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THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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President

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Security Policy

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Main results of the Council

*The Council reiterated its deep concern about the situation in **Egypt** and welcomed the High Representative's recent and timely visit to Cairo. It stressed that the struggle for democracy should remain central and called on all political forces to engage now in a process of reconciliation and trust building for the good of the country and its democratic future. Egypt has to move rapidly to an inclusive democratic transformation process, including by the holding of democratic elections in the shortest possible time.*

*Concerning the **Middle East peace process**, the Council warmly welcomed the announcement by Secretary of State John Kerry on 19 July 2013 that an agreement has been reached establishing a basis for resuming direct final status negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. This is a crucial step towards a lasting resolution of the conflict. In the light of the challenging negotiations ahead and difficult decisions to be taken, the Council underlined that continued bold leadership by President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu and their sustained willingness to engage in good faith will be crucial to success. Once negotiations resume, they should lead to tangible and timely progress.*

*The Council established a comprehensive framework for the EU's policy towards and support to **Myanmar/Burma** in the run-up to the general elections in 2015. The EU's goals are to support political, social and economic development, foster respect for human rights and assist the government in rebuilding its place in the international community.*

*The Council also appointed Mr Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin as **EU Special Representative in Afghanistan**.*

*Besides, the Council adopted two directives that will enable member states to better combat **VAT fraud**, facilitating rapid reaction and allowing a specific measure to tackle what is known as carousel fraud.*

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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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Ms Kristalina GEORGIEVA

Member

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Member

ITEMS DEBATED

Myanmar/Burma

The Council adopted conclusions on the Comprehensive Framework for the European Union's policy and support to Myanmar/Burma. The EU's goals are to support political, social and economic development, foster respect for human rights and assist the government in regaining its place in the international community.

The full text is set out in [12629/13](#).

Africa

The Council took stock of developments in Africa, focussing on the Great Lakes region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on Somalia and on Mali. It also adopted conclusions on Sudan and South Sudan (see page 25).

- Great Lakes/Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Recalling its long standing engagement in the region, the European Union (EU) confirms its determination to continue to contribute to lasting stability and development in the Great Lakes Region (GLR). The latest crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has demonstrated the need for a reinvigorated comprehensive approach, addressing the local, national and regional roots of conflict, especially those of the Kivus. Renewed fighting in recent days around Goma and tensions between the DRC and Rwanda underscore the need for urgent action. The EU calls for an end to violence and the protection of civilians.
2. In this context, the EU strongly welcomes and supports the "Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region" signed in Addis on 24 February 2013 (the Framework Agreement), the appointment of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Great Lakes, Mary Robinson, and the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2098 (2013). These measures and regional efforts constitute a window of opportunity that must be seized. The setting-up of both a national and a regional oversight mechanism should allow coordinated support and monitoring of the implementation of the commitments undertaken by the Signatory Parties.

3. Strong ownership by governments, civil society organisations and other stakeholders in the region is essential to the successful implementation of the Framework Agreement. In this context, the Technical Support Committee is key to reviewing the progress made in the implementation of these regional commitments.
4. The EU and its Member States will contribute actively to the success of these efforts through a coordinated response to the political, security and development process. In coordination with the UN and other partners, action to support the implementation of the Framework Agreement will focus on the following crucial five areas:
 - promoting peace among the countries in the region, with respect for their sovereignty, through efforts to build cooperation and trust between them;
 - encouraging the Government of the DRC to take responsibility and effectively implement all necessary reforms to ensure security and governance in eastern DRC as well as encouraging the neighbouring countries to cooperate, and to take active steps to rebuild trust among the local communities;
 - supporting countries in the region to embed democracy and good governance, including the protection of human rights, through improving delivery of basic services, providing reliable physical, judicial and administrative security throughout the country and ensuring an open political space and effective and transparent election cycle;
 - supporting countries in the region to rebuild the regional economy through transparent use of natural resources, a more integrated regional market and better access to global markets;
 - promoting greater engagement by the international community in encouraging countries and other actors in the region to fulfil their undertakings and act responsibly both internally and towards their neighbours.

5. Stabilising eastern DRC means that countries of the region must respect the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The reiteration in the Framework Agreement of the commitment by the Great Lakes countries not to interfere in the internal affairs of their neighbouring countries is a first essential step. There is an urgent need to put an end to all armed groups operating in the eastern DRC, in particular the M23, as requested by UNSCR 2076 (2012), and the FDLR (Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda), equally listed by the sanctions committee established pursuant to UNSCR 1533 (2004). The EU will continue to support the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to UNSCR 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of the Group of Experts. The EU welcomes the establishment, per UNSCR 2098 (2013), of an Intervention Brigade within the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) with a mandate to, in strict compliance with international law, prevent the expansion of all armed groups, the neutralisation and disarmament of these groups in order to contribute to the objective of reducing the threat posed by armed groups on state authority and civilian security in eastern DRC and to make space for stabilisation activities. Sustainable political solutions to the complex crises are paramount and any military action must be embedded in an appropriate political process, both locally and between the DRC and its neighbours, as it is not to be considered as an alternative to a comprehensive solution. Beyond that, a comprehensive regional security concept should be proactively sought and encouraged. The 2006 "Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region" provides a legal framework and sets out an agenda for the ICGLR (International Conference on the Great Lakes Region) initiatives in this area. The EU will seek to play an active role in the follow up in the oversight mechanisms foreseen in the Framework Agreement.
6. The EU will continue to promote good neighbourliness and regional integration. Legitimate security concerns and other interests are better served by stable neighbours who are able to spread legitimate State authority throughout their territory. It is ready to contribute to constructive engagement and to support confidence-building measures, including the ICGLR Extended Joint Verification Mechanism. Contacts beyond the scope of central government (inter-parliamentarian debates, local cooperation between neighbouring municipalities or provinces) could complete the overall approach.

