



14418/16

(OR. en)

PROVISIONAL VERSION

PRESSE 57
PR CO 56

OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3498th Council meeting

Foreign Affairs

(including defence issues)

Brussels, 14 November 2016

President **Federica Mogherini**
High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security
Policy

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/press>

14418/16

1
EN

CONTENTS¹

ITEMS DEBATED

Turkey	3
Eastern Partnership	3
Southern Neighbourhood	4
Security and defence	4

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

– Syria	5
– Iran	5
– Security Sector Reform	8
– Relations with Azerbaijan	8
– Relations with Kazakhstan	8

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.

ITEMS DEBATED

Turkey

Ministers restated their **concerns at recent developments in Turkey** as set out by the High Representative in her declaration on behalf of the EU of 8 November 2016. In their debate, they particularly highlighted worrying renewed considerations in Turkey to introduce a bill to parliament to reinstate the death penalty. They also underlined that Turkey is a key partner of the EU in the areas of the economy, security, migration and foreign policy, in particular with regard to Syria and Iraq. The Council recalled the EU's **condemnation of the 15 July coup attempt**. While recognizing the need for Turkey to take proportionate action, ministers also recalled that, **as a candidate country, Turkey is expected to uphold the highest standards of democracy**, including respect for human rights, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and the right of all to a fair trial. EU ministers agreed on the importance of continuing **political dialogue** with Turkey at all levels.

[Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the latest developments in Turkey, 8 November 2016](#)

Eastern Partnership

The Council discussed current multilateral and bilateral relations with the six Eastern Partnership countries - **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine**. Ministers had an exchange of views on the implementation of the Partnership and possible deliverables to be achieved in 2017, notably with a view to the next **Eastern Partnership Summit in November 2017 in Brussels**.

The Council adopted conclusions on the Eastern Partnership.

[Read the full text of the conclusions](#)

Southern Neighbourhood

Over lunch, ministers discussed the Southern Neighbourhood, focusing on **Syria**. The High Representative informed the Council of her **recent outreach efforts with key actors in the region**, in line with the European Council mandate and in full support of the efforts of the UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. The High Representative referred to, in particular, her most recent visits to Iran on 29 October and to Saudi Arabia on 31 October. In its conclusions on Iran, which were adopted without debate, the Council welcomed this outreach and invited the High Representative to continue her work. The Council expressed its concern at the escalation of tensions in the region, and called for a more constructive regional environment, as well as an end to the violence in Syria and support for the resumption of a political process.

There was also an information point on Libya.

Security and defence

Foreign ministers had a **joint session** with defence ministers on the **implementation plan on security and defence** under the EU global strategy. The Council **adopted conclusions** setting out the level of ambition and the way forward.

[Conclusions on implementing the EU global strategy in the area of security and defence](#)

[Implementation plan on security and defence](#)

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Syria

The Council also adopted a decision adding 17 ministers and the Governor of the Central Bank of Syria to the sanctions list against the Syrian regime over the violent repression of the civilian population.

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

[Syria: Council response to the crisis](#)

Iran

The Council adopted the following conclusions on Iran:

- "1. Recalling the July 2015 Council conclusions and the joint statement agreed by the HRVP and Foreign Minister Javad Zarif at their April meeting, the European Union expresses its will to develop further its relations with Iran, in a manner fully consistent with the JCPOA.
2. The European Union reiterates its resolute commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which is a multilateral endeavour by the E3/EU+3 and Iran. It welcomes that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is being implemented by all sides. It notes that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has issued four reports since Implementation Day verifying Iran's nuclear related commitments. It underlines the need for Iran to continue to cooperate fully and in a timely manner with the IAEA and it supports the Agency work in monitoring Iran's implementation of the deal. It encourages Iran to ratify the additional protocol to its safeguards agreement. The European Union reiterates the need for continued full and effective implementation of the JCPOA throughout the lifetime of the agreement. The European Union confirms its support to the High Representative in her role as Coordinator of the Joint Commission.
3. The European Union is committed to support the full and effective implementation of the JCPOA including by the lifting of nuclear related economic and financial sanctions and engaging with the private sector and economic operators, especially banks, to promote growth in trade and investment. In particular, extensive guidance has been provided on the lifting of sanctions to ensure the new regulatory framework is clear. The Council will continue to reach out to all relevant parties on this issue.

