



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



11575/06 (Presse 219)

PRESS RELEASE

2744th Council Meeting

General Affairs and External Relations

External Relations

Brussels, 17-18 July 2006

President

Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland

* Some external relations items were adopted without debate at the meeting on General Affairs (11574/06 Presse 218).

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 8239 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

11575/06 (Presse 219)

Main Results of the Council

*The Council, expressed its acute concern at the situation in the **Middle East**, and in particular at the deteriorating humanitarian situation, and deplored the loss of civilian lives on all sides. It called for the release of abducted soldiers and an immediate cessation of hostilities. While recognising Israel's legitimate right to self-defence, it urged Israel to exercise the utmost restraint and not to resort to disproportionate action. It called on all the parties to do everything possible to protect civilian populations. It expressed full support for HR Solana's active engagement and for the efforts of the UN Secretary-General. It looked forward to an active role of the UN Security Council in examining the possibility for an international monitoring presence.*

*The Council expressed deep disappointment that **Iran** had not responded positively to the international offer of negotiations put to it on 6 June by HR Solana and noted that, since Iran had given no indication of willingness to engage seriously on the basis of the proposals, the international community will have to return to the UN Security Council. The Council underlined the EU's continued commitment to a diplomatic solution. It also regretted the deterioration of the human rights situation in Iran.*

*The Council reiterated the EU's continuing support for the **Darfur** Peace Agreement and reaffirmed the EU's commitment to support the efforts of the African Union (AU) and the AU mission in Sudan (AMIS) politically and financially as well as through military and police means. It welcomed the AMIS Conference on 18 July in Brussels - a joint AU, UN and EU initiative - as an important opportunity to discuss pressing issues regarding the mission's political environment as well as to enhance further the effectiveness of EU technical and staff support to AMIS.*

*On **Kosovo**, the Council, which was briefed by UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari, expressed support for his efforts in conducting the political process to determine Kosovo's future status. It welcomed a joint report by the High Representative and the EU Commissioner for enlargement on the future EU role and contribution in Kosovo. It asked the HR and the Commissioner to continue examination of these issues.*

CONTENTS¹

PARTICIPANTS.....	4
--------------------------	----------

ITEMS DEBATED

WORLD TRADE NEGOTIATIONS – DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA - <i>Council conclusions</i>	6
SUDAN/DARFUR - <i>Council conclusions</i>	7
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO - <i>Council conclusions</i>	9
WESTERN BALKANS - <i>Council conclusions</i>	11
MIDDLE EAST - <i>Council conclusions</i>	13
IRAN - <i>Council conclusions</i>	15
EVENTS IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL	17

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

See press release 11574/06 Presse 218.

¹

- 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.
- The documents whose 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 abovementioned Council Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

PARTICIPANTS

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

Belgium:

Mr Karel DE GUCHT
Mr Didier DONFUT

Minister for Foreign Affairs
State Secretary for European Affairs, attached to the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Czech Republic:

Mr Cyril SVOBODA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Denmark:

Mr Claus GRUBE

Permanent Representative

Germany:

Mr Frank-Walter STEINMEIER

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

Estonia:

Mr Urmas PAET

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Greece:

Ms Theodora BAKOYANNIS
Mr Yannis VALINAKIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr Miguel Ángel MORATINOS CUYAUBÉ

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

France:

Mr Philippe DOUSTE-BLAZY
Ms Catherine COLONNA

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister with responsibility for European Affairs

Ireland:

Mr Dermot AHERN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Italy:

Mr Famiano CRUCIANELLI

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr Yiorgos LILLIKAS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Normans PENKE

State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Oskaras JUSYS

Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and
Immigration
Minister with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and
Immigration

Mr Nicolas SCHMIT

Hungary:

Ms Kinga GÖNCZ

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Michael FREDO

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Bernard BOT

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Austria:

Ms Ursula PLASSNIK

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

Poland:

Ms Anna Elżbieta FOTYGA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr Manuel LOBO ANTUNES

Deputy State Secretary for European Affairs

Slovenia:

Mr Dimitrij RUPEL

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Ján KUBIŠ

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ms Paula LEHTOMÄKI

Minister for Foreign Trade and Development

Sweden:

Mr Jan ELIASSON

Minister for Foreign Affairs

United Kingdom:

Ms Margaret BECKETT

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

.....

