



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESS RELEASE

3005th Council meeting

Foreign Affairs

Brussels, 22 March 2010

President

Catherine ASHTON

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and
Security Policy

P R E S S

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Main results of the Council

The Council called, in a declaration on **free access to information in Iran**, on the Iranian authorities to stop the jamming of satellite broadcasting, Internet censorship and restrictions on mobile telecommunications. It stated its determination to pursue these issues and to act with a view to putting an end to this unacceptable situation.

The Council expressed its continued support for the people of **Haiti** and adopted conclusions mandating the High Representative to represent the Union at the International Donors' Conference – Towards a New Future for Haiti – in New York on 31 March. The High Representative will present the EU's common position at the conference, providing an overview of the EU's collective effort in response to the earthquake and its support for the Haitian government's long-term plan for reconstruction and development.

The Council discussed the situation in **Afghanistan** and EU efforts on the ground and appointed Vygaudas Usackas as the single representative of the EU to Afghanistan, combining the posts of EU Special Representative and Head of the Union Delegation to Kabul.

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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.

PARTICIPANTS

The meeting was chaired by Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

The governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Olivier CHASTEL

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs with responsibility for preparing for the EU Presidency, attached to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

Bulgaria:

Mr Konstantin DIMITROV

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Czech Republic:

Mr Jan KOHOUT

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Denmark:

Mr Claus GRUBE

State Secretary

Germany:

Mr Guido WESTERWELLE

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Werner HOYER

State Secretary

Estonia:

Mr Raul MÄLK

Permanent Representative

Ireland:

Mr Micheál MARTIN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Greece:

Mr Dimitris DROUTSAS

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr Miguel Ángel MORATINOS CUYAUBÉ

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

France:

Mr Bernard KOUCHNER

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

Italy:

Mr Franco FRATTINI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr Markos KYPRIANOU

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Normunds POPENS

Permanent Representative

Lithuania:

Mr Audronius AŽUBALIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Hungary:

Mr Péter BALÁZS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Tonio BORG

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Maxime VERHAGEN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Austria:

Mr Michael SPINDELEGGER

Federal Minister for European and International Affairs

Poland:

Mr Radoslaw SIKORSKI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr Pedro LOURTIE

Secretary of State for European Affairs

Romania:

Mr Teodor BACONSCHI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovenia:

Mr Samuel ŽBOGAR

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Miroslav LAJČÁK

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Alexander STUBB

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Sweden:

Mr Carl BILDT

Minister for Foreign Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr David MILIBAND

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Commission:

Ms Kristalina GEORGIEVA

Member

Mr Andris PIEBALGS

Member

Mr Štefan FÜLE

Member

ITEMS DEBATED**FREEDOM OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN IRAN**

The Council adopted a declaration on freedom of access to information in Iran, calling on the Iranian authorities to halt the jamming of satellite broadcasting, Internet censorship and interference with mobile telecommunications.

- “1. Recalling its conclusions of December 2009 on human rights and democratisation in third countries, the Council reiterates its commitment to stepping up EU action on the relationship between freedom of expression and new technologies. The EU stresses that freedom of expression throughout the world is a universal right which includes the right of individuals to seek, receive and impart information regardless of frontiers. Restrictions and limitations on the use of new technologies have emerged as a key challenge to the respect for human rights in many parts of the world, undermining the potential the technologies have in promoting freedom of expression.
2. In this context, the European Union expresses its grave concern over measures taken by the Iranian authorities to prevent its citizens from freely communicating and receiving information through TV, radio satellite broadcasting and the internet. Deliberate interference by jamming of satellite broadcasting has affected numerous radio and TV services, including European services, transmitted by EUTELSAT. In addition, the Iranian authorities regularly prevent their citizens from freely accessing, communicating and receiving information on the internet, and restrict or block mobile telecommunications.
3. The jamming of TV and radio satellite broadcasting runs counter to the undertakings given by the Islamic Republic of Iran itself in the context of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). Despite complaints made to the Iranian authorities through the ITU they have not put an end to this jamming, which originates on Iranian territory.
4. The EU therefore calls on the Iranian authorities to stop the jamming of satellite broadcasting and internet censorship and to put an end to this electronic interference immediately. The EU is determined to pursue these issues and to act with a view to putting an end to this unacceptable situation.
5. The EU calls on Iran to ensure the right to freedom of expression as set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that the Islamic Republic of Iran has signed and ratified.”

