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President **Josep Borrell Fontelles**
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.

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ITEMS DEBATED

Belarus

Following an informal breakfast meeting with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, representative of the Belarusian pro-democratic forces, the Council exchanged views on Belarus, and adopted a comprehensive package of sanctions listing 86 individuals and entities responsible for the escalation of serious human rights violations in Belarus and the violent repression of civil society, democratic opposition and journalists, as well as for the forced and unlawful landing of a Ryanair flight in Minsk on 23 May 2021. These measures were also coordinated with Canada, the UK and the US.

[Belarus: fourth package of EU sanctions over enduring repression and the forced landing of a Ryanair flight](#)

[Belarus: Joint Statement by Canada, the European Union, United Kingdom, and United States \(EEAS\)](#)

Ministers also endorsed options for targeted economic sanctions with the aim of having them adopted swiftly, following guidance from the European Council later this week.

The Council reiterated its message to the Belarusian regime that it should immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners and those detained for peacefully demanding respect for their fundamental freedoms, stop further repression, hold those responsible to account, and initiate a genuine and inclusive national dialogue with broader society.

The EU stands ready to support a peaceful and democratic Belarus with a comprehensive plan of economic support of up to €3 billion.

Iraq

Foreign affairs ministers took stock of the latest developments in Iraq, notably Iraq's upcoming elections, security-related issues, regional stability, and bilateral engagement.

Iraq is undertaking comprehensive reforms, but the economic and security situation remains critical. In order to lend support to the country in its reform path, the Council decided to hold the Cooperation Council on the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement at ministerial level before the end of 2021.

The High Representative announced his decision to deploy an EU election observation mission for the upcoming Iraqi elections scheduled on 10 October 2021, following an invitation by the Iraqi Government.

Ministers had an opportunity to exchange views directly with Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, over an informal working lunch during which Mr Hussein briefed EU ministers on the latest domestic developments.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The Council exchanged views on Latin America and the Caribbean, with a particular focus on political and economic developments, as well as on the dramatic socioeconomic consequences of the spread of COVID-19 in the region.

Latin America remains one of the regions of the world which is closest to the EU in values and support for a multilateral rules-based order. The EU is also the region's largest investor and one of its leading trade partners.

The Council expressed its willingness to work together to ensure strong support for the region to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, through a Team Europe approach, including through increased access to vaccines and vaccine donations. Ministers also stressed the need to boost the region's financial resilience by enhancing trade relations with the most important countries and partners, e.g. Mexico, Chile and Mercosur.

Finally, the Council discussed regional hotspots where support for political dialogue is required. An election exploratory mission will be sent to Venezuela to consider whether or not there are the conditions to allow for an observation mission in November.

Current Affairs

The High Representative debriefed ministers about his recent visit to Lebanon, during which he conveyed the EU's message of solidarity to the Lebanese people, and the EU's call for Lebanese political leaders to take responsibility for the creation of a new reform-oriented government.

Ministers briefly touched on Turkey ahead of the European Council, and against the background of the High Representative's recent meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu.

EU Foreign Ministers were informed about the outcome of the high-level meeting of the Belgrade – Pristina Dialogue, that took place on 15 June 2021. During the meeting, the first high-level one to take place in 9 months, the parties confirmed their commitment to the comprehensive normalisation of relations and agreed to continue the dialogue process in July.

The Council had a short exchange of views on the Middle East Peace Process. In this context the High Representative informed ministers about his recent contacts with the new Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister, Yair Lapid.

The Council then discussed the dramatic situation in Tigray, Ethiopia, where a full-blown humanitarian crisis is currently pushing an estimated 400,000 people to the brink of man-made famine and loss of life. An exchange of views on Ethiopia will feature as a full discussion item on the agenda of the July Foreign Affairs Council.

The High Representative presented the Joint Communication on EU-Russia relations to the Council, with a view to a strategic discussion in the European Council later this week.

Lastly, ministers briefly touched on the results of the Iranian presidential elections and the state of play of ongoing negotiations in Vienna aimed at reviving the JCPOA.

Other points

The Council adopted conclusions on the role of cultural heritage in promoting peace, democracy and sustainable development, and the third round of EU sanctions over the military coup and subsequent repression in Myanmar/Burma.

[Council approves conclusions recognising the key role of cultural heritage in promoting peace, democracy and sustainable development](#)

[Myanmar/Burma: third round of EU sanctions over the military coup and subsequent repression](#)

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Annual progress report on the implementation of the EU's strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The Council endorsed the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the EU Strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction for 2020.

The EU's strategy was launched in December 2003.

Annual report on human rights and democracy in the world

The Council approved the 2020 EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World.

Restrictive measures in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol

The Council decided to renew sanctions introduced in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation for a further year until 23 June 2022.