Commission:

Mr Olli REHN

Member

Mr Louis MICHEL

Member

Ms Benita FERRERO-WALDNER

Member

Mr Peter MANDELSON

Member

.....

General Secretariat of the Council:

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

.....

The Governments of the Acceding States were represented as follows:

Bulgaria:

Mr Ivailo KALFIN

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ms Meglena KUNEVA

Minister for European Affairs

Romania:

Mr Mihai-Răzvan UNGUREANU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

ITEMS DEBATED**WORLD TRADE NEGOTIATIONS – DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA - Council conclusions**

The Council was briefed by the Commission on developments in the current round of trade negotiations under the World Trade Organisation's Doha Development Agenda. It held an exchange of views and adopted the following conclusions:

"Recalling in full the conclusions adopted at its meeting on 12 June, the Council agreed that a special session of the Council, as well as of its article 133 committee, would be held in Geneva if a WTO ministerial meeting is convened at the end of July or in August. The date would be determined by the presidency in the light of developments."

SUDAN/DARFUR - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council reiterated the EU's continuing support to the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) as a basis for peace and reconciliation in Darfur and encouraged its full and rapid implementation. The Council underlined the urgent need to show peace dividend to the people of Darfur and noted the important role of the Darfur-Joint Assessment Mission (D-JAM) in this respect. The findings of the JAM will be presented at a Donors Conference organised by The Netherlands which is currently planned for October 2006. The Council stressed that for a successful JAM an improvement in security on the ground is urgently needed. In the light of the recent reports of the situation on the ground, the Council expressed concern that delays in implementing the agreement will have serious consequences for the security and humanitarian situation and in this context condemned the attack by the National Redemption Front (NRF) on Hamrat al Sheikh on 3 July 2006. The Council emphasized the crucial role of the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation in bringing the DPA to the grass-roots level and in particular increasing the involvement of women, encouraged the AU to expedite preparations for the process, and expressed EU's readiness to support this initiative.
2. The Council again urged non-signatories to join in and commit themselves to the implementation of the agreement. The Council expressed support to the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) decision on 27 June to impose targeted measures against those who undermine the DPA, obstruct its implementation or violate the Comprehensive Ceasefire.
3. The Council emphasized the vital role of the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) for the peace process in Darfur, and for DPA implementation in particular. The Council stressed the need to continue to enhance the operational capabilities of AMIS, emphasizing especially the need to ensure protection of the civilian population and humanitarian access. In this respect, the Council welcomed the new Concept of Operations for AMIS, and in particular the AU PSC decision of 27 June to approve the additional tasks and the new mandate of AMIS already within its existing strength and capacity. The Council recalled the need to swiftly implement the recommendations of the AU-led evaluation mission of December 2005 in order to enhance the mission's overall efficiency.

4. The Council urged the Government of Sudan to accept the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council, reaffirmed at its meeting of 27 June, to end the mandate of AMIS within the context of a transition to a UN peacekeeping operation. The Council expressed support for an early UNSC resolution establishing a UN operation in Darfur, as this would provide a clear framework allowing all stakeholders to maximise their support for AMIS in the interim period and to facilitate a successful transition to a future UN mission.
5. The Council underlined that a UN operation is the only viable and realistic option in Darfur in the long term. The Council welcomed the AU/ UN Technical Assessment Mission paving the way for sustainable peacekeeping in support of the DPA. The Council noted with concern the position of the Government of Sudan towards a UN operation urging it to enter into a real dialogue with the international community, especially with the AU and the UN, on the details of the future UN peacekeeping force in Darfur in order to show real commitment to peace.
6. The Council reaffirmed the EU's commitment to support the efforts of the AU and AMIS in Sudan and Darfur politically and financially as well as through military and police means. The Council welcomed the forthcoming AMIS Conference on 18 July in Brussels as a joint AU, UN and EU exercise and as an important opportunity to discuss pressing issues regarding the mission's political environment as well as further enhancing the effectiveness of EU technical and staff support to AMIS. The Council recalled that engagement of the Government of Sudan with this joint effort would create opportunities for more broad-based cooperation between the parties, and lay the ground for continuing support for the overall peace process in Sudan, including the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), negotiations in the Eastern Sudan and relations between Sudan and Chad.
7. The Council expressed its concern about the security conditions in the Darfur refugee camps located in Chad.
8. The Council reiterated its full support for the ongoing investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC) of human rights abuses in Darfur as mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1593(2005) and urged all parties, in particular the Government of Sudan, to cooperate fully with the ICC.
9. The Council calls on the Government of Sudan and all parties in Darfur to remove immediately any existing obstacles to the delivery of aid and to end any obstruction of humanitarian work or of assistance rendered to AMIS."