EU POSITION FOR THE NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HAITI

The Council was briefed by the High Representative and the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, on their visit to Haiti on 2 and 3 March. It mandated the High Representative to represent the Union at the International Donors' Conference – Towards a New Future for Haiti in New York – on 31 March and present a common EU position providing an overview of the EU's collective effort and its support for Haiti's long-term reconstruction and development.

It adopted the following conclusions:

- “1. The Council expresses its support for the people of Haiti following the earthquake and underlines their ownership and central responsibility for determining their current and future priorities. Building on its swift and effective initial response the European Union will continue to assist them in addressing their humanitarian needs, including putting in place contingency measures in view of the upcoming rainy and hurricane seasons. Looking further ahead, the European Union stands ready to support a long-term plan over the next decade, led by the Government of Haiti, and in partnership with the international community, to support reconstruction and sustainable development in Haiti.
2. The Council supports the Government of Haiti's leadership with regard to recovery and reconstruction efforts and welcomes its intention to present its "Plan d'action pour le relèvement et le développement national : les grands chantiers pour l'avenir" at the International Donors' Conference Towards a New Future for Haiti in New York on 31 March 2010.
3. The High Representative will represent the European Union in New York and set forth a common EU position with the following elements:
 - a) An overview over the EU's collective effort in providing humanitarian, civil protection and other emergency assistance since the earthquake, including military assets, and police support;
 - b) The expressions of solidarity coming from European citizens and civil society;
 - c) A common aggregated figure representing the overall EU commitment to the reconstruction of Haiti;

- d) Support for a long-term plan that provides the basis for lasting inclusive economic growth and development in Haiti in the context of a joint EU approach linking relief to rehabilitation and development, underpinned by a commitment to joint programming to enhance aid effectiveness and promote an effective division of labour;
 - e) An EU House in Haiti, where EU development capabilities could be co-located, to enhance EU coordination on the ground and support joint programming and to assist EU donors not present in Haiti.
4. The Council underlines the leadership of the Government of Haiti in donor coordination, sector coordination, and management of the overall reconstruction agenda and the importance of democratic governance. It also stresses the need to ensure adequate coordination with the UN, as well as with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, key bilateral donors, and other stakeholders including regional actors, in particular through an overarching country-led governance mechanism which also offers a forum for policy dialogue, donor coordination and consultation with the Haitian civil society.
 5. The EU welcomes the consideration of implementation modalities such as a multi-donor trust fund to ensure support for long-term development priorities and ensure better coherence. Linked to its joint programming exercise, the EU will define its participation in different implementation bodies, based on an assessment of their effectiveness.
 6. In the light of the commitment to joint programming referred to in paragraph 3(d), the Council welcomes the preparation of a joint EU Country Strategy Paper and a joint aid planning document for the EU¹ in order to permit the effective coordination of Community development funds and those of the Member States contributing to the effort to rehabilitate Haiti. These will be drawn up after the New York Conference on the basis of the Government of Haiti "*Plan d'action pour le relèvement et le développement national : les grands chantiers pour l'avenir*," underpinned by the full Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, in consultation with the Government of Haiti and relevant stakeholders.

* * *

The Council welcomes the intention of the High Representative and the Commission to review the Union's emergency response capability and to report back to the Council, taking into account ongoing evaluations as well as lessons learned from the comprehensive EU response to the Haiti earthquake.”

¹ Council Conclusions of 11 April 2006 (doc. 8388/06).

CHILE

The Council was briefed by the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, on the EU's response to the earthquake and the tsunami in Chile and on her visit there. The Council had a short discussion, underlining that the EU's response had been speedy and comprehensive and that it was already looking ahead to support for long-term reconstruction. It requested the European Investment Bank to do likewise.