7. Stability in the region as a whole will be influenced by the internal evolution of each country. In the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda, sustainable and durable development will be possible where there is accountable government, an open society respectful of fundamental rights of men and women and the rule of law. In its political dialogues with all countries of the region, the EU will promote values and measures to bring stability, accountability and the rule of law to the whole region. The EU will continue to assist the political development of all these countries through its support for democratic and accountable institutions including national independent bodies for the protection of human rights, and strengthening civil society, helping countries build the rule of law and parliamentary systems that will give the population effective ownership of, and trust in, elections and decision-making processes.
8. The EU welcomes the commitments taken by DRC in the framework of the national oversight committee to improve the effectiveness and accountability of governance, including Security Sector Reform (SSR), public finance management, decentralisation, reconciliation and democratisation, and the consolidation of State authority in the East. It calls on the Government of the DRC to effectively implement these reforms which will be key to the success of any stabilisation strategy. The EU stands ready to support the identification of clear benchmarks and feasible next steps for concrete action. The fight against corruption, deepening democratisation and the respect of human rights, fundamental freedoms and gender equality will be essential components.
9. Security sector reform (SSR) in the DRC, in particular defence reform, remains of strategic importance. The EU welcomes the adoption of the legislative framework for the police and army. It calls on the DRC to take on the responsibility to build on the achievements of the EU missions EUPOL and EUSEC and to show political commitment to make concrete progress in reforming these institutions. The EU encourages MONUSCO to fully play its role in SSR, in line with the stronger SSR mandate it received in UNSCR 2053 (2012) and 2098 (2013), including through support to the establishment and implementation of a national SSR roadmap and the creation of a Congolese Rapid Reaction Force by the Government of the DRC. Support to the justice sector is essential to establish enduring rule of law. Military justice must also be improved so that crimes committed by the armed forces are effectively investigated and prosecuted. Building on the work by its missions EUSEC and EUPOL as well as lessons learned to provide guidance for a results-oriented approach, the EU and its Member States will remain engaged in support of the Government's implementation of SSR. The EU and its Member States are committed to an orderly transition of its CSDP missions, in particular as regards advice at the strategic level, training and human resources management in close coordination with the Government of the DRC and taking into account the planned activities of other international actors, in particular the UN. In line with SSR efforts, support could also be envisaged for a local community based approach to Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes.

10. Deepening democracy and allowing open, responsible debate about future alternatives will support reconciliation efforts in all countries. So, too, will ensuring that human rights violations of all kinds, notably the recruitment of child soldiers and acts of sexual violence, are addressed and that there is no impunity anywhere in the region for such actions. The EU reiterates its commitment to fully implement UNSCR 1325 (2000) and to actively promote the equal participation of women in all elections, peace processes and decision-making processes. All armed groups and armed forces should be held accountable for human rights violations. SSR can serve as a vital means to structurally address human rights atrocities such as gender-based violence.
11. Preventing the outbreak of violence, saving lives and alleviating the suffering of the most vulnerable affected people, in particular the hundreds of thousands IDP's and refugees, will remain a priority for the EU. The EU calls on all parties to enable safe and unhindered humanitarian access in accordance with international humanitarian principles. Continued humanitarian aid will aim at paving the way to a more sustainable approach that addresses the root causes and consequences of conflict that have led to a culture of impunity, serious human rights violations and gender-based violence. Special attention will be paid to provide support to the most fragile victims, particularly child soldiers and victims of sexual violence.
12. A truly lasting stabilisation of eastern DRC also involves addressing other local root causes of the conflict as well as the safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The EU welcomes the recent meeting of the tripartite framework and calls for further proactive work by UNHCR on this issue. The EU also encourages the Government of the DRC to specifically pursue efforts to solve land issues, which are complex and often embedded in wider problems affecting the DRC national policies.
13. While reinforced security and a constructive political process are essential, a sustainable solution also requires effective development and improvement of the living conditions of the population affected by the crisis. Fighting poverty and the promotion of economic growth in eastern DRC will require a specific approach that will bring sustainable investment, value the resources of the region and ensure indispensable central but also local governance in order to promote concrete results.

14. Fighting poverty and inequality and promoting human, social and economic development, as well as gender equality in the region will require serious commitments both from donors and partner countries in order to meet the basic social needs of the population, promote economic growth and job opportunities in support of viable livelihoods and revenue for the State. The recent initiatives of the World Bank for the region are welcomed and the EU is ready to work together with committed development partners in identifying together initiatives where their efforts could complement. The EU will actively promote regional integration and interconnectivity building on its existing collaboration with the ECGLC (Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries) and the ICGLR. Better economic integration among neighbouring countries has to be matched by parallel improvement of links between eastern and western Congo.
15. Corruption and bad governance exacerbate poverty. In this context, a particular focus is needed on improving the governance of the extractive sector to allow the people to benefit from their mineral riches. In addition, illegal exploitation of and trade in natural resources, including minerals, play a key role in sustaining conflict. A comprehensive approach to address this is needed; to this end, the EU will promote actively the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative and other initiatives such as the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas and the ICGLR Regional Initiative on natural resources. The EU Transparency Initiative and a possible initiative on responsible sourcing of minerals originating from conflict-affected areas could be a base for a more comprehensive partnership between the EU and the countries in the region.
16. The international community as a whole has an important role to play in encouraging and supporting the region to build lasting peace, security and development through implementation of the Addis Framework Agreement. The EU and its Member States will work in close cooperation with regional organisations, including the African Union (AU), the ICGLR, the ECGLC, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and with the UN, including the reinforced MONUSCO.
17. The Council will revert to this issue after the meeting of the oversight mechanism to be held in the margins of the UN General Assembly and invites to this end the High Representative and the Commission to present concrete proposals for action for consideration by the Council."

- Somalia

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The European Union (EU) welcomes the progress made in Somalia in establishing the foundations for re-building the Somali state by the Federal Government of Somalia. It reconfirms its support for the Federal Government and urges it to reach out to all regions of the country and engage in inclusive dialogue to build a viable and stable representative federal State. The EU equally urges regions to engage with the Government in this process. Swift establishment of interim regional and local administrations remains critical to provide governance and deliver social services to the population in newly accessible areas of Somalia. Rapid progress on the Constitutional Review process is therefore essential and will underpin the political and reconciliation processes.
2. Political progress remains the key to ensuring long-term stability for Somalia. The EU commends the role of the Federal Parliament in developing an institutional roadmap that sets benchmarks until 2016 when general elections are due to take place in Somalia. The EU welcomes the steps taken by the Federal Parliament in reaching out to the regions in order to assure that the roadmap is owned across the country. The EU looks forward to the Federal Government's overarching political vision resulting from an inclusive dialogue with all Somali stakeholders and regions, which will be presented at the Brussels New Deal Conference for Somalia in September. This vision should underpin the New Deal Compact framing Somalia's most urgent reconstruction priorities until 2016, which would be endorsed by the international community in September.
3. The New Deal Compact is a strategic means to ensure well-coordinated, effective implementation of Somalia's most vital political, security and socio-economic priorities found within the Federal Government's Six Pillar Policy as well as those of other regions. The New Deal Conference offers a platform for Somali reconciliation and rebuilding trust. It seeks to provide impetus and serve as a catalyst in the political process, marking the beginning of a new phase in Somalia's path towards inclusive national reconciliation, reconstruction and stability, and to maintain the momentum for change across Somalia, supported by the necessary resources. The EU encourages all Somali regions to engage with one another to develop a country-wide framework from which all Somalis would benefit. Furthermore, the EU underlines the importance of consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society and women, and their representation at the Brussels conference.

