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Foreign Affairs

Brussels, 15 December 2014

President

Federica Mogherini

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and
Security Policy

P R E S S

Main results of the Council

Syria and Iraq

Today's Foreign Affairs Council was focussed on the situation in Syria, Iraq and the threat from ISIL. The discussion will feed into the preparation of an EU comprehensive regional strategy.

Ministers also exchanged views on the crisis in Syria with UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura. The EU is fully committed to support his efforts to achieve a strategic de-escalation of violence as a basis for a broader political process. The EU stands ready to concretely support the development of his proposal to build on local freezes of hostility in Aleppo and elsewhere.

The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, said: "All the EU member states and the European Union as such are, in one way or another, involved in the fight against Da'esh. All of us are very much working on the support of the Iraqi government." She added that she would travel to Bagdad and Erbil next week.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Council agreed a renewed approach to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), without changing the EU accession conditions, including the implementation of the Sejdic-Finci ruling. It invited the High Representative and Commissioner Hahn to engage with the BiH leadership to secure its irrevocable written commitment to undertake reforms for EU accession. Once this commitment has been agreed by the BiH presidency, signed by the BiH political leaders and endorsed by the BiH parliament, the Council will decide on the entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, added: "Yes, there can be a new start for the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are ready to engage. We are ready to reciprocate in the moment when this commitment will be adopted by the parliament. This could be a turning point in the way of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards the European Union."

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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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High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

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Minister for Foreign Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr Philip HAMMOND

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
(Foreign Secretary)

Commission:

Mr Johannes HAHN

Member

ITEMS DEBATED

Syria

The Council held an in-depth discussion on the situation in Syria, following an informal session with UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura on 14 December. It adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Recalling the Council conclusions of 20 October, the EU expresses grave concern regarding the continued deterioration of the humanitarian and security situation in Syria. The EU condemns unreservedly the atrocities and human rights violations and abuses perpetrated by the Assad regime as well as ISIL / Da'esh, Jabhat al-Nusra and other terrorist groups. The EU will continue to encourage all efforts to reach a political solution by mutual consent in order to maintain the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity as well as the multi-ethnic and multi-religious character of Syria. A lasting solution to the conflict can only be achieved through a Syrian-led political process leading to a transition.

The EU is committed to fully support the UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura's efforts to achieve a strategic de-escalation of violence as a basis for a broader sustainable political process. The EU stands ready to support concretely the development of his proposals, in particular the proposal to build on local freezes of hostility in compliance with international humanitarian law in Aleppo and elsewhere.

2. Reduction of violence will not be achieved without effective monitoring, preferably anchored in the United Nations Security Council. The EU recalls that cases of forced surrender imposed by the Assad regime through starvation sieges were labelled fallaciously as local ceasefires in the past. It expresses serious concern regarding the intensified military action by the Assad regime against areas held by the opposition, which threaten the UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura's initiative. The EU will seek ways to provide practical support to his efforts notably by contributing to the revival of local governance and administration, to the restoration of basic services and to the return to normalcy in areas of reduced violence, in particular in Aleppo, as conditions allow.
3. The EU recalls that the overall objective remains a Syrian-led process leading to a transition that meets the aspirations of all the Syrian people, based on the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 and in line with relevant UNSC Resolutions. The EU calls on all Syrian parties to show clear and concrete commitment to this process, and to ensure the involvement of civil society and women. The EU is ready to engage with all regional and international actors with influence over the Syrian parties and calls on them to use their influence constructively towards this end.

