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High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security
Policy

P R E S S

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¹ • Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
• Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
• Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

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ITEMS DEBATED

Current affairs

Foreign ministers discussed the most pressing issues on the international agenda. They highlighted their continued full support for the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA), following the entry into force of US sanctions on 5 November 2018. They noted that the agreement continues to be implemented by Iran, as certified for the 13th time by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). At the same time, they expressed their full solidarity to those member states which witnessed unacceptable behaviour from Iranian actors on European soil, and affirmed their readiness to consider a targeted appropriate response.

Foreign ministers also touched on the outcome of the international conference for Libya hosted by the Italian Government in Palermo on 12-13 November and the situation in Gaza, following the latest escalation of violence.

Central Asia

Foreign ministers had a discussion on Central Asia (Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) ahead of the 14th EU-Central Asia ministerial meeting that will take place on 23 November in Brussels. Foreign ministers noted the recent significant changes in the region and the new momentum in bilateral and regional cooperation. They expressed a strong interest in stepping up EU engagement in Central Asia in areas such as support for reform and economic development, as well as the promotion of sustainable connectivity and of regional conditions for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

This discussion will feed into the preparation of the new EU strategy on Central Asia expected to be adopted in 2019.

[EU-Central Asia relations, factsheet](#)

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Council discussed Bosnia and Herzegovina following the elections held on 7 October. Foreign ministers underlined the importance of forming governments at all level as soon as possible. This will allow political leaders to return to fully focusing on the reform agenda. The Council insisted that the continuation of the reform process remains essential to respond to the aspirations of the citizens, in particular the youth. They also noted that the reform of the electoral law should be undertaken.

Yemen

Foreign ministers discussed the situation in Yemen. Ministers exchanged views on ongoing EU efforts, in particular with regard to political and humanitarian support. They reaffirmed their strong support to the UN-led process and the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffith.

Foreign ministers noted that some encouraging steps in the direction of de-escalation could be noted on the ground. They agreed to send a clear message to all those involved in the conflict to consolidate these steps, come to a ceasefire, and to engage in political talks led by the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths.

[EU and Yemen factsheet](#)

Ukraine

The Council exchanged views on the latest developments in Ukraine, in particular the situation in the Azov Sea and the "elections" in the so-called "Luhansk People's Republic" and "Donetsk People's Republic" on 11 November 2018.

Foreign ministers reiterated their unwavering support for and commitment to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. In this context, they recalled that the EU does not recognise the "elections" of 11 November 2018 that it considers as illegal and illegitimate. They affirmed their readiness to consider appropriate targeted measures in response. Foreign ministers recalled that the full implementation of the Minsk agreements remain essential. They also highlighted the EU's continued humanitarian engagement in Eastern Ukraine, addressing the needs of those most affected by the conflict.

Ministers touched upon the EU's support for the reform process in Ukraine. The EU and Ukraine will have the opportunity to review the progress on reforms, as well as many other issues of relevance for bilateral and global cooperation, at their forthcoming Association Council meeting scheduled for 17 December 2018.

[EU relations with Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

Security and defence

Foreign ministers were joined by defence ministers for a discussion on EU cooperation in security and defence. They reviewed the implementation of the EU Global Strategy in this area.

The Council adopted conclusions on security and defence. The Council underlined that by addressing Europe's current and **future security needs, the EU will enhance its capacity to act as a security provider and its strategic autonomy, and strengthen** its ability to cooperate with partners. The Council recalls that this will contribute decisively to collective efforts, also in the context of the transatlantic relationship, and will enhance the European contribution to a rules-based global order with the UN at its core.

In its conclusions, the Council takes note of progress in strengthening cooperation in the area of security and defence, and provides guidance for further work. The areas covered include:

- **Civilian CSDP**

The Council welcomes the agreement on the establishment of a civilian CSDP compact, marking an ambitious commitment to strengthen civilian CSDP and make it more capable, more effective and responsive, and more joined-up in today's changed security environment.

- **The military planning and conduct capability (MPCC)**

The Council welcomes the positive impact of the MPCC in its command and control of the EU military training missions (currently: EUTM Somalia, EUTM RCA, EUTM Mali). The Council agrees to further strengthen the role of MPCC with the objective to be ready by the end of 2020 to also take responsibility for the operational planning and conduct of one executive military CSDP operation, limited to EU battlegroup size.

- **Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)**

The Council welcomes progress in the implementation of PESCO almost one year after its establishment and adopts a list of 17 new PESCO projects on 19 November.