4. The EU welcomes the Federal Government's commitment towards good public financial management and encourages continued progress in establishing the systems that will enable transparency and accountability of revenues and national resources. It is concerned by reports of corruption and financial mismanagement. The EU calls on the Federal Government to fight against corruption, impunity and organised crime, including human trafficking and smuggling of human beings. The EU highlights the importance of strengthening mutual accountability – to be laid out in the New Deal Compact – between the international community and Somalia, as well as that between the Federal Government and the Somali people. The EU calls upon donors to increase efforts to coordinate their support to Somalia to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of effort. It welcomes the recent decision of the Joint EU-ACP Council of Ministers on Somalia's accession to the Cotonou Agreement and looks forward to its implementation.
5. The EU strongly condemns all terrorism and violent extremism, in particular the acts of Al-Shabaab, including the recent assault on the United Nations Common Compound. It is concerned about the ongoing violence in Somalia that causes harm to civilians and hampers the process of reconciliation and building peace. It calls on all parties to refrain from violence, exercise restraint and engage in political dialogue to resolve outstanding differences. In this context, the EU welcomes the intention of the UN and the African Union (AU) to deploy civilian staff to monitor the situation in newly accessible areas, including Kismayo.
6. The EU commends the continued efforts of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in delivering security. AMISOM remains a critical force in Somalia until such time that Somalia can assume full responsibility for its own security. The EU underlines the importance for AMISOM troop contributors to act in line with the mandate set out in UNSCR 2093 (2013) and in line with the AU strategic concept for AMISOM (5 January 2013). The EU reiterates its strong and urgent call on Somalia's key partners to seriously contribute to sustainable and predictable funding for AMISOM, recognising substantial EU funding. The EU will continue to engage in developing Somalia's own security capacity, as the ultimate exit strategy for AMISOM. In this context, the EU underlines the importance of the Federal Government taking on an increased responsibility and ownership of the security sector.
7. In this regard, the EU welcomes the success of its military training mission (EUTM) in Somalia, which has already provided training to around 3,000 Somali recruits. The EU commends the successful set-up of an initial operational capability of EUTM in Mogadishu as part of a conditions-based deployment, with the aim to contribute to developing the Somali National Armed Forces' structures and their training capacity in Somalia itself. With this, EUTM's move to Mogadishu could help pave the way for possible further EU activities in Somalia.

8. The EU remains fully committed to fighting piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia. It welcomes the good results that its naval operation Atalanta has achieved so far. It underlines that, despite the great progress witnessed against piracy at sea, the threat remains and progress could be reversed. In this regard, efforts also need to continue to address the root causes on land, including to reduce impunity of pirate networks. The EU therefore underlines the importance of its EUCAP Nestor mission to assist Somalia and States in the region to develop self-sustainable capacities and welcomes its initial achievements. The EU will continue to help building up the broader rule of law sector, through its support to Somali Police Forces and judicial capacities within the framework of the New Deal process and in coordination with other donors. The EU will take forward its integrated approach to improving security and rule of law in Somalia, on the basis of Somali ownership and responsibility, close coordination with other actors and coherence and synergies between EU instruments, in particular between its CSDP missions and operations.
9. The EU welcomes the establishment of the Integrated UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), in line with UNSCR 2093 (2013), and expresses strong support for its crucial mission, including political good offices, capacity-building, international coordination, including humanitarian coordination, and promoting human rights. The EU is committed to coordinate its action with UNSOM and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Somalia.
10. The EU welcomes the Federal Government's commitment to promote democracy, the rule of law and to improve human rights in Somalia. The EU expresses its concern at the reports of violations of human rights, including extrajudicial killings, violence against women, children and journalists, arbitrary detention and sexual violence in camps for internally displaced persons, and underscores the need to end impunity, uphold human rights and to hold accountable those who commit such crimes.
11. The EU expresses concern at the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Somalia and its impact on the people of Somalia. It recalls the importance for humanitarian actors to deliver life-saving assistance to vulnerable populations and condemns any misuse or obstruction of humanitarian assistance. The EU underlines the importance of allowing the full, safe, independent, timely and unimpeded access of all humanitarian actors to all those in need of assistance, in line with international humanitarian principles, and underlines further the importance of full accountability in international humanitarian support.

12. Recalling its Conclusions of 31 January, the EU reiterates the importance of good neighbourly relations for peace, security and prosperity in Somalia. Somalia's neighbours and the wider international community have an important role to play in improving security and encouraging political dialogue. The EU welcomes the role of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) in assisting reconciliation in Somalia and expresses its readiness to support IGAD, AU and UN efforts to stabilise the country. Enhanced regional cooperation and engagement is not only an important factor to achieve results in Somalia, but will also help to create the conditions for greater stability and prosperity across the region."

- Mali

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The European Union (EU) welcomes the Malian authorities' commitment to do their utmost to ensure the success, credibility and transparency of the presidential elections, the first round of which will be held on 28 July, and of the ensuing parliamentary elections. The presidential elections will be a major step towards fully restoring constitutional order throughout Mali. The EU calls on all parties across Mali to actively participate in this process, in a peaceful and constructive manner, and to ensure the widest possible participation of refugees, displaced persons and Malians abroad. To this end, the EU encourages all political parties to sign and implement the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters.
2. At the request of the Malian authorities, the EU has started to deploy an election observation mission. The Council stresses the importance of providing observation wherever possible in the northern regions of Mali, especially in the Kidal region, and in the refugee camps.
3. It is crucial that the preliminary peace agreement of 18 June is implemented, in its entirety and according to schedule, by all signatories, in order to allow peaceful elections to take place in the Kidal region, through the phased redeployment of security forces and the administration. The EU welcomes the first steps towards implementing the preliminary peace agreement, including the gradual re-establishment of the authority of the State in Kidal and the withdrawal of armed groups. It urges all non-terrorist armed groups to accede to and implement the agreement. The EU will continue to fully support this process, in particular through the work of the EU Special Representative for the Sahel.

