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President **Federica Mogherini**
High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security
Policy

P R E S S

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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.
 • Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
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ITEMS DEBATED

Current affairs

The Council touched on the **Global Refugee Forum**, which will take place in Geneva on 17-18 December 2019. Development ministers were informed about the EU's wider engagement, covering the entire range of areas of the Global Compact on Refugees.

The Council was also updated on the state of play of negotiations on the future partnership between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, in view of the **Cotonou framework's** expiration in 2020.

[Global Refugee Forum \(UNHCR website\)](#)

[Cotonou Agreement \(background information\)](#)

Financial architecture for development

Development ministers exchanged views on the future financial architecture for sustainable development following the release of the Wise Persons Group's report on 8 October 2019.

The Chair of the Wise Persons Group, Thomas Wieser, presented the final report on how to **maximise the added value of the European financial architecture for development**, taking into account existing national and international bodies involved. The President of the European Investment Bank (**EIB**), Werner Hoyer, and the President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (**EBRD**), Sir Suma Chakrabarti, also attended the meeting and presented their views.

The report argues in support of consolidating and streamlining development finance and climate activities outside the EU into a single entity – a 'European Climate and Sustainable Development Bank' – in order to avoid overlaps and to strengthen the EU's presence, role and long-term capacity to deliver on its development priorities. The report also outlines several options for achieving this. In addition, it makes the case for taking more immediate steps to create a strong policy centre in the EU and to use the EU development budget in the forthcoming multiannual financial framework as a catalyst for reforming the existing system.

During the discussion, ministers stressed the importance of **working towards a common and strategic vision**, and improving the coherence and effectiveness of EU action, thereby giving the EU greater visibility and impact as the largest donor in the world jointly with its member states. Ministers also highlighted that work on short-term measures should be taken forward as soon as possible, and that longer-term solutions should be based on in-depth analysis.

The Finnish presidency aims to adopt Council conclusions on the report by December 2019, taking into account the guidance provided by development ministers.

[Public debate: discussion on the future financial architecture for sustainable development following the release of the Wise Persons Group's report](#)

[Report on the future of the European financial architecture for development, October 2019](#)

Support for developing countries in transition

The Council discussed how the **EU and member states can better cooperate** to support development of countries in transition, paying particular attention to the cases of Ethiopia and Sudan. Ministers shared their experience and identified best practices, challenges and priorities. In the case of **Ethiopia**, the focus of these priorities is economic transition, including private sector engagement.

In a short exchange of views on **Sudan**, building on the discussions held by foreign ministers on 11 November, the Council reaffirmed its support for the peace process and reiterated the importance of including women and youth in achieving long-term stability, as well as the urgent need to accompany the democratic transition with the necessary resources.

[Factsheet EU - Ethiopia relations \(EEAS\)](#)

[Factsheet EU - Sudan relations \(EEAS\)](#)

Gender and education

Over a working lunch, EU development ministers had an exchange of views with the Ethiopian Minister of Education, Dr Tilaye Gete. They looked at **learning challenges** in Africa from a **gender equality** perspective.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Council conclusions on addressing inequality in partner countries

The Council today adopted conclusions on addressing inequality in partner countries.

The Council notes that many partner countries remain confronted with levels of inequality that are higher than they were 30 years ago and which threaten the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Inequality is a major brake on the eradication of poverty and sustainable economic growth; it can threaten democracy, social cohesion and inclusion, resilience and stability, and can exacerbate environmental degradation and climate change.

The conclusions also acknowledge the multidimensional nature of inequality, which encompasses economic, social, political and environmental aspects and requires urgent attention.

The Council reaffirms that tackling inequality is an internal and external priority for the European Union and that equality and solidarity are among the values and principles guiding the Union and its external action.

[Read the full text of the Council conclusions on addressing inequality in partner countries](#)

Council conclusions on humanitarian assistance and international humanitarian law

The Council adopted conclusions on humanitarian assistance and international humanitarian law (IHL). They will guide the common messaging of the EU and the member states at the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which will take place in Geneva on 9-12 December.