– **the coordinated annual review on defence (CARD)**

The Council welcomes the trial run report and agrees to launch the CARD as a standing activity. CARD is a process aimed at offering a better overview at EU level of defence spending, national investment and defence research efforts. This actively promotes an enhance a defence cooperation among member states.

– **The European Defence Fund**

The Council adopted its position (partial general approach) on the European Defence Fund proposed by the European Commission in the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027. The European Defence Fund aims to strengthen the global competitiveness and innovation capacity of the EU defence technological and industrial base.

– **EU-NATO cooperation**

The Council reiterates that it continues to ensure coherence and mutual reinforcement between the EU and NATO. It welcomes the second Joint Declaration on EU-NATO cooperation signed on 10 July 2018 by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of NATO.

– **The European Peace Facility**

The Council takes note of the proposal by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy with the support of the European Commission, for a European Peace Facility with the intention of enhancing the EU's ability to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security. The Council invites the relevant preparatory bodies to continue to take this work forward.

– **Military mobility**

The Council welcomes the implementation of efforts in improving the mobility of military personnel, materiel and equipment. The aim of military mobility is to address the obstacles which are hampering the movement of military equipment and personnel across the EU and beyond.

[Council conclusions on Security and Defence](#)

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Council conclusions on Ethiopia

The Council adopted conclusions on Ethiopia. The Council notes that Ethiopia has witnessed momentous change and that political and economic reforms have gained a new impetus under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. The Council states that his ambitious agenda towards a more democratic and just Ethiopian society is a positive example for the region and beyond.

The Council welcomes the commitment of the government of Ethiopia to multi-party democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law and gender equality. It also encourages the government to continue its efforts in this regard and towards developing an inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders, including federal and regional authorities, opposition groups, civil society, youth groups and media, on sustainable solutions towards better governance, justice and accountability, elections, job creation, and security challenges.

[Council conclusions on Ethiopia](#)

Council conclusions on Sudan

The Council adopted conclusions on Sudan, which remains crucial for the peace and stability of the wider Horn of Africa. With the 2020 elections on the horizon and the dynamics in the region opening a new chapter of cooperation within the Horn, the Council reaffirms the EU's readiness to engage in an evolving dialogue and cooperation with Khartoum, depending on progress shown by Sudan in committing to internal reforms, including human rights and good governance, facilitation of humanitarian assistance, sustainable peace and a constructive role in the region.

In its conclusions, the Council also expected urges the Sudanese authorities to fully respect the rights to freedom of expression, press, access to information, association and peaceful assembly, in compliance with international human rights law. The Council underlines that the run-up to 2020 elections should be an opportunity for Sudan to demonstrate its commitment to reforms by allowing the full participation of all its citizens in an inclusive political process and without restrictions to individual rights.

In this regard, the Council expresses its deep concern with the shrinking space for the civil society and the persecutions against human rights defenders, students, political activists, journalists, and other media workers, as well as with the situation for women and girls.

[Council conclusions on Sudan](#)

Council conclusions on Afghanistan

The Council adopted conclusions on Afghanistan. The Council reaffirms its long-term commitment to support the people of Afghanistan in their path towards peace, security and prosperity, and welcomes the provisional application of the Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development (CAPD) as an important step in bilateral relations between the EU and Afghanistan.

The Council underlines that the Geneva ministerial conference on Afghanistan on 27-28 November 2018 will be an important opportunity to take stock of progress on mutually agreed reforms made since the Brussels Conference in 2016 and set a forward-looking agenda for peace, stability and sustainable development. The Council also recalls the EU support for political dialogue and economic cooperation between Afghanistan and neighbouring countries and the wider region, including Central Asian countries, through the establishment of networks and partnerships that develop sustainable connectivity.

[Council conclusions on Afghanistan](#)

Council conclusions on Pakistan

The Council adopted conclusions on Pakistan, following the holding of the July 2018 general elections. The Council states the EU's willingness to engage with the new government of Pakistan to support its efforts in advancing social and economic reforms, ensuring access to education, and addressing poverty and inequality through good governance and the respect of the rule of law.

The Council urges Pakistan to live up to its international commitments with regards to the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law. In the conclusions, the EU draws particular attention to the freedom of religion or belief, abuses of the blasphemy law, the freedom of expression and media, the shrinking space for civil society, the rights of the people belonging to minorities, and women's and children's full enjoyment of their human rights.

The Council also reiterates the EU's wishes to strengthen cooperation with Pakistan in the fields of security and defence, sustainable development, trade and migration. The Council calls on Pakistan to step up its engagement in constructive initiatives to support peace in Afghanistan and intensify its pursuit of cooperation with neighbouring countries, which would contribute to regional stability.