4. The EU welcomes the deployment of human rights observers from the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and other organisations in Mali, and will continue to support them. All those who violate human rights and international humanitarian law must be held accountable for their actions. The EU calls on the Government of Mali to firmly commit to the fight against impunity. The EU supports the International Commission of Inquiry into crimes committed in Mali, provided for by the Ouagadougou Agreement, and calls upon it to work hand in hand with the International Criminal Court. The return of the Malian defence forces to northern Mali must be carried out in full compliance by all parties with international humanitarian law and human rights.
5. The EU supports and encourages the efforts being undertaken in Mali, especially in the north of the country, to promote reconciliation and inclusive national dialogue between all communities, including civilian representatives. The work of the Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission is important for restoring national unity and stability, not least during the post-election period. The EU is committed to helping the Commission to become fully effective. Its efforts must above all help encourage the voluntary return of displaced persons and refugees and stimulate development in northern Mali.
6. The EU welcomes the transfer of authority on 1 July, from the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and the appointment of Albert Koenders as UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General. It commends all the troop-contributing nations for their key role in the stabilisation efforts. The EU intends to maintain close coordination with MINUSMA in fulfilling its mandate, in all its political, security and human rights aspects. "

7. The EU welcomes the completion of the first round of training provided by the EUTM Mali military mission to the first Malian battalion, including in the areas of human rights and international humanitarian law, and the launch of the second battalion training. In addition to military action, restoring the credibility and effectiveness of the internal security forces in Mali is likewise an urgent and integral part of restoring sovereignty and sustainability to the Malian State. Therefore, the EU calls on the Malian authorities to prepare to launch a substantial reform of the security sector immediately after the elections. In this context, the Council commends the current work on options for possible further action under the CSDP and other relevant instruments to support the Malian internal security forces and Mali's justice sector in close coordination with the United Nations.
8. The EU is actively pursuing the issue of monitoring mechanisms, at local level and at the highest level, in order to ensure the implementation of the Plan for the Sustainable Recovery of Mali 2013-2014 and the fulfilment of the commitments given on 15 May 2013 in Brussels at the Donor Conference for Development in Mali. Mali must make good its commitments on good governance, transparency and sound financial management to ensure the effective implementation of the plan and donors' pledges, and more generally, the rebuilding of the Malian State.
9. The Council would encourage the Commission and the EEAS to continue supporting the full restoration of stability and basic services throughout Mali, and developing proposals for further action.

As regards the region more generally, the EU welcomes the submission of an Integrated Regional Strategy by the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Sahel. The Council invites the Commission and the High Representative to swiftly report on the implementation of the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel and provide guidelines on how the strategy could be developed further.

Southern neighbourhood

- Syria

During lunch, ministers debated the situation in Syria. The High Representative reported to member states on the way the EU contributes to international diplomatic efforts, on the developments related to the US-Russia initiative for a peace conference and on the engagement of the Syrian parties.

- Egypt

The Council debated the latest events in Egypt and the EU's reaction to them. The High Representative briefed ministers about her recent trip to Cairo. The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU greatly values its relationship with Egypt and continues to stand with the Egyptian people in their struggle for dignity, democracy, social justice and a decent life.
2. The EU recalls its Declaration of 14 July 2013 and reiterates its deep concern of the situation in Egypt. Many Egyptians protesting have voiced legitimate concerns and expressed deep frustration at the fact that their concerns had not been heeded. At the same time, the armed forces should not play a political role in a democracy; they must accept and respect the constitutional authority of civilian power as a basic principle of democratic governance. It is now of utmost importance that Egypt embarks on a transition, allowing a transfer of power to a civilian-led and democratically elected government.
3. The EU welcomes the High Representative's recent and timely visit to Cairo and her meetings with the interim government, representatives of the previous government, representatives of the popular movement and civil society. The EU stresses that the struggle for democracy should remain central and calls on all political forces to engage now in a process of reconciliation and trust building for the good of the country and its democratic future. Inclusivity remains central to this process.
4. The EU calls on all parties to refrain from violence and reiterates condolences to the families of all those who lost their lives in recent incidents. Security and public order should be maintained with restraint and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
5. Egypt has to move rapidly to an inclusive democratic transformation process, including by the holding of democratic elections in the shortest possible time. In this respect the EU welcomes Egypt's intention to invite the international community to observe forthcoming elections and stands ready to provide the necessary support according to international standards.

6. Key priorities must be the inclusive and democratic drafting process of the constitution; free and fair elections; end to politically motivated arrests; the release of all political detainees, including Mohamed Morsi; full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all Egyptians, including the rights of women and persons belonging to religious communities; assurance of accountability for past violations and guarantees for peaceful political engagement. All political parties, including the Freedom and Justice Party, must be allowed to work freely and enjoy full freedom of expression. All media must be free to function and journalists must be allowed the necessary freedom to fulfil their role in a professional manner. The EU also recalls the important role of an active and independent civil society as a key component of any democratic society. The EU urges the interim authorities to make every effort to address these issues.
7. Stability can only be achieved through an inclusive process which produces a democratically elected government responding to the legitimate aspirations of all the Egyptian people. This will be the basis for returning to economic growth and regaining prosperity. The EU fully recognises the serious social and economic challenges that Egypt is facing and invites the Egyptian interim authorities to take urgent and concrete measures in this respect, including reengaging with the IMF. The political process has to move forward in an inclusive and democratic manner. In line with the principles and objectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU will continue to provide support to Egypt to face these challenges as expressed in the Task Force of November 2012.
8. The EU stands ready to assist the Egyptian people in their desire for a democratic and prosperous future."

Lebanon

The Council discussed questions relating to Lebanon and the possible designation of an entity under the EU's restrictive measures to combat terrorism, as set out in common position 931/2001. For more details, see [remarks by the High Representative following the Foreign Affairs Council](#).

Middle East peace process

The Council discussed the latest developments in the Middle East peace process. It adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The European Union warmly welcomes the announcement by Secretary of State John Kerry on 19 July 2013 that an agreement has been reached establishing a basis for resuming direct final status negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. This is a crucial step towards achieving a lasting resolution to the conflict. The European Union commends Secretary Kerry's dedication and the personal commitment demonstrated by Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas.
2. The European Union also praises the significant efforts made by the League of Arab States confirming the strategic importance of the Arab Peace Initiative for all parties.
3. In the light of the challenging negotiations ahead and difficult decisions to be taken, continued bold leadership by President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu and their sustained willingness to engage in good faith will be crucial to success. Once negotiations resume, they should lead to tangible and timely progress. The European Union urges all parties to refrain from actions which could undermine the negotiation process and the prospects of peace.
4. The European Union recalls previous Council conclusions which laid down its vision for the two-state-solution resulting in an agreement on all final status issues, ending all claims, and fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of both parties with the state of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security and mutual recognition , both states enjoying normal relations with all the countries of the region. It also recalls previous conclusions and will continue to address all issues that put the viability of the two-state solution at risk.
5. The European Union will remain fully engaged with both parties and will also continue to contribute together with other regional and international partners, including within the Quartet, to a negotiated solution on all final status issues, including Jerusalem, borders, security, water and refugees. The European Union will give active and concrete support to help ensure negotiations between the parties are successful, including through support to any international arrangements aimed at underpinning a peace agreement. If an agreement to finally end this conflict were reached, the door would open to deepened and enhanced cooperation between the European Union and all the countries of the region, contributing to the prospect of a new era of peace, security and prosperity."