These conclusions reaffirm the Council's strong support for the respect for and promotion of IHL as operationalised in the EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law. They also reiterate the EU's commitment to doing its utmost to strengthen effective multilateralism and to promote a rules-based international order.

The conclusions also express the EU's commitment to responding to the rapidly growing humanitarian needs around the world, to strengthening coordination between humanitarian, development and peace actions, and to more effectively addressing the humanitarian impact of climate change.

[Read the full text of the Council conclusions on humanitarian assistance and international humanitarian law](#)

Council conclusions on the fourth progress report on the EU's Action Plan on Nutrition

The Council adopted conclusions on the fourth progress report on the EU's Action Plan on Nutrition, which aims to reduce stunting in children under five by at least 10% of the World Health Assembly goal by 2025.

The conclusions recognise that hunger and malnutrition in all its forms constitute one of the greatest global obstacles to achieving most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to equitable economic and social development. They also note with alarm the negative trends in food insecurity and malnutrition. The Council therefore recalls the firm commitment of the EU and its member states to ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition in line with the 2030 Agenda, the European Consensus on Development and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

[Read the full text of the Council conclusions on the EU Nutrition Action Plan](#)

[EU Action Plan on Nutrition](#)

Council conclusions on the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan II in 2018

The Council adopted the conclusions on the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan II in 2018, which focused on strengthening gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action.

The conclusions note that further significant progress was made globally in 2018. Several countries have adopted or are ready to adopt equality and anti-discrimination laws, have increased their gender budgeting and have improved the quality of their reporting and transparency processes. They also highlight, however, that no country in the world can yet be considered to be on track for achieving gender equality by 2030. The Council therefore recalls the urgent need for a much deeper, faster and more ambitious response at the global, regional and local levels.

[Read the full text of the Council conclusions on the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan II](#)

[EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020](#)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

New person added to the list of sanctions against ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaeda

The Council included a new individual on the list of persons, groups, undertaking and entities subject to restrictive measures for their association with ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaeda.

On 20 September 2016, the Council adopted an autonomous sanctions regime against ISIL/Da'esh and Al-Qaida and persons and entities associated or supporting them. This sanctions regime complements and reinforces the sanctions imposed by the United Nations.

[EU fight against terrorism](#)

[Council decision concerning restrictive measures against ISIL \(Da'esh\) and Al-Qaeda and persons, groups, undertakings and entities associated with them, 20/09/2016](#)

Restrictive measures in response to the crisis in Ukraine - amendments

The Council adopted amendments to the statements of reasons for certain persons and entities subject to restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine.

On 17 March 2014, the Council adopted the sanctions regime in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine.

[EU restrictive measures in response to the crisis in Ukraine](#)

EU position on the IOC Headquarters Agreement

The Council established the EU position on the adoption of the new Headquarters Agreement between the Kingdom of Spain and the International Olive Council (IOC) by the Council of Members of the IOC at the plenary sitting of its 110th session on 27 November 2019.

BUDGETS

EU budget for 2020

The Council approved the joint text on the EU's general budget for 2020 agreed with the European Parliament on 18 November ([14283/19](#) + [ADD 1-5](#)).

The EU's budget for 2020 will continue to support the growth and competitiveness of the European economy, as well as other EU priorities, such as security and the management of migration. 21% of the budget will go towards measures aimed at addressing climate change. This has been achieved through increases for climate-related actions in several areas such as research and development, transport and energy infrastructure, and the EU's external action.

Total commitments are set at €168.7 billion. This is an increase of 1.5% compared to the amended 2019 budget. €1.5 billion have been kept available under the expenditure ceilings of the multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020, allowing the EU to react to unforeseeable needs.

Total payments amount to €153.6 billion, rising 3.4% from 2019. This increase reflects the continuing implementation of the 2014-2020 programmes at full speed.

