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President **Federica Mogherini**
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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

Current affairs

The Foreign Affairs Council discussed pressing issues on the international agenda. The High Representative and foreign ministers followed-up on their discussion on Syria at the last Foreign Affairs Council in October, and recalled their commitment to halt arms exports to Turkey. They also noted the adoption of the framework for sanctions in response to Turkey's illegal drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Ministers also referred to the situation in Bolivia, calling on all to exercise a sense of responsibility to find a way towards credible elections and to avoid any further violence. They briefly touch upon Venezuela following the international solidarity conference on the Venezuelan refugee and migrant crisis (28-29 October). The Council also renewed sanctions on Venezuela for a year due to persistent actions undermining democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights.

The High Representative and foreign ministers briefly discussed the situation in Lebanon, expressing their expectations that a new government be formed without delay and the EU's readiness to continue supporting the country.

They also referred to the situation in Hong Kong, Iraq and Libya.

Regional security in the Gulf region and Iran

The High Representative and foreign ministers discussed the security situation in the Gulf region. They noted that while tensions remain in the region, the situation has not escalated. They reflected on how the EU could support and encourage further de-escalation, in particular through initiatives allowing for ownership from the region itself.

The Council also discussed Iran, following the recent announcement by Teheran on the JCPoA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), Iran's nuclear deal. Foreign ministers noted that it was increasingly challenging to preserve the JCPoA, but reiterated their commitment and their call to Iran to return to full compliance with the agreement, which remains extremely important for both European and regional security.

Afghanistan

The Council discussed Afghanistan. The High Representative and foreign ministers recalled that direct intra-Afghan talks are the only way to achieve a sustainable solution, while the resumption of US-Taliban talks could, in this context, constitute a first step towards the relaunch of the intra-Afghan negotiations. The Council also highlighted the need to significantly reduce violence and to create an environment that allows for the preservation of the rights and democratic advancements of the country, including with regard to the rights of women, children and minorities.

The High Representative and foreign ministers reiterated the EU's readiness to support an inclusive political process. They recalled the significant engagement of the EU in the country and the commitment to its stability and prosperity.

Sudan

EU foreign ministers discussed Sudan and had an informal exchange of views with the Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. They reaffirmed the EU's strong political commitment to support the civilian transitional government, as well as the EU's readiness to provide financial aid for the transition, including in support of economic reform. They highlighted the importance of ensuring that the civilian transition remains an inclusive process, including an appropriate role for youth and women.

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OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Framework for sanctions in response to Turkey's illegal drilling activities

The Council adopted a framework for restrictive measures in response to Turkey's unauthorised drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. The framework will make it possible to sanction individuals or entities responsible for or involved in unauthorised drilling activities of hydrocarbons in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The sanctions will consist of a travel ban to the EU and an asset freeze for persons, and an asset freeze for entities. In addition, EU persons and entities will be forbidden from making funds available to those listed.

The framework for restrictive measures makes it possible to place under sanctions:

- persons or entities responsible for drilling activities related to hydrocarbon exploration and production not authorised by Cyprus within its territorial sea, exclusive economic zone (EEZ) or continental shelf. Such drilling activities include, where the EEZ or continental shelf has not been delimited in accordance with international law, activities which may jeopardize or hamper the reaching of such a delimitation agreement;
- persons or entities providing financial, technical or material support for the above mentioned drilling activities;
- persons or entities associated with them.

This decision is a direct follow-up to the Council conclusions of 14 October 2019, which were endorsed by the European Council on 17-18 October 2019, when the EU reaffirmed its full solidarity with Cyprus, regarding the respect of its sovereignty and sovereign rights in accordance with international law and invited the Commission and the European External Action Service to submit proposals for a framework for restrictive measures..

In its conclusions of 15 July 2019, the Council deplored the fact that, despite the European Union's repeated calls to cease its illegal activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey has continued its drilling operations within Cypriot territorial waters. The Council reiterated the serious immediate negative impact that such illegal actions have across the range of EU-Turkey relations. The Council called again on Turkey to refrain from such actions, act in a spirit of good neighbourliness and respect the sovereignty and sovereign rights of Cyprus in accordance with international law.

The Council already decided then, in the light of Turkey's continued and new illegal drilling activities, to suspend negotiations on the Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement and agreed not to hold the Association Council and further meetings of the EU-Turkey high-level dialogues for the time being. It also endorsed the Commission's proposal to reduce the pre-accession assistance to Turkey for 2020 and invited the European Investment Bank to review its lending activities in Turkey, notably with regard to sovereign-backed lending. The Council also decided that the High Representative and the Commission should continue work on options for targeted measures.

On 14 October 2019 the Council recalled and reaffirmed previous Council and European Council conclusions, including the European Council Conclusions of 22 March 2018 and 20 June 2019, strongly condemning Turkey's continued illegal actions in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Council expressed serious concerns over Turkey's illegal drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean and deplored that Turkey had not yet responded to the European Union's repeated calls to cease such activities.

[Council decision concerning restrictive measures in view of Turkey's unauthorised drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean](#)

[Council conclusions on Turkey's illegal drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, 14 October 2019](#)

[Council conclusions on Turkey's illegal drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, 15 July 2019](#)

Sanctions against Venezuela

In light of the ongoing political, economic, social and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela with persistent actions undermining democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, the Council today extended the restrictive measures against Venezuela for one year, until 14 November 2020. The measures include an embargo on arms and on equipment for internal repression as well as a travel ban and an asset freeze on 25 listed individuals in official positions who are responsible for human rights violations and/or for undermining democracy and the rule of law in Venezuela.

These measures are intended to help encourage democratic shared solutions in order to bring political stability to the country and allow it to address the pressing needs of the population. The targeted measures are flexible and reversible and designed not to harm the Venezuelan population.

[Council's response to the crisis in Venezuela](#)

EU POSITIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

EU's position in the EU-Pacific Interim Partnership Agreement Trade Committee

The Council adopted the position of the European Union in the Trade Committee established under the Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Pacific States regarding the amendments of Annexes II and VIII to Protocol II of the Agreement.

The Partnership Agreement between the EU, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Samoa opens up trade in goods with the EU. The Solomon Islands and Tonga informed the European Commission that they also wish to join the Agreement.

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

52nd meeting of the EEA Council

The Council established the EU's common position for the 52nd meeting of the European Economic Area Council which is expected to take place in Brussels on 19 November 2019.

TRANSPORT

Aviation – en route charges

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the EU within the enlarged Commission of Eurocontrol to ensure continued consistency with EU rules on transport regarding principles for establishing the cost-base for en route charges and the calculation of the unit rate and conditions of application of the route charges system and conditions of payment ([13468/1/19 REV 1](#); 113492/19).