Eastern Partnership

Ahead of the Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting, the Council discussed recent developments in the partner countries. It deliberated on the way ahead for the Eastern Partnership in the run-up to the Eastern Partnership summit in November and the phase after that.

EU water diplomacy

The Council adopted conclusions on EU water diplomacy. The full text can be seen in [12493/13](#).

Human rights

The Council discussed the implementation of the EU's strategic framework and action plan on human rights and adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. One year after the adoption of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy and the appointment of Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis as EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the Council reaffirms its determination to promote and protect human rights and democracy throughout the world.
2. The Council welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the Strategic Framework and Action Plan, as reflected in the implementation report contained in the 2012 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy, including the adoption of new EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief as well as on the promotion and protection of the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons.
3. The Council reiterates the importance of placing human rights at the centre of the EU's policies and relations with third countries and of effectively addressing human rights issues making use of the full range of instruments at the EU's disposal as expressed in the Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy. The Council reaffirms its strong commitment to work towards the full implementation of the Strategic Framework and of the specific actions contained in the Action Plan which is a joint responsibility of the EU and its Member States, in close connection between Headquarters and the country level.

4. The Council welcomes the important work undertaken by the EUSR for Human Rights in enhancing the effectiveness, coherence and visibility of the EU Human Rights Policy, in particular through his engagement with partner countries, international and regional organizations and civil society, and expresses its full political support to his work.
5. The Council is committed to continue to work in close cooperation with the European Commission and the European Parliament and in a spirit of genuine partnership with civil society in order to step up its efforts to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law across all aspects of its external action. "

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Council adopted the following conclusions on Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- "1. Recalling its December 2012 Conclusions, the Council expresses its concern about Bosnia and Herzegovina's continued lack of progress on the path towards the European Union. As other countries of the region make progress, Bosnia and Herzegovina is lagging behind.
2. The Council regrets, in particular, the failure of BiH political leaders to implement over the last three years the ECtHR ruling in the Sejdic/Finci case, placing BiH in breach of its international obligations. The Council is concerned about possible implications in view of the 2014 elections and urges Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a matter of priority, to bring its Constitution into compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights. A credible effort in this regard remains necessary for the entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA). Full implementation of the Sejdic/Finci ruling is a key element for a credible membership application to be considered by the EU.
3. The Council urges the BiH political leaders to agree on the implementation of this ruling as a matter of urgency and, in this context, to reengage constructively with the European Union, through the EU Special Representative/Head of Delegation. The European Union remains committed to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU perspective."

Relations with Kazakhstan

The Council adopted the EU position for the thirteenth meeting of the EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Council, to be held in Brussels on 24 July 2013.

Sudan and South Sudan

The Council adopted the following conclusions on Sudan and South Sudan:

- "1. Two years on since the independence of South Sudan, the European Union (EU) remains convinced that Sudan and South Sudan must co-exist peacefully as two viable states. The EU believes that the Addis Agreements of 27 September 2012 must be fully implemented without further delay or preconditions; failure to do so would have serious implications for the viability of both states. In this context, the EU calls on the Governments of both Sudan and South Sudan to prevent any support going to rebels in the other country and to comply with the agreed Safe Demilitarised Border Zone. The EU urges the Government of Sudan to continue to maintain the free flow of South Sudan's oil exports. The EU encourages the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to recover the spirit of cooperation they exhibited in past months and to cooperate fully with the African Union (AU) and the Chair of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) to resolve current difficulties.
2. The AU High Level Implementation Panel led by former President Mbeki continues to play an invaluable role in the peace process. The EU urges the Parties to engage with the Panel to resolve the remaining outstanding issues including the final status of Abyei and border-related issues. The EU will continue to support the efforts of the Panel and looks forward to the renewal of its mandate.
3. The EU remains deeply concerned by the long-running conflict in Darfur and the ongoing conflicts in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile regions of Sudan. Military action is not a solution to these conflicts which continue to cause enormous human suffering and new displacements. The EU urges all parties to grant immediate humanitarian access to all affected population groups, to come to the negotiating table to agree to an immediate cessation of hostilities and work towards a lasting political solution. The EU recalls the responsibility of the Government of Sudan to protect all its civilians and the obligation of all parties to respect international humanitarian and human rights law. The EU calls on the Government of Sudan to end the culture of impunity and to ensure that all perpetrators of violence are held accountable. The EU encourages the United Nations-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) to use all available resources to discharge its protection of civilians mandate. The EU strongly condemns the recent attacks on UNAMID peacekeepers.

4. The EU supports the promotion by the AU of a holistic approach to the quest for peace in Sudan. The EU believes that a long-term solution to all Sudan's internal conflicts would be assisted by a genuinely inclusive national dialogue, including representatives of civil society, the Government, opposition parties and the armed movements to pave the way for national reconciliation and democratic reforms. This should take place in a conducive environment with respect for peace and basic freedoms.
5. The EU is gravely concerned by the violent conflict in South Sudan's Jonglei state and the alarming reports of human rights violations against civilians. The EU recalls the responsibility of the Government of South Sudan to protect all its citizens and urges the Government to hold accountable those who have committed abuses, including members of the security forces. The EU calls on all parties to allow immediate and unhindered humanitarian access to all affected population groups, to desist from further violence and to seek a political solution. In the meantime the EU welcomes the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and it encourages UNMISS to use all available resources to discharge fully its protection of civilians and human rights mandate.
6. The EU encourages the Government of South Sudan to demonstrate its commitment to national reconciliation, democratic and transparent governance, including the fight against corruption and respect for human rights as the core of its vision for the future. It welcomes South Sudan's commitment to work with international partners on a New Deal Compact. Ratification of the Cotonou Agreement would lay the foundation for a long-term development partnership with the EU.
7. The EU is concerned by access restrictions for international humanitarian agencies and organisations in conflict-affected areas of Sudan and South Sudan. It reiterates its call on the Governments of Sudan and of South Sudan, as well as on armed groups operating in both countries, to allow timely, full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all populations in need, in line with international humanitarian principles.
8. The EU stands ready, together with the international community, to support Sudan and South Sudan's efforts towards national reconciliation and inclusive national dialogue, and to cooperate with both countries in areas of mutual interest. "

EU action in Pakistan

The Council took note of the fifth implementation report for Pakistan, covering the work of the EU and its member states towards greater coherence and complementarity in the EU's overall engagement with Pakistan.

