Joint Communication of 25 January, the EU reiterates the need to stem irregular migratory flows along the Central Mediterranean route and disrupt the business model of human smugglers and traffickers. The EU remains committed to work with the Libyan authorities in helping to support SSR and to develop their security and defence structures. Recognizing the need for Libyan ownership in helping to address irregular migration flows and saving lives, the EU will continue its activities through different complementary and coordinated activities in the context of Seahorse Mediterranean Network, European Border and Coast Guard Agency and CSDP, in accordance with international law.

In line with the Malta declaration, the EU will give further priority to the provision of training, equipment and other support, with priority given to the Libyan Coastguard and Navy and other relevant legitimate Libyan agencies.

EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia will continue focusing on disrupting the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks. In addition, Operation Sophia will continue implementing its supporting tasks to train the Libyan Coastguard and Navy and to contribute to the implementation of the UN arms embargo, EUBAM will continue engaging and assisting Libyan authorities in view of a possible future civilian mission, once conditions allow, in the field of police, rule of law and border management. The EU also recalls its determination to help reduce the pressure on Libya's land borders in close co-operation with Libyan authorities and its neighbours.

9. The EU is implementing a cooperation package worth Euro 120 million, focused on civil society, governance, health, youth and education, migration, security and mediation. The EU continues to provide short-term assistance through various funding instruments, including support to municipalities and the provision of essential services to Libyan citizens in need. The EU has also expanded its humanitarian aid, with Euro 10.8 million in 2016. Improved security conditions on the ground and political stability are paramount for the effective delivery of EU assistance in all parts of Libya, including the remote South. The EU stands ready to increase its engagement to promote stability and prosperity in Libya."

Egypt

Over lunch, ministers discussed the situation in Egypt and the way forward for bilateral relations. They addressed more specifically EU support for economic growth and job creation, dialogue democracy, the rule of law and human rights, cooperation in areas such as counterterrorism and migration, and Egypt's role in the region. The discussion prepared the next Foreign Affairs Council meeting, to which Foreign Minister of Egypt Sameh Hassan Shoukry will be invited for an informal discussion with EU ministers.

Middle East Peace Process

The Council discussed the Middle East peace process in light of the most recent developments. Ministers reiterated their concern over the new settlements announced by Israel and called on both sides to restrain from taking any measures that might result in an escalation of the conflict. The EU reaffirmed its strong commitment to work to achieve a comprehensive peace deal, preserve the viability of the two-state solution and reverse on-going negative trends on the ground. The High Representative expressed the EU's readiness to continue working with the UN, the United States and Arab partners in order to achieve these goals.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Relations with the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Council updated the information related to twenty-one persons and one entity subject to restrictive measures against the Democratic Republic of the Congo, following the respective update by the United Nations Security Council Committee.

EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The Council took note of the annual progress report on the implementation of the European Union strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The report describes the main non-proliferation, disarmament and arms export control activities undertaken in 2016. The EU strategy against the proliferation of WMD was adopted on 12 December 2003. The report covers the main non-proliferation, disarmament and arms export control activities undertaken in 2016. It focuses on: nuclear issues, chemical and biological weapons, ballistic missiles, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) risk mitigation, the implementation of UNSC resolution 1540 and export controls and space issues. The report also outlines the work with partners in the G7 format, the political dialogue meetings, the cooperation with think-tanks and the WMD non-proliferation clauses in partnership agreements (5361/17 + ADD1 + ADD2)

EU strategy on small arms and light weapons

The Council took note of the annual report on the implementation of the European Union strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition - Actions in 2015. The report describes the actions the EU undertook in 2015 to support the fight against the illicit arms trade in military grade weapons. These actions include support to third countries for secure arms stockpile management and destruction of surplus weapons; capacity building for marking, record-keeping, tracing and law enforcement capacities; outreach for improved arms export control and foster regional cooperation (5368/17).

International Science and Technology Centre - Research and security

The Council [approved](#) the conclusion of an agreement aimed at continuing the [International Science and Technology Center](#) (ISTC). The ISTC is a unique multilateral instrument allowing the scientific communities from several countries (the EU, Japan, the United States, South Korea, Norway, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kirghizstan and Georgia) to work together on the relationship between research and security. The objectives of the ISTC include the promotion of the improvement of international mechanisms for the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. The ISTC is moving towards larger scientist engagement and focuses on securing sensitive knowledge and information, as well as on capacity building in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation.

The Council authorised the opening of negotiations in October 2013 in follow-up to the withdrawal of Russia from the ISTC, with the other parties agreeing that a [new ISTC agreement](#) was needed in order for the Center to effectively fulfill its mandate. The European Parliament gave its consent on 19 January 2017. The original agreement establishing the ISTC was signed in 1992. Its headquarters is in Astana, Kazakhstan.