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"After years of war and concluding the transition period, the first democratic elections in 40 years provide a chance for a better future in the DRC. It is for the Congolese to seize this chance. The Council therefore stresses how imperative a transparent and fair electoral process is, reflecting the full sovereignty of the Congolese people. In line with its recent Council Conclusions on the DRC of February 27, May 15 and June 12, the EU will continue to wholeheartedly support the elections which should lay the foundation of a sustained process of peace, democratisation, good governance and the rule of law in the DRC.

The Council therefore commends all efforts undertaken by the Congolese transition authorities, the United Nations and the international community to prepare these elections in line with international standards and recalls the need to respect the overall electoral calendar. The Council appreciates the role of MONUC and the Comité International d'Accompagnement de la Transition (CIAT) in assisting the Congolese transition authorities in achieving their objectives.

The Council calls upon the transition authorities and on all political forces in the DRC to fully comply with democratic principles and basic freedoms in the electoral campaign. In this regard the EU urges all stakeholders to refrain from any harassment, intimidation or any other form of undue pressure as well as from all attempts of disturbing the electoral process by causing civil unrest. The Council expects that the Congolese security forces exercise restraint and remain impartial while providing security to the electoral process. The Council firmly condemns all acts which are violating basic civil rights, including the harassment of media, and that are undermining a fair and transparent electoral process. It recalls the need to provide sufficient security to all candidates, and stresses the need to fully guarantee the freedom of speech and equal access to the media.

The Council supports every effort of consensus building and of reducing the political tensions during and after the electoral process; the Council keeps encouraging all parties and candidates to conduct a fair and respectful electoral campaign during the coming weeks; in this context, the Council also recalls the need of upholding the democratic consensus by respecting the rules of establishing the final results of the elections. Furthermore, the Council encourages all regional actors to play a constructive role, noting that the entire region will benefit from credible and peaceful elections in the DRC. The successful holding of the second Summit of the Great Lakes Conference, provisionally scheduled for next December in Nairobi, would also help to underpin security in the DRC and throughout the region.

The Council welcomes the progress in deploying the EUFOR RD Congo operation in support of the MONUC peacekeeping mission and notes that the EUFOR RD Congo shall be in a short delay fully operational for a period of up to four months after the 30th of July, date of the first round of the presidential and parliamentary elections. The Council underlines in particular the importance of good and close cooperation with the United Nations and the transition authorities in the DRC. It furthermore welcomes the support of the Republic of Gabon and the Republic of Congo in this regard.

The Council, active in the security sector reform with two ESDP missions, notes that the temporary reinforcement of the police advisory mission EUPOL Kinshasa is well under way with a view to support the Congolese crowd control units in Kinshasa. The Council welcomes in particular the participation of African partner nations in this mission. The EU will also continue to support the efforts related to the reform of the national army FARDC through the EUSEC RD Congo mission.

The Council also welcomes the ongoing deployment of the EU Election Observation Mission in the DRC and recalls the importance of best possible coordination among the different observation missions.

In continuous cooperation with the United Nations, the African Union and the international community, the EU will work closely with the transition authorities in the coming months, fully committed and looking forward to pursuing its efforts in partnership and cooperation once a new democratic government is in place."

WESTERN BALKANS - Council conclusions

The Council was briefed by UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari on the state of play regarding the Kosovo status process. It also had an exchange of views ahead of the EU Troika meeting with the Prime Minister of Serbia later in the day. It adopted the following conclusions:

"Serbia/Kosovo"