EU action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The Council endorsed the six-monthly progress report on the implementation of the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, covering activities from the first half of 2013.

The Council also allocated EUR 750 000 from the EU budget to support action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1977 (2011). Workshops, country visits, training and public relations efforts can be funded so as to enhance national and regional efforts and capabilities as well as the implementation of the specific recommendations of the 2009 comprehensive review.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea - restrictive measures

The Council amended the implementing legislation for the EU restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to take account of changes introduced by UN Security Council resolution 2094 (2013).

EU Special Representative in Afghanistan

The Council appointed Mr Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin as EU Special Representative in Afghanistan. For more details, see press release [12618/13](#).

Syria - restrictive measures

The Council amended the implementing legislation for the EU restrictive measures against Syria.

EU external relations

The Council approved a position on the arrangements to be followed regarding the conclusion by the EU of memoranda of understanding, joint statements and other texts containing policy commitments with third countries and international organisations.

Relations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The Council approved the EU position and draft agenda for the 10th meeting of the EU-former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Stabilisation and Association Council, to be held in Brussels on 23 July.

Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Serbia

The Council adopted the Council and Commission decision on the conclusion of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their member states, of the one part, and the Republic of Serbia, of the other part.

The Council also established the position of the EU and the European Atomic Energy Community within the EU-Serbia Stabilisation and Association Council concerning a decision of that Stabilisation and Association Council adopting its rules of procedure.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY**Participation of Australia in EU crisis management operations**

The Council approved the signing and conclusion of an agreement between the EU and Australia establishing a framework for the participation of Australia in EU crisis management operations.

EUCAP Sahel Niger

The Council approved an agreement between the EU and the Republic of Niger on the status of EUCAP Sahel Niger, the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy mission in Niger, and endorsed its conclusion.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**Local authorities**

The Council adopted the following conclusions concerning the role of local authorities in development cooperation:

- "1. Decentralisation processes and effective local governance contribute significantly to deepening democracy and citizen's empowerment. Local authorities and their associations are important actors for change in reducing poverty and in promoting human rights and democracy, good governance and sustainable development at local levels in partner countries. Alongside central governments and in partnership with civil society organisations, local authorities at different levels play an important role in the provision of basic services, supporting inclusive growth, and increased social cohesion.

2. Working through local authorities and supporting decentralisation processes of power, decision making and resources improves opportunities to increase participation of citizens in decision making, strengthens democratic ownership, drives domestic reforms and helps bring about sustainable development and pro-poor results. Local authorities are key to the enhancement of public sector accountability to citizens, as well as promoting justice and core principles of equality including the rights of women and girls, ensuring transparency, and broad-based participation in the public sphere, building resilience and reaching out to all citizens, including vulnerable groups.

3. The Council recalls that, in line with the fundamental principle of subsidiarity, the EU has in its development policy ¹ recognised the crucial role of local authorities ² and associations of local authorities. ³ It also recalls the importance of commitments to improving development effectiveness and of the Busan Declaration to broaden development partnerships. It also notes that the EU and its Member States together have considerable experience of working with local authorities in many countries.
4. In this context, the Council welcomes the Commission's Communication on "Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes," ⁴ which proposes a more strategic engagement with accountable, representative local authorities and associations of local authorities in partner countries and is based on the results of the Structured Dialogue on the involvement of Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities in EU development cooperation and the work of the Policy Forum on Development.
5. The Council also welcomes the proposed work at sub-national, national, regional and international level with associations of local authorities which can act as important channels for the views and opinions of their members on local and national political and socio-economic issues.
6. The Council supports the proposals for a stronger engagement with partner governments and local authorities to create a more conducive legal and policy environment in support of decentralisation processes, in order to further EU development priorities. Where there is a political will to initiate decentralisation, the EU should work to promote enhanced political, administrative and fiscal decentralisation and ensure that its current support takes into account decentralisation processes and contexts.

¹ Doc. 14015/08 and doc. 15293/08: Commission Communication (and annexed European Charter on development cooperation in support of Local Governance) and Council Conclusions on Local Authorities: Actors of Development; The European Consensus on Development (OJ 2006/C 46/01); doc. 15560/11 and doc. 9369/12: Commission Communication and Council Conclusions on Increasing the Impact of the Development Policy: an Agenda for Change.

² The EU considers local authorities as public institutions with legal personality, component of the State structure, below the level of central government and accountable to citizens, encompassing different tiers of government, e.g. villages, municipalities, districts, countries, provinces, regions, etc. Local authorities are usually composed of a deliberative or policy-making body (council or assembly) and an executive body (the Mayor or other executive officer), directly or indirectly elected or selected at local level.

³ The term "associations of local authorities" is to be understood as umbrella organisations based on membership and representativeness at sub-national, national, sub-continental, continental and international level.

⁴ Doc. 9806/13 (COM(2013) 280 final).

7. The Council emphasises that the EU, based on thorough context analyses, should in particular invest in capacity-reinforcement activities to ensure that local authorities and their associations can implement their institutional and operational responsibilities with a special focus on building transparency and accountability at the local level. This is key to addressing potential political and institutional risks, in order to support local leadership in tackling corruption, strengthening institutions, and guarding against financial mismanagement.
8. The Council recognises the added value of local authorities in the territorial approach to development, which can reinforce local political processes and coherent local development planning and enhance democratic ownership of development at local level including through local elections, through the definition of multi-sector policies, the establishment of strategic multi-actor partnerships, the use and management of local natural resources and the mobilisation of other local private and community based assets.
9. In the context of growing urbanisation, the EU supports the role local authorities can play in addressing challenges related to rural-urban population movements, the need for basic services and facilities for citizens living in informal settlements, improved land management, risk assessment and mitigation and in ensuring coherence between urban and rural development policies.
10. The Council recognises that support for decentralised and cross-border cooperation between European local authorities and their counterparts in partner countries adds value through peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, by the development of coherent national policy on issues of mutual concern such as migration and enhancing local actors' participation in political and developmental processes. Local Authorities and their associations can also be relevant actors in promoting Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) among European citizens. This support needs to be based on a clear and sound partnership and have at its core the key commitments of aid effectiveness that underpin good development programmes including on avoiding fragmentation.