The conclusions also underline that the EU looks forward to engaging with Pakistan on sustainable connectivity as a positive contribution to regional stability, prosperity and development.

[Council conclusions on Pakistan](#)

Council conclusions on water diplomacy

The Council adopted conclusions on water diplomacy. The Council recalls that water is a prerequisite for human survival and dignity and a fundamental basis for the resilience of both societies and the environment. Water is vital for human nutrition and health, and essential for ecosystem management, agriculture, energy and overall planetary security.

The Council notes the potential of water scarcity to affect peace and security, as water related risks can have grave human and economic costs, all of which can have direct implications for the EU, including through migration flows. The Council intends to enhance EU diplomatic engagement about water as a tool for peace, security and stability, and firmly condemns the use of water as a weapon of war. The Council also underlines the EU's commitment to promoting transboundary and integrated water management as well as effective water governance.

The Council reaffirms the EU's commitment to the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, as components of the right to an adequate standard of living. It underlines the EU's strong commitment to the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda and highlights that progress on Goal 6 (“Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”) is essential for the achievement of other Sustainable Development Goals.

The Council stresses the essential link between water and climate change, and welcomes recent discussions at the UN Security Council linking water, climate, peace and security. The EU confirms its continued commitment to address water challenges around the world and to give the necessary consideration to the importance of water and sanitation in the programming of future financial and technical cooperation with partner countries.

[Council conclusions on water diplomacy](#)

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Civilian CSDP compact

The Council and the member states meeting within the Council adopted conclusions on the establishment of a civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) compact. These conclusions set the strategic guidelines for the strengthening of civilian CSDP. The aim is to strengthen the EU capacity to deploy civilian crisis management, reinforcing police, rule of law and civil administration in fragile and conflict settings. It contributes to the EU's wider response to tackle security challenges.

In its conclusions, the Council agrees to an increased contribution to civilian CSDP missions. The Council also commits to enhance the civilian CSDP's responsiveness through the ability to launch a new mission of up to 200 personnel in any area of operation within 30 days after a Council decision, with all the necessary equipment provided by the strategic warehouse and utilising the multi-layered responsiveness capacity.

[Conclusions on Civilian CSDP compact](#)

Permanent structured cooperation (PESCO)

The Council adopted an updated list of projects to be undertaken under PESCO. There will be 17 new projects, coming in addition to the initial 17 projects agreed on 11 December 2017 and formally adopted on 6 March 2018.

The projects cover areas such as training, capability development and operational readiness on land, at sea and in the air, as well as cyber-defence.

On 11 December 2017, the Council adopted a decision establishing Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). PESCO enables EU member states to work more closely together in the area of security and defence. This permanent framework for defence cooperation allow willing and able member states to develop jointly defence capabilities, invest in shared projects, and enhance the operational readiness and contribution of their armed forces.

The 25 member states participating in PESCO are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

[Permanent Structured Cooperation \(PESCO\) - Factsheet](#)

European Defence Fund

The Council adopted its position (partial general approach) on the European Defence Fund proposed by the European Commission in the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027. The objective is to strengthen the global competitiveness and innovation capacity of the Union's defence technological and industrial base.

On 13 June 2018, the European Commission presented its proposal for a regulation of the European Defence Fund as part of the upcoming MFF with a proposed envelope of €13 billion. The European Defence Fund aims to foster innovation and allow economies of scale in defence research and in the industrial development phase by supporting collaborative projects. The approach adopted is labelled as "partial" as the financial and other horizontal aspects of the fund will depend on the overall agreement on the next multiannual financial framework.

In its partial general approach, the Council broadly agrees with the Commission proposal. In particular, it confirms the overall objectives and structure of the Fund, including the intention to invest in disruptive technologies. It mostly seeks to clarify a number of aspects in regards to the eligibility of entities, and ownership of the results. It also seeks to clarify the award procedures and criteria and the provisions concerning the share of the indirect costs that will be covered by the Fund, the latter being an important element to make the Fund more attractive for industry players. The Council further stresses that special attention will be paid to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and mid-caps in the Union.

[Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Defence Fund \(First reading\) - Partial general approach \(Document\)](#)

[Proposal by the European Commission for a European Defence Fund, press release 7 June 2017](#)

EU strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and ammunition

The Council adopted a new EU strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition.

The Council notes that illicit SALW continue to contribute to instability and armed violence, thwarting sustainable development and crisis management efforts, further destabilising entire regions, the states therein and their societies, fuelling armed violence and organised crime, and amplifying the impact of terrorist attacks.

The new EU strategy replaces the strategy adopted in 2005. The new strategy takes into account the evolved security context, including the threat of terrorism inside the EU and developments in SALW design and technology affecting the capacity of governments to address the threat. It also includes the guiding principles of the 2016 EU Global Strategy.