4. The EU recalls that the moderate opposition, including the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (SOC), is a vital element of both a future political settlement and in fighting the extremist groups on the ground in Syria. The EU encourages both internal and external opposition groups to unite behind a common strategy in order to present an alternative to the Syrian people. It will seek ways to enhance its political and practical support to the moderate opposition including in opposition held areas such as Aleppo.
5. The EU condemns the continued widespread and systematic violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law perpetrated in Syria, in particular by the Assad regime and terrorist groups, as reported by the Commission of Inquiry. This includes indiscriminate bombings with barrel bombs by the regime forces and atrocities committed by ISIL / Da'esh. The EU welcomes the adoption of the UN General Assembly Third Committee resolution condemning human rights violations in Syria. It underlines its concern regarding cases of forced disappearances and calls for the immediate release of the victims. The EU will spare no effort to ensure that all perpetrators of such violations and abuses are held accountable for their crimes which may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. The EU reiterates its call to the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.
6. The EU will continue its policy of imposing and enforcing sanctions targeting the regime and its supporters as long as repression continues.
7. The EU urges the Assad regime to fully implement the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118 and the Chemical Weapons Convention and to take the necessary measures to eliminate its chemical weapons program completely and irreversibly. This includes the destruction of the remaining production facilities and the provision of evidence to support the assurances that Syria has fully abandoned its chemical weapons program. The EU remains extremely concerned by the gaps and discrepancies in the Assad regime's declarations to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The EU condemns the use of chlorine gas as a chemical weapon by the Assad regime and it will continue its support to the investigations of the OPCW's Fact Finding Mission. The EU recalls that, in line with the Convention on Chemical Weapons, it is the primary responsibility of the Assad regime to bear the costs related to the verification and the destruction of its chemical program.

8. The EU urges all parties to comply with international humanitarian law as regards protection and access to humanitarian aid and to provide humanitarian aid to all people in need, including in hard-to-reach areas. The EU condemns the continued impediments in the delivery of aid for which the Assad regime bears the primary responsibility. The EU urges all parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, to fully and immediately implement all the provisions of UNSC Resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014). The EU fully supports the renewal of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2165 in order to foster effective cross-border and cross line assistance and ensure access to vulnerable people regardless of their location.
9. The EU and its Member States continue to play a leading role in the provision of humanitarian aid in response to the crisis, having mobilised so far €3 billion for relief and recovery assistance to those most in need in Syria and in neighbouring countries, including host communities. The EU will sustain its efforts to provide humanitarian aid to the people affected by the crisis and to build their resilience through recovery assistance and basic services in Syria and the neighbouring countries alike. The EU expresses serious concern about the severe lack of funding for the UN Appeals 2014, which resulted in a temporary suspension of World Food Program assistance to Syrian refugees. Therefore, it calls on the international community to step up its funding and assistance in view of the winter and in response to the forthcoming 2015 appeals.
10. The Council welcomes the establishment of the European Union Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis that will act in coordination and complementarity with ongoing assistance including the existing Syria Recovery Trust Fund.
11. The EU commends the considerable efforts of Lebanon and Jordan as well as Turkey sheltering refugees from Syria. It will spare no effort to continue to help them provide assistance to refugees and vulnerable host communities and comply with existing refugee laws, conventions and humanitarian principles as regards protection and access to humanitarian aid. In this context, it welcomes the Berlin declaration "Solidarity with the refugees and their hosts" of the Conference on the Syria Refugee Situation of 28 October 2014.
12. The EU remains fully aware of the immense security challenges that the crisis in Syria poses to Lebanon and Jordan in particular. The EU underlines the importance of the ongoing EU and member States' support, and it reiterates its commitment to seek ways to further enhance this support to both countries to meet those challenges. "

Iraq

The Council exchanged views on the situation in Iraq. The discussion will feed into the preparation of an EU comprehensive regional strategy on Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL / Da'esh threat.

The EU has pledged its full support to efforts by Prime Minister Haider al Abadi's government in its pursuit of inclusive policies and national reconciliation. It is committed to comprehensively tackling the threat posed by terrorism and to addressing the underlying dynamics, which have given ISIL a foothold.

Western Balkans

The High Representative and Neighbourhood Commissioner Hahn briefed the Council about their recent trip to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council reiterates its unequivocal commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU perspective. The Council also reaffirms its unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign and united country.
2. The Council welcomes the Compact for Growth and Jobs to shift the focus towards reforms and issues of direct concern to citizens, in the wake of the widespread, citizen-led protests in early 2014 which underlined the fragility of the socio-economic situation.
3. The Council welcomes the recent visit of HR Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn to Sarajevo and their engagement in the revitalisation of the reform process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council agreed on a renewed EU approach towards Bosnia and Herzegovina on its EU accession path throughout which all conditions, including the implementation of the Sejdic-Finci ruling will have to be met. The Council calls on BiH political leadership to anchor the reforms necessary for EU integration in the work of all relevant institutions.
4. The Council invites HR Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn to continue engaging with the BiH leadership to secure at the earliest its irrevocable written commitment to undertake reforms in the framework of the EU accession process. The overall objective is to establish functionality and efficiency at all levels of government and allow Bosnia and Herzegovina to prepare itself for future EU membership. The text will also contain a commitment to work out in consultation with the EU an initial agenda for reforms, in line with the EU acquis. The reform agenda should be developed and implemented in consultation with civil society. This agenda should include first and foremost reforms under the Copenhagen criteria (socio-economic reforms including the "Compact for Growth and Jobs", rule of law, good governance) and also agreed functionality issues (including the EU coordination mechanism).