11. The Council encourages the Commission to explore new and innovative funding modalities in support of local authorities and their associations that are in line with internationally agreed development effectiveness principles and commitments.
12. The Council also encourages the Commission to monitor and ensure coherence with the implementation of its existing modalities such as budget support and sector budget support and that funds are properly transferred through government treasuries to local authorities, for their specific competences and service provision, in order to drive the local political process and deliver results that better target citizens' needs.
13. In fragile, conflict, and crisis-prone situations, EU dialogue with and support to local authorities is particularly important as part of wider public sector reforms and state-building processes, including to safeguard the needs of vulnerable communities, and to guide the transition from emergency response to sustainable development. The Council recognises that in situations where national funding mechanisms are not feasible or desirable, support to and partnerships with actors such as local authorities may present opportunities to continue service delivery, while at the same time maintaining consistency with official EU policy positions.
14. In view of this, the Council, calls on the EU and its Member States, as appropriate in cooperation with the Committee of Regions, in their work in partner countries to take into account the voice and experience of local authorities and – in line with national constitutional arrangements -to support their representation in policy discussions at national and international level, including in the development of the post-2015 agenda and in the preparation of HABITAT III.¹
15. In addition, the Council encourages the Commission to develop an action plan around these key areas and to draw upon the wide experience of EU Member States in working with local authorities including in the context of programming. EU delegations, in close cooperation with Member States, should engage on the ground with local authorities in structured and regular dialogue.
16. The Council invites the Commission to provide, in cooperation with the EEAS, regular updates and to report back to the Council on progress made, including on the development of an action plan."

¹ The Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Combating VAT fraud

Following a political agreement reached at its meeting on 21 June, the Council adopted two directives aimed at enabling member states to better combat VAT fraud ([11373/13](#) + [11374/13](#)).

Both directives amend directive 2006/112/EC on the common VAT system:

- One is aimed at enabling immediate measures to be taken in cases of sudden and massive VAT fraud ("quick reaction mechanism");
- The other allows member states to implement, on an optional and temporary basis, a reversal of liability for the payment of VAT on the supply of certain goods and services ("reverse charge mechanism").

For details, see press release [12627/13](#).

Macro-financial assistance for Kyrgyzstan

The Council agreed on a decision on the provision of macro-financial assistance for Kyrgyzstan, up to a maximum amount of EUR 30 million.

The aim is to support the country's economic stabilisation and cover its balance of payments needs as identified in its current IMF programme.

Approval of the decision follows an agreement reached with the European Parliament at a trilogue meeting on 26 June. Once the Council has adopted its position at first reading, the Parliament is expected to accept it without further amendment.

Debt securities

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a regulation on disclosure requirements for convertible and exchangeable debt securities ([12356/13](#)).

Further to amendments in 2010 to directive 2003/71/EC on the prospectus to be published when securities are traded, the draft regulation makes technical adjustments and clarifications to a number of disclosure requirements.

Subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny, the regulation can now be adopted unless the European Parliament objects.

Derivatives

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a regulation on technical standards on colleges for central counterparties (CCPs) ([12290/13](#)).

The draft regulation defines conditions for determining the most relevant currencies for the participation of central banks of issue in the CCP college, and practical arrangements for the establishment and functioning of colleges.

Subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny, the regulation can now be adopted unless the European Parliament objects.

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Multiannual financial framework 2014-2020*

The Council took the following steps with a view to the formal adoption of the draft regulation laying down the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020 and the formal approval of the interinstitutional agreement on budgetary discipline, cooperation in budgetary matters and sound financial management:

- it requested the European Parliament's consent to the draft MFF regulation as finalised by the legal-linguistic experts ([11791/13](#));

- it requested the European Parliament's and the Commission's approval of the draft interinstitutional agreement (IIA) on budgetary discipline, cooperation in budgetary matters and sound financial management ([11298/13](#)), subject to legal-linguistic finalisation;
- it requested the European Parliament's and the Commission's approval of the draft statements forming part of the political agreement reached on the MFF at the end of June ([11961/13 ADD 1](#)).

Once the European Parliament has given its consent to the MFF regulation and the European Parliament and the Commission have approved the IIA and the statements, the Council will formally adopt the regulation and approve the IIA and the statements.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Attacks against Information Systems

The Council adopted a directive on attacks against information systems, replacing the current Council framework decision 2005/222/JHA (PE-CONS [38/12](#)).

The objectives of this directive are to approximate the criminal law of the member states in the area of attacks against information systems by establishing minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and the relevant sanctions and to improve cooperation between competent authorities, including the police and other specialised law enforcement services of the member states, as well as the competent specialised EU agencies and bodies such as Eurojust, Europol and its European Cybercrime Centre, and the European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA).

The directive builds on the provisions of the Council framework decision 2005/222/JHA by enlarging the current scope of criminalization, increasing the level of penalties and providing for a reinforced framework for cooperation between competent authorities.

Eurojust activity report 2012

The Council took note of the activity report of the Joint Supervisory Body of Eurojust for the year 2012 ([12129/13](#)) and forwarded it to the European Parliament for information, as required by the Council decision setting up Eurojust¹.

The Joint Supervisory Body is an independent body that collectively monitors the activities of Eurojust which involve the processing of personal data.

Europol's 2012 report

The Council endorsed the general report on the European Police Office (Europol)² activities in 2012 ([10182/13](#)) and forwarded it to the European Parliament for information.

This report is prepared annually by Europol's management board, describing Europol's activities during the previous year, including the results achieved on the priorities set by the Council.

Access to the Visa Information System (VIS)

The Council adopted a decision setting 1 September 2013 as the date of effect of decision 2008/633/JHA concerning access for consultation of the Visa Information System (VIS) by designated authorities of member states and by Europol for the purposes of the prevention, detection and investigation of terrorist offences and other serious criminal offences ([11431/13](#)).

This follows the entry into force of regulation 767/2008 concerning the Visa Information System (VIS) and the exchange of data between member states on short stay visas (VIS Regulation)³.

¹ OJ L 63, 6.3.2002.

² OJ L 121, 15.5.2009.

³ OJ L 218, 13.8.2008,

World Anti-Doping Code

The Council approved the text of the EU contribution to the revision of the World Anti-Doping Code and International Standards ([12159/13](#)) and authorised the Presidency to submit it to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

The World Anti-Doping Code provides the basic framework for harmonised anti-doping policies, rules and regulations within sport organisations and among public authorities. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has launched a code revision process with a view to adopting a revised Code at the 4th World Conference on Doping in Sport in Johannesburg (South Africa) in November 2013.