[Council conclusions on the Adoption of an EU strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons and ammunition](#)

EU cyber defence policy framework

The Council adopted an updated version of the EU cyber defence policy framework. The update allows the EU to take account of the changing security challenges since the initial framework was adopted in 2014. It identifies priority areas for cyber defence and clarifies the roles of those involved.

The EU is increasingly cooperating in cyber defence, with a view to strengthen its capacities. At its last meeting, on 18 October 2018, the European Council called for measures to build strong cybersecurity in the EU. EU leaders referred in particular to restrictive measures able to respond to and deter cyber-attacks.

[EU Cyber Defence Policy Framework \(2018 update\)](#)

[Reform of cybersecurity in Europe](#)

EUTM Somalia

The Council extended the mandate of EU military training mission EUTM Somalia until 31 December 2020 and agreed on a budget of €22.9 million for the period 1 January 2019 until 31 December 2020.

The Council also slightly adapted the mission's existing mandate of providing political and strategic level military advice to the Somali authorities and contributing to the development of the Somali National Army (SNA)'s own training capacity with a view to handing over training activities for tactical units once conditions are met. The mission continues to support Somali-owned and Somali-provided training. It also supports other actors in carrying out their respective mandates in the security and defence area in Somalia.

EUTM Somalia was launched in December 2010 to provide political and strategic level military advice and mentoring to Somali defence institutions. The mission focuses on specific mentoring, advice, tailored training and capacity-building in order to contribute to the development of the Somali National Army, with the focus on delivering effective and sustainable security in the country. EUTM Somalia has been based in Mogadishu since 2014. It has a team of more than 200 staff and is led on the ground by Brigadier General Matteo Spreafico (Italy).

EUTM Somalia is part of the EU's comprehensive approach to Somalia, which comprises diplomatic efforts, development support, humanitarian aid as well as security engagement. It includes two complementary missions under the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: EUNAVFOR Operation ATALANTA contributing to fighting piracy off the Somali coast and EUCAP Somalia for maritime security capacity development in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean.

[EUTM Somalia website](#)

[Factsheet on EUTM Somalia](#)

Military mobility

The Council approved annexes for the military mobility requirements within and beyond the EU, that is what the military requires in terms of transport infrastructure, procedural and legal basis and communication network to be able to move and respond rapidly to a crisis. These requirements provide the military mobility work strands with military input as a commonly agreed basis for further progress in the area.

This is an essential step for identifying gaps and consequently to develop dual use civil and military infrastructure projects that can meet the military needs to move smoothly and rapidly in order to respond to a crisis in line with the EU and its member states defence needs and responsibilities. These requirements were developed in consultations with NATO, and therefore are coherent with the NATO requirements, particularly the infrastructure parameters.

European Defence Agency report

The Council took note of the report submitted by the Head of the European Defence Agency to the Council on 8 November 2018.

[European Defence Agency](#)

European Defence Agency guidelines

The Council adopted the guidelines for the European Defence Agency's work in 2019.

[European Defence Agency](#)

EU military capabilities

The Council took note of the single progress report on the development of EU military capabilities in the period from November 2016 to June 2018.

[The Common Security and Defence Policy \(CSDP\)](#)

Relations with the member states of the League of Arab States

The Council adopted a decision to promote capacity-building in the member states of the League of Arab States for implementing the UN programme of action against the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, in the context of the EU - League of Arab States strategic dialogue.

[EU - League of Arab States relations](#)

Relations with the Western Balkans

The Council adopted a decision in support of the South-Eastern and Eastern Europe clearinghouse for the control of small arms and light weapons (SEESAC) for the implementation of the regional roadmap on combating illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans.

ENERGY

EURATOM/KEDO Agreement

The Council approved the conclusion by the European Commission of an Agreement between Euratom and Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO) that ensures the continued applicability of the provisions of a previous agreement between the two sides. The Agreement will expire on 31 May 2019 and will be automatically renewed each year for a period of another year, unless a party notifies the other party that it wishes to terminate the Agreement at least one month before the date of its expiry. The Agreement will not be renewed beyond 31 May 2021 and will take effect retroactively from 1 June 2018. ([13254/18](#), [13261/18](#))

EURATOM/KEDO Agreement (retroactivity)

The Council approved the conclusion by the European Commission of an Agreement that ensures the applicability of the previous Agreement between Euratom and Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO), which expired on 31 May 2015, for the duration between 1 June 2015 and 31 May 2018. ([13255/18](#), [13263/18](#))