1. The Council reiterated its full support for UN Status Envoy Martti Ahtisaari and his efforts in conducting the political process to determine Kosovo's future status. The Council welcomed his intention to move forward into direct political talks on the status issue. It called upon both sides to engage constructively in this phase of the negotiations.
2. The Council noted the report on the implementation of standards for Kosovo presented to the UN Security Council by the SRSG on 20 June 2006. It noted progress reported and stressed again the crucial importance of and the need for further accelerated and effective implementation of the Standards. The Council urged Belgrade to encourage Serbs in Kosovo to participate in Kosovo's institutions, in which they can most effectively advocate their own interests.
3. The Council welcomed the joint report by the SG/HR and the EU Commissioner for Enlargement on the Future EU role and contribution in Kosovo. It asked the SG/HR and the EU Commissioner for Enlargement to continue examination of these issues, in the light of the European Council conclusions of 15-16 June 2006, in coordination with other international actors and to keep the relevant Council bodies actively engaged in order to ensure continuing timely preparation of the future EU role in Kosovo. The Council stressed the need for a well coordinated EU presence in Kosovo. The Council welcomed the early deployment of the planning team in preparation for an ESDP mission in the broader field of rule of law and asked the SG/HR to continue informing on progress made.
4. The Council expressed appreciation for the work of the outgoing Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Mr Søren Jessen-Petersen, in Kosovo and looked forward to the appointment of his successor.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

5. The Council welcomed the generally peaceful and orderly conduct of the elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 5 July and the International Election Observation Mission's preliminary assessment that the elections were conducted largely in accordance with international standards. It noted with concern the incidents of violence especially during the beginning of the electoral campaign and the other shortcomings observed by the International Election Observation Mission in certain constituencies. It stressed the need that all such irregularities be investigated and addressed so that they do not occur in the future.
6. The Council looked forward to the smooth formation of a new Government. Once it is formed, the Government should begin to work resolutely on the European reform agenda in line with the European Partnership. In this context, the Council recalled that further steps in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's progress towards the EU will be considered in the light of the fulfilment of the conditions and requirements set out in European Council's conclusions of 16 December 2005. The EU remains committed to supporting the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in its European course.

Montenegro

7. The Council took note of the fact that all EU Member States have recognized the Republic of Montenegro as a sovereign and independent state. In line with the Stabilisation and Association Process and the Thessaloniki Agenda, the Council decided to extend bilateral political dialogue at ministerial level to Montenegro. A joint declaration will be prepared to that end. The Council also agreed to invite Montenegro to align itself with EU demarches, declarations and common positions on CFSP issues.

Regional cooperation

8. The Council underlined the importance of regional cooperation in the framework of the Stabilisation and Association Process. In this context, the Council welcomed the Energy Community Treaty that entered into force on 1 July 2006 which will be of mutual benefit for both the EU and the Western Balkan states. This treaty is an important step towards secured energy supply that is crucial for social and economic development of the region. The common framework established by the treaty will also increase the transparency and attractiveness of the region for investors."

MIDDLE EAST - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council is acutely concerned at the situation in the Middle East, in particular at the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, and deplores the loss of civilian lives on all sides. These developments pose a serious threat to peace and security in the region. It calls for the release of abducted soldiers and an immediate cessation of hostilities. The EU recognises Israel's legitimate right to self-defence, but it urges Israel to exercise utmost restraint and not to resort to disproportionate action. All parties must do everything possible to protect civilian populations and to refrain from actions in violation of international humanitarian law. It is urgent to stop violence and return to diplomacy. Only a political process of negotiation can bring lasting peace to the region. It is urgent that the international community engage actively in this. We express our full support for the High Representative's active engagement, for the efforts of the UN Secretary-General and for the efforts of actors in the region. The Council welcomes an active role of the UN Security Council including through examining the possibility for an international monitoring presence. We support the agenda set out in the G8 statement.

Developments in Lebanon and Israel

1. The European Union condemns the attacks by Hezbollah on Israel and the abduction of two Israeli soldiers. It calls for their immediate and unconditional release and for the cessation of all attacks on Israeli towns and cities.
2. The EU recalls the need for the Lebanese state to restore its sovereignty over the whole of its national territory and to do its utmost to prevent such attacks. The EU expresses its support for Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora. The EU urges the full implementation of the UNSCR 1559 and UNSCR 1680, including disbanding and disarming of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, and strict respect of the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and political independence of Lebanon.
3. Continued escalation will only aggravate the vicious circle of violence and retribution.
4. The EU appeals to all parties to ensure the safe and speedy passage from Lebanon of all those citizens of EU Member States, as well as other expatriates, who wish to leave Lebanon in the current situation. The EU calls on Israel not to hinder shipping in international waters.