4. The European Union welcomes and looks forward to the continued issuing of export licenses by the US Office of Foreign Assets Control for the transfer of commercial passenger aircraft and related parts and services to Iran. The sale of a significant number of aircraft to Iran's airlines will be an important signal for the successful implementation of the JCPOA. The aircraft's exclusively civil aviation end-use will enhance the people's mobility and contribute to a safer commercial aviation environment.
5. The upholding of commitments by all sides is a necessary condition to continue rebuilding trust and allow for continued, steady and gradual improvement in relations between the European Union, its Member States and Iran as stated by the July 2015 Foreign Affairs Council.
6. The Council reiterates its support to the development of EU-Iran relations in areas of common interest such as political dialogue, human rights, economic cooperation, trade and investment, agriculture, transport, energy and climate change, civil nuclear cooperation, environment, civil protection, science, research and innovation, education, including through university exchanges, culture, drugs, migration, regional and humanitarian issues as outlined in the Joint statement agreed by the HRVP and the Iranian Foreign Minister in their April meeting. The Council supports a coordinated EU strategy of gradual engagement with Iran that is comprehensive in scope, cooperative where there is mutual interest, critical when there are differences and constructive in practice. As part of that the Council fully supports the prompt opening of an EU Delegation in Iran as a key step to deliver the broad cooperation agenda.
7. The Council welcomes the expansion of the EU's economic relationship with Iran as a result of the implementation of the JCPOA and reaffirms its support for Iran's WTO accession as a way to promote market related reforms and achieve reintegration into the global economy and the rules based trading system. For Iran to fully benefit from the lifting of sanctions, including the full reengagement of European banks and businesses, it is important that it addresses obstacles related to economic and fiscal policy, business environment and rule of law. The Council welcomes Iran's adoption of, and high-level political commitment to, a Financial Action Task Force Action Plan to address its strategic anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism deficiencies, and its decision to seek technical assistance and urges its timely and swift implementation. The EU and its Member States are open to cooperate with Iran in these areas, including providing technical assistance for the implementation of the FATF action plan, and consider the use of export credits to facilitate trade, project financing, and investment in Iran. The Council welcomes the prospect of extending the third country lending mandate of the European Investment Bank (EIB) to Iran.

8. The Council notes the Iranian President's pledge to improve human rights in the country. However it remains concerned with the human rights situation, in particular the frequent use of death penalty including against juvenile and drug offenders. The EU opposes the use of the death penalty in all circumstances. The Council underlines the need to ensure equal rights of women, and persons belonging to all minorities, including ethnic and religious minorities, respecting freedom of expression, assembly and association and implementing the treaties to which Iran is a party as well as acceding to those conventions to which it is not yet a state party. It also calls on Iran to cooperate with and grant access to the UN special rapporteur. The EU aims at addressing these issues in a constructive manner, including through a dialogue on human rights, which would further identify areas of cooperation in this field.

9. The Council expresses its concern with the growing tensions in the region and supports ways to promote a more constructive regional environment. Iran plays an important regional role and it is of utmost importance that it takes tangible and constructive steps that would help make an improved regional situation a reality. The EU emphasises its balanced approach to the region and urges all countries in the region to work towards de-escalation of tensions and avoiding actions which feed violence, sectarianism and polarisation. In this sense the Council expresses its concern with the regional military build-up, including Iran's missile programme and calls upon Iran to refrain from activities which may deepen mistrust, such as ballistic missile tests, which are inconsistent with UNSCR 2231, and the statements associated with these.

10. The EU reiterates its conclusions on Syria of 17 October 2016^t and calls urgently for an end to the excessive and disproportionate attacks by the Syrian regime and its allies, both deliberate and indiscriminate, against civilian populations, humanitarian and healthcare personnel and civilian and humanitarian infrastructures. Therefore the Council urges Iran to use its influence on the Syrian regime to end the violence against civilian populations, humanitarian personnel and civilian and humanitarian infrastructures, enable full unhindered country-wide humanitarian access and engage constructively in a negotiated political process. The Council also encourages Iran to fully contribute to laying the ground for the resumption of an inclusive and Syrian led political process under UN auspices. The Council welcomes the outreach of the High Representative in this respect and invites her to continue this work with key actors in the region in support of the efforts of the UNSE Staffan de Mistura."

[EU restrictive measures against Iran](#)

[EU relations with Iran](#)

Security Sector Reform

The Council adopted conclusions on the Security Sector Reform (SSR). It endorsed the joint communication "Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support Security Sector Reform (SSR)".

Read the full text of the conclusions ([13998/16](#)).

Relations with Azerbaijan

The Council authorised the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to open negotiations on and negotiate, on behalf of the European Union and its member states, a Comprehensive Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

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

Relations with Kazakhstan

The Council agreed in principle on the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Kazakhstan and requested the consent of the European Parliament. The agreement will strengthen political dialogue and improve cooperation between the EU and Kazakhstan in a broad range of areas ([12409/16](#)).