The BiH leadership will also commit to make progress, at a later stage, on further reforms in order to enhance functionality and effectiveness of the different levels of government.

5. The Council invites HR Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn to regularly report on progress in bringing about this written commitment and on how this is reflected in the work of all relevant institutions.
6. Once the written commitment has been agreed by the BiH Presidency, signed by the BiH political leaders and endorsed by the BiH Parliament, the Council will decide on the entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.
7. Meaningful progress on the implementation of the agenda for reforms, including the "Compact for Growth and Jobs", will be necessary for a membership application to be considered by the EU. When requesting the Commission's Opinion on the membership application, the Council will ask the Commission to pay particular attention to the implementation of the Sejdic-Finci ruling.
8. The Council underlines the crucial importance of swift government formation and calls on the country's leaders to ensure that this takes place."

Ukraine

The Council confirmed its agreement in principle to the High Representative's proposal for additional EU restrictive measures in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. Technical discussions on the proposal are ongoing.

Ebola

The Council took note of a report by EU Ebola coordinator Christos Stylianides on the state of play in the epidemic and the EU's response. Collectively, the EU and its member states are the prime donor among the international community to help stem the Ebola outbreak: they have committed over €1.1 billion.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Central African Republic

The Council adopted the following conclusions on the Central African Republic:

- "1. L'Union européenne (UE) continue à suivre attentivement la situation en République centrafricaine (RCA) qui reste fragile malgré une relative amélioration de la situation sécuritaire perçue ces dernières semaines à Bangui. L'UE appelle au respect de l'intégrité territoriale du pays et rappelle son attachement à la cohabitation pacifique entre les différentes communautés et religions.
2. En vue d'engager le pays sur une voie de sortie de crise durable, le processus politique en RCA doit continuer à avancer. L'UE réitère son plein soutien aux autorités de transition et les encourage à continuer à s'investir, dans la plus grande cohésion, pour mettre en œuvre les réformes nécessaires. Elle salue la montée en puissance de la MINUSCA pour appuyer le processus politique et appelle à son déploiement complet dans les plus brefs délais. L'UE rappelle que le soutien de l'ensemble de la communauté internationale est primordial pour aider les autorités de transition à renforcer leurs capacités et pour maintenir une dynamique de changement.
3. Le Forum de Bangui sur le Dialogue Politique et la Réconciliation Nationale qui constitue une étape importante de la transition, doit être large, inclusif et conduit par des acteurs locaux afin d'être durable et apporter une vraie valeur ajoutée. Il doit permettre aux acteurs centrafricains d'aboutir eux-mêmes à des solutions durables aux défis interdépendants de sécurité, de gouvernance et de développement auxquels le pays est confronté. Dans ce contexte, l'UE prend note de la déclaration de la plate-forme religieuse relative au Forum de Bangui et reconnaît l'importance des consultations locales et du dialogue intercommunautaire pour poser les jalons d'une véritable réconciliation nationale. Elle invite les autorités de transition à poursuivre activement ce processus, en concertation avec l'ensemble des parties prenantes, et rappelle la nécessité absolue d'un engagement de bonne foi de tous les acteurs concernés.