Mobilisation of the Flexibility Instrument

The Council adopted a decision to mobilise the Flexibility Instrument for the EU's general budget for 2020, to provide €778.1 million in commitments under heading 3 (Security and Citizenship) ([14286/19](#)).

The purpose of the decision is to supplement the financing available in the EU budget for 2020 beyond the ceiling of heading 3 to finance measures in the field of migration, refugees and security.

EU budget for 2020 - Mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund

The Council adopted a decision to mobilise the EU Solidarity Fund for the EU's general budget for 2020, to provide €50 million in commitments and payment appropriations for the payment of advances ([14287/19](#)).

The aim of this proposal is to allow the timely payment of advances in the event of natural disasters in member states or in a country involved in accession negotiations with the European Union.

GENERAL AFFAIRS**List of Commissioners-designate**

The Council adopted a new list of persons whom it proposes for appointment as members of the Commission until 31 October 2024 ([12763/19](#)). This paves the way for the vote of consent in the European Parliament on the entire Commission as a body.

Under Article 17(7) of the Treaty on European Union, the list of Commissioners-designate is adopted by the Council by common accord with the President-elect of the Commission. President-elect Ursula von der Leyen gave her agreement to the draft list on 21 November.

The following persons have been proposed for appointment as Commissioner:

Mr Thierry BRETON (France)

Ms Helena DALLI (Malta)

Mr Valdis DOMBROVSKIS (Latvia)

Ms Elisa FERREIRA (Portugal)

Ms Mariya GABRIEL (Bulgaria)

Mr Paolo GENTILONI (Italy)

Mr Johannes HAHN (Austria)

Mr Phil HOGAN (Ireland)

Ms Ylva JOHANSSON (Sweden)

Ms Věra JOUROVÁ (Czech Republic)

Ms Stella KYRIAKIDES (Cyprus)

Mr Janez LENARČIČ (Slovenia)

Mr Didier REYNDEERS (Belgium)

Mr Margaritis SCHINAS (Greece)

Mr Nicolas SCHMIT (Luxembourg)

Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ (Slovakia)

Ms Kadri SIMSON (Estonia)

Mr Virginijus SINKEVIČIUS (Lithuania)

Ms Dubravka ŠUICA (Croatia)

Mr Frans TIMMERMANS (Netherlands)

Ms Jutta URPILAINEN (Finland)

Ms Adina VĂLEAN (Romania)

Mr Olivér VÁRHELYI (Hungary)

Ms Margrethe VESTAGER (Denmark)

Mr Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI (Poland),

in addition to:

Mr Josep BORRELL FONTELLES (Spain), appointed High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Following the European Parliament's consent, the Commission is appointed by the European Council, acting by a qualified majority.

EU POSITIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

ICAO: EU position on the revision of Annex 17 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation

The Council adopted the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) regarding the revision of Annex 17 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention). Annex 17 includes the measures to prevent and suppress all acts of unlawful interference in civil aviation throughout the world.

This position will be used as the basis for the intervention of the representatives of the EU member states which are members of the ICAO Council at its next meeting, on 18-29 November 2019.

[International Civil Aviation Organization](#)

TRADE

Pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the EU within the Joint Committee established by the Regional Convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin as regards the amendment of the convention ([13592/19](#)).

The convention was concluded by the EU by means of Council Decision 2013/94/EU and entered into force in the Union on 1 May 2012.

The Joint Committee is expected to amend the convention during its meeting on 27 November 2019 or at a later date.

IOC: EU position on olive oils and olive pomace oils

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the EU within the Council of Members of the International Olive Council (IOC) as regards trade standards applying to olive oils and olive pomace oils ([14078/19](#)).

TRANSPORT

Air traffic management - conclusions on special report

The Council adopted conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' special report entitled 'The EU's regulation for the modernisation of air traffic management has added value – but the funding was largely unnecessary' ([13466/1/19 REV 1](#)).