Situation in Gaza

5. The Council remains deeply concerned at the deteriorating situation between Israel and the Palestinians and deplores the loss of civilian life it has brought. The EU reiterates its call for the immediate and unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldier. It calls on the Palestinian leadership to bring an end to violence and terrorist activities, including the firing of rockets on Israeli territory.
6. The Council calls on both parties to alleviate the desperate humanitarian situation of the civilian population. The Council urges Israel to engage in the restoration of the destroyed civilian infrastructure. The Israeli air strikes on Gaza's only power plant have had a far-reaching impact on Gaza's hospitals, food production facilities, water and sanitation systems. The Council urges that the border crossings such as Rafah and Karni be opened and remain open to allow at least the passage of humanitarian aid and basic products to Gaza and the safe return of Palestinians currently on the Egyptian side of the border.
7. The European Union remains particularly concerned about the detention of elected members of the Palestinian Government and legislature and calls for their immediate release.
8. The Council commends the efforts of President Abbas to create the widest possible consensus in support of the objectives of the Roadmap. The Council reiterates that the EU stands ready to work with a Palestinian government that meets and implements the three principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel's right to exist and acceptance of existing agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. The Council encourages progress in the Palestinian National Dialogue to that end.
9. The European Union is committed to pressing ahead with the further expansion of the proposed Temporary International Mechanism to which the EU and its Member States have contributed significantly. The EU encourages donors and others in the region to make full use of the mechanism. The Council urges Israel to resume transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues.
10. This crisis underlines the need for the negotiation of a just and lasting settlement. The European Union calls on both parties to demonstrate urgently an active commitment to the search for a negotiated two-state solution. The European Union supports the central role of the Quartet in this process."

IRAN - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council expresses its deep disappointment that Iran has not responded positively to the offer of negotiations put to it on 6 June by the High Representative following agreement between France, Germany, UK, China, Russia and the US, and with the full support of the European Union.

These are far-reaching proposals for a long-term agreement which would provide Iran with everything it needs to develop a modern civil nuclear power programme. They would open the way to a new relationship with Iran based on mutual respect and expanded cooperation in political and economic fields, while meeting international concerns about the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

The Council recalls that the IAEA Board of Governors and the UN Security Council have repeatedly called on Iran to suspend all uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities. The proposals put to Iran are an attempt to find a way for Iran to fulfil these requirements without further action in the UN Security Council.

Since Iran has given no indication of willingness to engage seriously on the basis of the proposals the international community will have to return to the UN Security Council to make the decisions of the IAEA Board of Governors mandatory on Iran. Should Iran not comply, we will work for the adoption of measures under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

We remain committed to a diplomatic solution, and the ideas put to Iran remain on the table. Should Iran decide to suspend all its enrichment-related activities and to implement the Additional Protocol, the way to negotiation would be reopened and action in the Security Council could be suspended.

The Council reiterates its commitment to exercise the utmost vigilance in the application of existing export control mechanisms for sensitive material so as to prevent the transfer of goods, technology and materials that might be used, directly or indirectly, in fissile material programmes and missile programmes.

The EU remains committed to building a long-term relationship with Iran based on confidence and cooperation. Such a development will depend on progress on all issues of concern which include terrorism, Iran's approach to the Middle East peace process and regional issues.

Furthermore, the Council regrets the deterioration of the situation of human rights in Iran. Recalling its statement of 15 May 2006, the Council would like to draw particular attention to continuing violations of the freedom of expression and association, illustrated by the violent disruption of a peaceful demonstration on 12 June that advocated an end to legal discrimination against women. The Council is concerned at the situation of labour activists in Iran and the detention of Mr Mansour Ossanlou.

The Council calls on Iran to ensure implementation of its human-rights obligations including in the case of detention of Dr. Ramin Jahanbegloo. The Council deplores the lack of progress in this case and urges the Iranian authorities to ensure access to legal counsel for all detainees without delay."

EVENTS IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL

The following events took place in the margins of the Council:

- EU- Kazakhstan Cooperation Council;
- EU- Kyrgyz Republic Cooperation Council;
- Troika Meeting with Bosnia-Herzegovina;
- Troika meeting with Serbia;
- Signing of an Internal Agreement on financing the 10th European Development Fund.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

See press release 11574/06 Presse 218.