4. Une stratégie claire sur la façon de traiter les groupes armés est nécessaire. Comme la crise actuelle est largement alimentée par l'impunité persistante, les auteurs des violations des droits de l'Homme et du droit international humanitaire doivent être tenus responsables. L'UE invite les autorités de transition à poursuivre leurs efforts en matière de lutte contre l'impunité en contribuant activement au rétablissement de la chaîne pénale, avec le soutien de la communauté internationale, et notamment de l'UE et les Nations unies, en accélérant l'adoption de la législation pour la Cour criminelle spéciale, et en continuant à coopérer avec la Cour pénale internationale dans le cadre de l'enquête en cours.
5. La tenue d'élections les plus inclusives possibles est également une étape cruciale. Il n'en est que plus important que le scrutin soit bien préparé. A cet égard, l'UE appuie l'extension de la période de transition jusqu'en août 2015. Comme souligné par le Groupe International de Contact à Bangui le 11 novembre, elle salue l'adoption d'un calendrier électoral et appelle à l'accélération des préparatifs. L'UE réitère sa disponibilité à soutenir le processus électoral, y compris à travers le déploiement d'une mission d'observation électorale. Elle appelle tous les partenaires internationaux à contribuer, y compris financièrement, à la préparation des élections en RCA.
6. L'UE salue les efforts mis en œuvre dans le domaine de la stabilisation, en particulier les contributions de la MINUSCA, de la force française Sangaris et de l'opération EUFOR RCA, mais aussi ceux des autorités de transition. La prolongation de l'opération militaire de transition EUFOR RCA, demandée par l'ensemble des acteurs présents sur le terrain constitue une preuve supplémentaire de l'utilité et de l'efficacité de l'opération européenne. L'UE soutient pleinement l'action de la MINUSCA qui est le principal garant de la sécurité dans le pays. En vue d'une stabilisation du pays à long terme, les réflexions sur un programme de désarmement, démobilisation et réintégration et la réforme du secteur de sécurité doivent se poursuivre dans le cadre du processus politique en cours. Dans ce contexte, l'UE souligne l'importance d'une coordination étroite des efforts internationaux et de la poursuite de la médiation internationale, menée sous l'égide du Congo-Brazzaville et de la Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale (CEEAC), de l'Union africaine et des Nations unies, en associant pleinement les autorités de transition.

7. Afin de contribuer à la réforme des Forces Armées Centrafricaines (FACA), dans le cadre de l'approche globale de l'UE en RCA, le Conseil approuve un Concept de gestion de crise en vue d'une mission militaire PSDC de conseil, d'une durée d'une année, basée à Bangui. Cette mission PSDC contribuera à fournir au gouvernement centrafricain des conseils d'experts dans la perspective de la réforme des FACA en une force armée républicaine, professionnelle et multi-ethnique. Sur la base d'une approche graduelle sous responsabilité du Comité politique et de sécurité, des entraînements non-opérationnels spécifiques et limités, au profit de l'armée centrafricaine, pourraient aussi être dispensés par cette mission. Le Conseil invite le SEAE à poursuivre les travaux de planification opérationnelle, selon des procédures accélérées, en vue de permettre le déploiement de la mission, soumis à une décision du Conseil, avant la fin du mandat d'EUFOR RCA. Il souligne enfin l'importance d'une coordination étroite avec les partenaires, notamment les autorités centrafricaines et l'ONU, afin d'assurer une bonne coopération et complémentarité des efforts en cours en vue de restaurer la stabilité de la RCA.
8. L'UE réitère ses inquiétudes relatives à la situation humanitaire en RCA et son lourd impact sur les pays voisins. Les capacités de mouvement des acteurs humanitaires et l'accès à la population à l'intérieur du pays restent limités à cause des activités de multiples groupes armés présents sur le territoire, ce qui complique considérablement l'acheminement de l'aide et entrave l'accès aux populations les plus vulnérables. L'UE condamne fermement les attaques contre les travailleurs et les convois humanitaires. La mobilisation des moyens de réponse à la crise humanitaire, y compris dans les pays voisins où de nombreux Centrafricains ont trouvé refuge, reste une priorité. La communauté internationale doit rester engagée au côté de la RCA.
9. Dans le domaine du développement, la priorité va à la reconstruction de l'Etat centrafricain, notamment pour lui permettre d'exercer ses prérogatives sur l'ensemble du territoire et d'apporter aux populations les services sociaux de base. Ce processus doit aller de pair avec le déploiement progressif en cours des forces internationales sur l'ensemble du territoire centrafricain. Le fonds fiduciaire européen « Békou » en faveur de la RCA a commencé à mettre en œuvre les premiers projets et d'autres vont suivre prochainement. Le Conseil rappelle que le fonds Békou est ouvert aux contributions de tous, y compris des tiers. Il se réjouit par ailleurs de l'engagement des autorités à poursuivre les réformes pour rétablir progressivement l'équilibre des finances, notamment à travers la mise en œuvre des recommandations faites lors de la mission du Fonds Monétaire International (FMI) en RCA. "

At the same time, the Council adopted the crisis management concept for a possible EU military CSDP mission in the Central African Republic.