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

Conclusion of a protocol with Tunisia to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement regarding Croatia's EU accession

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the EU and its member states, of a protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their member states, of the one side, and the Republic of Tunisia, of the other side, to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the EU.

Council conclusions on EU approach to cultural heritage in conflicts and crises

The Council today approved conclusions welcoming the EU Concept on cultural heritage in conflicts and crises, which enhances the EU's approach to peace, security and development.

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

Council appoints three new EU special representatives for the Sahel, Central Asia and the Horn of Africa

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

Belarus: fourth package of EU sanctions over enduring repression and the forced landing of a Ryanair flight

The Council today decided to impose restrictive measures against 78 Belarusian individuals and 8 entities.

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

Myanmar/Burma: third round of EU sanctions over the military coup and subsequent repression

The Council imposed sanctions on 8 individuals, 3 economic entities and the War Veterans Organisation in relation to the military coup staged in Myanmar/Burma on 1 February 2021, and the ensuing repression against peaceful demonstrators. The EU's restrictive measures are largely aligned with those of major international partners.

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

Council decision supporting the OPCW cyber programme within the framework of the EU non-proliferation strategy

The Council adopted a decision in support of the Cyber security and resilience and information assurance programme of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the framework of the implementation of the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Council amends decision on financial resources in support of UN Resolution 1540 (2004)

The Council amended its decision of 11 May 2017 in support of the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The decision concerns financial resources supporting the relevant UN Committee implementing Resolution 1540 (2004) until the end of its current mandate on 28 April 2022.

Libya: Council specifies sanctions criteria in relation to obstruction of elections

The Council changed the decision currently in place concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Libya, with the aim of specifying the criteria used to decide on sanctions on persons and entities whose acts threaten the peace, stability or security of Libya.

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

Council approves EU-Kenya joint press statement

The Council approved the joint press statement following the meeting between European Council President Charles Michel and the President of the Republic of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta. The Council also agrees that if further adjustments to the text are required in order to ensure agreement by the EU and Kenya sides, the text may be adopted accordingly, provided that the changes do not affect the substance and intent of the text.

Council approves EU-Indonesia Joint Green Agenda

The Council approved the EU-Indonesia Joint Green Agenda and agreed that if further adjustments to the text are required in order to ensure agreement by the time of the EU-Indonesia Joint Committee on 22 June 2021, the text may be adopted accordingly, provided that the changes do not affect the substance and intent of EU positions.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EU drugs action plan 2021-2025

The Council today approved the EU drugs action plan for 2021-2025, which sets out the concrete actions needed to achieve the priorities of the EU drugs strategy. The action plan sets out a specific timetable for these actions, as well as a list of responsible parties and a series of indicators to measure effectiveness ([9819/21](#)).

With the EU drugs strategy, the EU and its member states reaffirm their commitment to an approach which is based on evidence, comprehensive and balanced between demand and supply reduction of drugs, with the preservation of human rights at its core. At the same time, this strategy uses the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis in the area of drugs and takes a future-oriented approach, promoting research, innovation and foresight to respond more effectively to increasing challenges and to anticipate them.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Council position on DAB No 3/2021: Entering the surplus of the financial year 2020

The Council adopted its position on draft amending budget No 3/2021.

On 15 April 2021, the Commission submitted to the Council draft amending budget (DAB) No 3 to the general budget for 2021 concerning the budgeting of the surplus resulting from the implementation of the budget year 2020. The Budget Committee examined this draft amending budget at its meeting on 21 April 2021 and was able to accept it without any changes ([9682/21](#); [7862/21](#)).

EU POSITIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

Inland waterways

The Council adopted a decision on the EU position on the discharging of domestic wastewater by inland waterways vessels carrying between 12 and 50 passengers ([9654/21](#); [9655/21](#)).

EU position on olive oil trade standards

The Council decided to adopt a position on behalf of the EU on trade standards applying to olive oils and olive pomace oils in the Council of Members of the International Olive Council (IOC). The decision was approved by the Permanent Representatives Committee on 16 June 2021 (8589/21 + ADD 1, 8588/21, 8638/21).

TRANSPARENCY

Security rules for classified information

The Council adopted a decision amending Decision 2013/488/EU on the security rules for protecting EU classified information.

In a letter dated 1 March 2021, France notified the Secretary-General of Council of the reform of the French security classification policy that will enter into force on 1 July 2021. Consequently, the French classification levels will be simplified and made applicable to all strategic activities. Italy and Slovenia also notified the General Secretariat of the Council of changes in the contact details of their respective National Security Authorities (NSAs).

It is therefore necessary to amend Council Decision 2013/488/EU on the security rules for protecting EU classified information, and in particular its Appendix B, which contains a table of equivalence of security classifications and its Appendix C that contains the list of the NSAs ([9297/21](#)).