AFGHANISTAN

The Council discussed developments in Afghanistan and EU efforts on the ground on the basis of the EU's 2009 Action Plan for Enhanced Engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan in the presence of the EU's new single representative for Afghanistan, Mr Vygaudas Usackas.

It adopted the following conclusions:

- “1.) The Council discussed developments in Afghanistan and EU efforts on the ground on the basis of the Action Plan for Enhanced EU Engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan, adopted in October 2009. The discussion took place in the presence of Mr. Vygaudas USACKAS, who today was appointed as single representative of the EU in Afghanistan, taking up office from 1 April 2010. His appointment as both the Special Representative of the EU and Head of the EU Delegation in Kabul is a further step to strengthen coordinated EU action on the ground, working in close cooperation with other international actors. EU efforts will be spearheaded under Mr. Usackas' leadership, who will guide the implementation of the Action Plan, in close cooperation with Member States' representatives in Kabul. The Council expressed sincere appreciation to outgoing EU Special Representative, Ettore Sequi, and outgoing Head of the EU Delegation, Hansjörg Kretschmer, for their outstanding work over the past years.
- 2.) The Council reiterated that the internal security situation remained a direct challenge to the stability of Afghanistan. The Council underlined its continued support for international civilian efforts in Afghanistan, emphasising the central coordination role of UNAMA and reaffirming its support for the UN mandate and the objectives of ISAF. The key to delivering the civilian efforts will be enhanced coordination and the development of a coherent approach between all major civilian actors, notably the EU Special Representative, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and the NATO Senior Civilian Representative, under the leadership of the Government of Afghanistan. The Council underlined the importance of Afghan ownership and leadership.
- 3.) The Council emphasised its support for the outcomes of the London Conference of 28 January 2010 and reiterated that all efforts must now focus on implementing the commitments made there, including with regards to the announced Peace and Reintegration Trust Fund to finance the Afghan-led Peace and Reintegration Programme. The Council underlined the significance of balanced, Afghan-led reconciliation and reintegration processes as key elements of a sustainable political solution in Afghanistan. In this respect, the Council welcomed the organisation of a Peace Jirga, scheduled to take place this Spring. The Council also welcomed recent contacts between leaders in the region aimed at confidence building. It looks forward to a second successful ad hoc Summit between the EU and Pakistan on 21 April 2010.

- 4.) The Council discussed the Kabul Conference, which should follow up the commitments made in London. The Kabul Conference will provide an opportunity for the Afghan Government to chart the way forward, notably on anti-corruption, reinforced security, effective and impartial governance, economic and social development, human rights and improved electoral processes. The EU expects that the Government of Afghanistan will act swiftly and decisively to deliver on the promises made to its people. Through its Action Plan, the European Union in cooperation with UNAMA and other international partners, continues to provide long-term assistance to Afghanistan in institution building and civilian capacity programmes, including at sub-national level. The Council expects to discuss a first report on the progress of implementation of the Action Plan next month.

- 5.) The Council stressed the importance of credible, inclusive and secure parliamentary elections in Afghanistan reflecting the will of the people. Recalling the recommendations of the EU Election Observation Mission to the Presidential Elections of 2009 and the commitments made at the London Conference to ensure the integrity of the elections, the Council urged the Government of Afghanistan to proceed without further delay with reforms to the electoral process to safeguard the impartiality, independence and integrity of the electoral institutions, notably the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission, in close cooperation with the SRSG of the UN. The Council emphasised that only structural reforms will make any support extended to the electoral process by the international community fully effective. The Council will continue to closely follow preparations for the upcoming parliamentary elections.”

MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

Over lunch, the Council discussed the Middle East Peace Process in the presence of the International Quartet Envoy, Tony Blair. The High Representative reported on her visit to the Middle East and the International Quartet meeting in Moscow and the Quartet Envoy briefed ministers on the situation and efforts on the ground.

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE

The Council in a joint session (General Affairs/Foreign Affairs) discusses current work on the future European External Action Service (see press release *7802/10*).