FISHERIES

Partnership agreement between EU and Gabon - New protocol

The Council adopted a decision on the signing on behalf of the EU and on the provisional application of the protocol setting out fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the fisheries partnership agreement (FPA) between the EU and the Gabonese Republic ([11874/13](#)).

The partnership agreement in the fisheries sector between the EU and Gabon was concluded in 2007. The main objective of the protocol to this FPA is to define the fishing opportunities offered to EU vessels as well as the financial contribution due, separately, for access rights and for sectoral support. Following negotiations, a new protocol was initialled on 24 April 2013. The new protocol covers a period of three years from the date of its signature. In order to allow EU vessels to carry on fishing activities, the new protocol should be applied from the date of its signature on a provisional basis, pending completion of the procedures for its formal conclusion.

In addition to the signing and the provisional application of this new protocol, the Council adopted a regulation concerning the allocation of fishing opportunities between member states ([11872/13](#); [11875/13](#)).

RESEARCH

Seventh framework programme - Court of Auditors report

The Council adopted conclusions on [special report No 2/2013](#) by the European Court of Auditors regarding the implementation of the EU's seventh framework programme for research

The conclusions are set out in [12449/13](#).

INTERNAL MARKET

Vehicles - International agreements - Adaptation of EU procedures

The Council amended decision 2000/125/EC concerning the agreement establishing global technical regulations (the "Parallel Agreement") and decision 97/836/EC on the agreement of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (the "Revised 1958 Agreement"), regarding wheeled vehicles, equipment and parts which can be fitted to and/or be used on these vehicles, with a view to adapting both decisions to new procedures set out in the EU Treaty as regards the conclusion of international agreements by the EU ([5978/13](#) and [5975/13](#)).

Modernisation of state aid policy

The Council adopted two regulations for updating the EU rules governing state aid policy: the "procedural regulation" and the "enabling regulation".

The "procedural regulation" sets out the rules concerning state aid investigations.

The "enabling regulation" enables the Commission to specify categories of state aid compatible with the EU treaty that can be exempted from prior notification and approval.

These two regulations are part of the ongoing revision of the state aid framework with a view to ensuring that state aid policy contributes to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and to budgetary consolidation efforts in the member states. The revision is expected to be completed by the end of 2013.

For more details see press release [12632/13](#).

CUSTOMS UNION

EU/New Zealand agreement on customs cooperation - Opening of negotiations

The Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations for an agreement between the EU and New Zealand on customs cooperation and mutual administrative assistance in customs matters.

ENVIRONMENT

Water policy

The Council adopted a directive amending directives 2000/60/EC and 2008/105/EC as regards priority substances in the field of water policy ([21/13](#)), which reviews the list of chemicals identified as presenting a significant risk to or via the aquatic environment at EU level, as required by the Water Framework Directive (WFD)¹ at least every four years.

The WFD acknowledges the existence of considerable pressures on the aquatic environment, including that from chemical pollution, and the need for sustainable water management. Its environmental objectives include the achievement of good chemical and ecological status for surface and groundwater bodies, and the prevention of deterioration.

TRANSPORT

Port state responsibilities for the enforcement of the Maritime Labour Convention*

The Council adopted a directive laying down the responsibilities of port states for the enforcement of the Maritime Labour Convention agreed in 2006 by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The purpose of the ILO Convention is to guarantee decent working and living conditions on board ships and to limit social dumping, thus securing fair competition for ship owners who respect seafarers' rights. The directive now adopted ([24/13](#)) is the result of an agreement reached with the European Parliament on this legal act.

¹ (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000)

The new directive amends directive 2009/16 on port state control, in particular by:

- including new documents to be checked, namely the "maritime labour certificate" and the "declaration of maritime labour compliance";
- extending inspections to cover other requirements of the Maritime Labour Convention;
- complementing the rules on the handling of complaints; and
- including a serious or repeated breach of the Maritime Labour Convention as a reason for detaining a ship.

The directive will enter into force on 20 August 2012, at the same time as the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention.

The responsibilities of flag states for the enforcement of the Convention will be covered by another directive, on which the Council and the Parliament have already reached an agreement and which is to be adopted soon.

TRADE POLICY

Anti-subsidy measures - Stainless steel bars and rods - India

The Council amended regulation 405/2011 imposing a definitive countervailing duty and collecting definitively the provisional duty imposed on imports of certain stainless steel bars and rods originating in India ([11789/13](#)).

BUDGETS

Humanitarian aid for Syria, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic

The Council approved two transfers of a total amount of EUR 262.7 million in commitments and EUR 148 million in payments in order to provide humanitarian aid to Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic.

Amounts of EUR 247.7 million in commitments and EUR 140 million in payments are transferred from different budget lines within heading 4 ("global Europe") and the emergency aid reserve for humanitarian aid to Syria. Further EUR 2.3 million are intended to be allocated from the operational reserve for humanitarian aid, bringing the total additional humanitarian assistance from the EU budget to EUR 250 million. This amount is part of the total additional support of EUR 400 million proposed by the Commission for the population affected by the crisis in Syria ([11826/13](#)).

Moreover, EUR 15 million in commitments and EUR 8 million in payments are transferred from the emergency aid reserve in order to provide humanitarian aid and respond to the increased needs in the two interlinked crises of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic ([11827/13](#)).

Dates for the negotiations on the 2014 EU budget

The Council approved the dates for the budgetary procedure and modalities for the functioning of the Conciliation Committee in 2013, as agreed with the European Parliament and the Commission ([12248/13](#)).

The Council will endeavour to formally adopt its position on the 2014 draft budget proposed by the Commission by 11 September 2013. The European Parliament will vote on amendments to the Council's position in calendar week 43 (starting on 21 October). If the Council's and the Parliament's positions diverge, a three-week conciliation period would start on 24 October (until 13 November included). The Conciliation Committee would meet on 4 November and on 11 November. On 11 November an Ecofin (Budget) Council would also take place in order to give the Lithuanian presidency guidance for the negotiations with the European Parliament.

TRANSPARENCY

Public access to documents

The Council approved:

- the reply to confirmatory application No 14/c/01/13 made by Mr O'Huiginn, with all delegations voting in favour ([11824/13](#)).
- the reply to confirmatory application No 15/c/01/13 made by Mr Hillebrandt, the Danish, Estonian, Dutch, Finnish and Swedish delegations voting against ([11832/13](#)).
- the reply to confirmatory application No 26/c/01/09 - new partial reply following the judgment of the General Court in case T-63/10, with all delegations voting in favour ([11936/13](#)).