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3540th Council meeting

Foreign Affairs

Development issues

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President **Federica Mogherini**
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

Humanitarian crises

Ministers discussed how to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Africa, Yemen and Syria. Those regions are currently facing major crises caused by conflicts in north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan, Yemen and Syria, and by droughts in Somalia and to a lesser extent in parts of Kenya and Ethiopia. The crises have given rise to widespread devastation and displacement of population, acute food and nutrition insecurity and a shortage of essential health care.

In order to better respond to the most urgent humanitarian needs, ministers stressed the need to quickly disburse the generous pledges made at recent donor conferences. They also stressed the importance of increased flexible and predictable humanitarian funding and of diplomatic and political solutions to support peace and security.

Ministers also examined ways to improve coordination between humanitarian and development aid instruments and effective joint initiatives of both fields. They adopted conclusions addressing this issue.

See the conclusions ([9459/17](#)).

EU-ACP relations post 2020

Ministers had an exchange of views on future relations between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, in view of the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement in 2020.

The discussion took place on the basis of a joint communication from the European Commission and High Representative Federica Mogherini, adopted on 22 November 2016, notably on the options proposed on the three main aspects: the structure of the future relationship, the nature of the possible agreement, and the geographical coverage.

[Communication on a renewed partnership with African, Caribbean and Pacific \(ACP\) countries](#)

New European consensus on development

The Council adopted a new European consensus on development, in the form of joint statement by the Parliament, the Council, the representatives of the governments meeting within the Council and the Commission setting out a new framework for development cooperation for the EU and its member states.

The new European consensus for development is the EU's response to the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development and a key deliverable at UN level. It sets out the main principles which will guide the approach of the EU and the member states to cooperation with all developing countries over the next 15 years, as well as a strategy for reaching the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

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

Other issues

Implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development

Over lunch, Amina J. Mohamed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations joined ministers for an exchange on the implementation of the 2030 agenda focusing on the external parts of the 2030 agenda, including the internal work of the UN to achieve the sustainable development goals and EU's efforts to contribute to the implementation.

This discussion falls within the context of the preparation of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, to be held on 10-19 July in New York. The 2030 agenda was adopted in September 2015 and came into force on 1 January 2016. It includes 17 sustainable development goals that provide a universally agreed plan to achieve sustainable development.

External aspects of migration

On the eve of the meeting, a joint dinner between development and home affairs ministers addressed the external aspects of migration to ensure full coherence between migration and development policies. Ministers discussed options to reinforce cooperation with countries of origin and transit to address the root causes of migration, prevent irregular migration and improve return, readmission and reintegration of irregular migrants.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

European Year for Development 2015 legacy

The Council adopted conclusions on the European Year for Development 2015 Legacy: “Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future” ([9376/17](#)).

Annual report on EU development targets

The Council adopted conclusions regarding information on the EU's official development assistance (ODA), analysing trends with regard to its commitments and delivery in 2016. The ODA is a major source of finance for least developed countries and fragile states which particularly lack the domestic capacity to raise finance from other sources. Last year, ODA reached €75 billion. This constitutes an 11% increase compared to 2015 ([9266/17](#)).

Sustainable garment value chains

The Council supports the promotion of responsible supply chains in the textile and clothing sector. It adopted conclusions recognising the potential of this sector as a driver of development and emancipation, but also acknowledging the economic, social and environmental challenges posed by the garment value chains. Deadly accidents such as the collapse of the factory in Rana Plaza in Bangladesh in 2013 underline the importance of preventing human rights violations and of promoting corporate social responsibility in the garment sector ([9381/17](#)).

Implementation of instruments for financing external actions

The Council adopted conclusions reviewing the 2016 annual report on the implementation of the EU's instruments for financing external actions in 2015. It stressed the usefulness of a yearly reporting on the evolution of EU development policy and practices. It welcomed the extensive geographic and thematic scope of the report, which provides a useful overview of the EU's response to political developments and global challenges ([9378/17](#))

Use of budget support for sub-Saharan Africa

Approximately 20% of EU development funding is channelled through budget support, sub-Saharan Africa being the largest recipient. The Council adopted conclusions on a report by the Court of auditors on how this funding is being used and how it could be improved. In particular, it stressed the importance of a predictable and sustainable financing where domestic revenues play a significant role, to support the implementation of the sustainable development goals ([9262/17](#)).

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Relations with Armenia

The Council adopted the EU position for the 17th meeting of the EU–Armenia Cooperation Council taking place in Brussels on 23 May. The main objective of the cooperation council is to address the future steps of the new EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement deepening the cooperation in the framework of Eastern Partnership and the reviewed European Neighbourhood Policy. Negotiations for this new agreement started in 2015, and were concluded successfully on 26 February 2017.

Current EU relations with Armenia are based on the EU-Armenia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (1999), which provides for wide-ranging cooperation in the areas of political dialogue, trade, investment, economy, promotion of democracy and human rights, law-making and culture. The new agreement will replace the current EU-Armenia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

[EU-Armenia relations \(EEAS website\)](#)

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Schengen evaluation - France

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2016 evaluation of France (Pas-de-Calais) on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of return (9522/17).

FOOD LAW

Cereal-based food, baby food and food for special medical purposes

The Council decided not to object to a Commission regulation ([8199/17](#)) authorising the addition of

- ferrous bisglycinate as a source of iron to processed cereal-based food and baby food
- calcium phosphoryl oligosaccharides as a source of calcium to food intended for special medical purposes

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. It now can enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects.