Southern Mediterranean investment initiative

The Council adopted the following conclusions on a Southern Mediterranean investment initiative (AMICI):

- "1. Against the background of regional developments in the past few years in the EU's Southern Neighbourhood and the necessity for political and economic reforms and respect for the rule of law, the Council highlights the need for greater co-ordination in investment-related programmes and enhanced support for policy dialogue and regional cooperation aiming at inclusive economic growth, private sector development and job creation.
2. In this context, the Council welcomes the successful completion of the mapping/stocktaking exercise on ongoing projects and operations in the region and existing coordination mechanisms, which cover resources managed by the European Commission, and those from EU Member States and European Financial Institutions. The Council endorses the key findings and proposals of the mapping/stocktaking exercise.
3. The Council invites the High Representative/Vice President and the European Commission, within their respective competences, to pursue the Southern Mediterranean Investment Coordination initiative (AMICI). This initiative will be fully in line with European Neighbourhood Policy principles and will not create any duplications but will operate within the existing institutional framework. It will also take into account initiatives such as the Deauville Partnership. . The aim is to optimise the policy dialogue among relevant actors and donors in order to support the Southern partner countries in a more effective way, and provide more targeted investments in the region with a greater socio-economic impact in line with European and partners' priorities.
4. Regular coordination will be initiated at country level, where feasible, in the framework of Joint Programming, to be followed up during the implementation phase through the local EU development counsellors meetings, and at EU Member States level, through the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) Committee and in the framework of the Neighbourhood Investment Facility. It will also include a regional and international dialogue, involving the European Commission, the EEAS, Member States, European Financial Institutions, the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), partner countries, International Financial Institutions and other donors, as appropriate. The Council notes the important role that the UfM and its Secretariat can play in this respect, notably by facilitating the dialogue at sectorial level.

It is planned that the first plenary meeting takes place in the first semester of 2015.

5. The Council invites the High Representative/Vice President and the European Commission to review annually the progress made and the functioning of the AMICI initiative as a part of the ENI implementation report."

South Sudan

The Council adopted the following conclusions on South Sudan:

- "1. Today marks one year since the outbreak of the destructive conflict in South Sudan. The European Union (EU) is dismayed that all efforts have so far proved unsuccessful in resolving the situation. It calls on the parties to bring the conflict to an immediate end and swiftly reach a political settlement.
2. The civil war has resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands, the displacement of two million people with detrimental effects also in the neighbouring countries and appalling violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. At least 2.5 million people will face severe food shortages in the coming months and this man-made situation has become one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. The EU is particularly concerned at the continued hindrance of international humanitarian assistance.
3. The EU is deeply concerned about reports that human rights violations and abuses, including sexual violence against women, continue even today. It stresses the need to end impunity in South Sudan and bring the perpetrators to justice, and looks forward to the publication of the report from the AU Commission of Inquiry.
4. The EU expresses its full support for the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to protect civilians in all parts of South Sudan and to the benefit of all communities, including by sheltering more than 100 000 civilians in its own bases.

5. The EU has lent full support to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) efforts to push for inclusive and comprehensive peace talks, including by financing the cease-fire verification and monitoring mechanism, yet the government and the opposition have failed to engage in the process in good faith. Both sides have undermined the process by failing to honour their commitments and excluding others from negotiations, while regularly breaching the cessation of hostilities agreement and continuing their hostilities on the ground. It is vital that the parties respect their commitments and desist from any planned offensives.