OTHER BUSINESS

- The Council held an exchange of views on **Ukraine** and the main lines of EU engagement, including the package of measures that the EU could offer Ukraine in return for implementing internal reforms, for example a roadmap towards a visa-free regime.
- The Council held a short discussion on the **Republic of Moldova**, relating to macro-financial assistance, the launch of a visa dialogue and negotiations on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA).
- The Council held an exchange of views on the bilateral dispute between **Libya and Switzerland** and the mediation efforts being led by Germany and Spain.
- The Council was briefed by the Slovenian Foreign Minister on the Brdo Conference on the **Western Balkans** on 20 March.

IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL

- Ministerial political dialogue IGAD - Horn of Africa ([7956/10](#)).

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**FOREIGN AFFAIRS****New EU Special Representative for Afghanistan**

The Council appointed Mr Vygaudas Usackas (Lithuania) as new EU special representative (EUSR) for Afghanistan from 1 April until 31 August 2010, or until the decision establishing the European External Action Service, enters into force, if it does so at an earlier date ([7017/10](#)).

Mr Usackas will replace Mr. Ettore Francesco Sequi, whose mandate expires on 31 March.

The EUSR mandate for Afghanistan includes promoting EU policy objectives in Afghanistan and directing the European delegation in the country.

EU policy objectives include:

- contributing to implementation of the EU-Afghanistan joint declaration and implementing the EU action plan on Afghanistan and Pakistan, insofar as it concerns Afghanistan, and thereby working with EU member states' representatives in Afghanistan;
- supporting the role played by the United Nations with particular emphasis on contributing to better coordinated international assistance.

EU - Israel conformity assessment of industrial products

The Council adopted a decision approving the signing of a protocol to the EU-Israel association agreement on conformity assessment and acceptance of industrial products.

It also decided to forward a draft decision on the conclusion of the protocol to the European Parliament for its consent.

COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

EU "Atalanta" mission against piracy off the Somali coast - Transfer agreements

The Council authorised the High Representative to open negotiations with Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda with a view to concluding transfer agreements in the framework of the EU military operation "EU NAVFOR Atalanta" against acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast.

In accordance with Council joint action 2008/851/ CFSP¹, persons having committed or suspected of having committed acts of piracy or armed robbery in Somali territorial waters, who are arrested and detained, with a view to their prosecution, and property used to carry out such acts, may be transferred to any third state, provided that the conditions for the transfer have been agreed with that third state in a manner consistent with relevant international law, notably international law on human rights.

"Atalanta" mission against piracy of the Somali coast - Participation of Montenegro

In its General Affairs session, the Council adopted a decision approving the signing and conclusion of an agreement with Montenegro on its participation in the EU's "Atalanta" operation against piracy off the coast of Somalia (*doc. [6976/10](#)*).

Somalia - EU military training mission in Uganda

The Council approved the text of a letter to be sent to the committee established by United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 751(1992) on Somalia, notifying it of the EU's decision to carry out a military training mission in Uganda in order to contribute to strengthening the transitional federal government in Somalia.

The EU has decided to conduct a military training mission in Uganda, at the invitation of Uganda, with the objective of contributing to a comprehensive and sustainable perspective for the development of the Somali security sector.

Under resolution 1872 (2009), the UN Security Council urged the international community to offer technical assistance for the training and equipping of Somali security forces

¹ OJ L 301, 12.11.2008, p.33, as corrected in OJ L 253, 25.9.2009, p.18. Amended by Council Decision 2009/907/CFSP (OJ L 322, 9.12.2009, p.27).

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**Free movement of third country nationals with a long-stay visa within the Schengen area**

The Council adopted a regulation amending the convention implementing the Schengen agreement and regulation (EC 562/2006) as regards the movement of persons with long-stay visas ([7392/10](#)).

Long-stay visas, or so-called "D" visas, are visas issued to third country nationals for periods of stay longer than three months.

The new rules put third country nationals with a long-stay visa on the same footing as third country nationals holding valid residence permits. They will be able to move freely for up to three months in any six-month period within the territories of the other Schengen member states.

The regulation also stipulates that long-term visas have a period of validity of no more than one year. If a member state allows an alien to stay for more than one year, the long stay visa must be replaced before the expiry of its period of validity by a residence permit.

For more information see press release [7803/10](#).