6. Given this alarming lack of progress, the EU welcomes the declarations of the latest IGAD Summit and the African Union Peace and Security Council that restrictive measures will be applied to any party responsible for violating the cessation of hostilities or obstructing the political negotiations. The EU calls for their swift adoption in coordination with the UN Security Council. The EU has imposed an arms embargo and invites all international key partners to consider this step, and calls for measures to ensure that the wealth of the country is used for the benefit of the South Sudanese people rather than to stockpile weapons of war. The EU is ready to consider further targeted restrictive measures against those individuals obstructing peace in South Sudan.

Tougher action by the international community as a whole, including regional partners, is needed to press all sides in the conflict to pursue the path of peaceful negotiation to a lasting settlement to their political differences in the primary interest of the South Sudanese population."

EU action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The Council extended the implementation period for EU support to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the UN Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The EU funds were initially granted in December 2013 and will be prolonged until 30 September 2015.

Action against proliferation of small arms in the Sahel region

The Council allocated €3.8 million to support states in the Sahel region in conducting physical security and stockpile management activities to reduce the risk of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

EU action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The Council allocated € 990.000 for activities in support of the Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation. The funds will be used for information and communication, action to strengthen ballistic missile non-proliferation and outreach activities for the universalization of the Hague Code of Conduct.

EU - Ukraine relations

The Council endorsed the EU position on the rules of procedure of the Association Council with Ukraine and those of the Association Committee and of Sub-Committees, the establishment of two Sub-Committees, and the delegation of certain powers by the Association Council to the Association Committee in Trade configuration.

Relations with Serbia

The Council adopted the EU position for the Stabilisation and Association Council with Serbia, to take place in Brussels on 17 December.

Relations with Morocco

The Council adopted the EU position for the twelfth meeting of the EU-Morocco Association Council, to be held in Brussels on 16 December.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Chairman of the EU military committee

The Council appointed General Mikhail Kostarakos as next Chairman of the EU Military Committee as of 6 November 2015. For more details, see [press release](#).

Amendment of the small arms and light weapons article in agreements

The Council adopted the following conclusions concerning the amendment of the small arms and light weapons article in agreements between the EU and third countries:

"The Council:

1. Recalls its 2008 Conclusions on the inclusion of a small arms and light weapons (SALW) article in agreements between the EU and third parties, which have since then been included in numerous agreements;
2. considers that, following the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and its forthcoming entry into force in December 2014, there is a need to complement the standard reference text for the SALW article with provisions relating to the regulation of legal arms trade;
3. considers that the provisions relating to the regulation of arms trade should contain, in addition to a generic part, a part referring specifically to the ATT, to be included in agreements with third countries that have ratified/acceded to the ATT, or expressed their intention to do so;
4. considers that the revised clause will have a more comprehensive nature, as it will cover both legal and illicit trade aspects;
5. considers that the following text will be used as a reference in future negotiations:

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS AND OTHER CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

- I. The Parties recognise that the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons, including their ammunition, and their excessive accumulation, poor management, inadequately secured stockpiles and uncontrolled spread continue to pose a serious threat to peace and international security.
- II. The Parties agree to observe and fully implement their respective obligations to deal with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including their ammunition, under existing international agreements and UN Security Council resolutions, as well as their commitments within the framework of other international instruments applicable in this area, such as the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects.

- III. The Parties recognise the importance of domestic control systems for the transfer of conventional arms in line with existing international standards. The Parties recognise the importance of applying such controls in a responsible manner, as a contribution to international and regional peace, security and stability, and to the reduction of human suffering, as well as to the prevention of diversion of conventional weapons.

Part III bis to be added when negotiating with a country that has ratified/acceded to the ATT or expressed its intention to do so: The Parties undertake in this regard to fully implement the Arms Trade Treaty and to cooperate with each other within the framework of the Treaty, including in promoting the universalisation and full implementation of the Treaty by all UN Member States.

- IV. The Parties therefore undertake to cooperate and to ensure coordination, complementarity and synergy in their efforts to regulate or improve the regulation of international trade in conventional arms and to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in arms. They agree to establish regular political dialogue that will accompany and consolidate this undertaking."

EUCAP SAHEL Mali

The Council approved the Operational Plan for the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Mission EUCAP SAHEL Mali. EUCAP SAHEL Mali has been established as a civilian mission to deliver strategic advice and training for the Malian internal security forces, in coordination with international partners.
