



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



12770/04 (Presse 276)

PRESS RELEASE

2609th Council Meeting

General Affairs and External Relations

External Relations

Luxembourg, 11 October 2004

President **Mr Bernard BOT**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

* Some external relations items were adopted without debate at the 2608th meeting on General Affairs (12767/04).

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 285 8239 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 285 8026
press.office@consilium.eu.int <http://ue.eu.int/Newsroom>

12770/04 (Presse 276)

1
EN

Main Results of the Council

As part of a policy of engagement vis-à-vis **Libya**, the Council decided inter alia to lift the arms embargo against that country as well as to repeal a set of economic sanctions adopted by the EU in application of UNSC resolutions. The Council invited Libya to respond positively to this policy, notably with a view to the resolution of remaining EU concerns, in particular the case of the Bulgarian and Palestinian medical workers and other outstanding issues.

The Council, addressing the situation in the **Middle East**,

- condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks perpetrated in the Sinai against innocent Egyptian and Israeli citizens;
- expressed grave concern at the unprecedented cycle of retaliatory violence in Israel and the Occupied Territories, called on both parties to take steps to fulfil their Roadmap obligations and commitments and welcomed the proposals made by the EU Special Representative for an EU coordinating mechanism for donor assistance to the Palestinian Civil Police.

Other main results in the field of external relations, such as those concerning the tightening of restrictive measures against the regime in **Burma/Myanmar**, as well as decisions taken in the field of the **European Security and Defence Policy** are reflected in the “General Affairs” press release, 12767/04 Presse 275.

CONTENTS¹

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| PARTICIPANTS | 5 |
| ITEMS DEBATED | |
| LIBYA - <i>Council Conclusions</i> | 7 |
| CHINA..... | 9 |
| IRAN..... | 11 |
| MIDDLE EAST..... | 13 |
| – Terrorist attacks in Taba and Ras Satan - <i>Council Conclusions</i> | 13 |
| – Middle East Peace Process - <i>Council Conclusions</i> | 13 |
| EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY..... | 16 |
| SUDAN/DARFUR - <i>Council Conclusions</i> | 17 |
| AFRICAN GREAT LAKES REGION - <i>Council Conclusions</i> | 20 |
| ICTY..... | 22 |
| WESTERN BALKANS - <i>Council Conclusions</i> | 23 |
| INDONESIA - <i>Council Conclusions</i> | 25 |
| UKRAINE - <i>Council Conclusions</i> | 27 |
| OTHER BUSINESS..... | 28 |
| – EU-Mercosur..... | 28 |
| – Guinea-Bissau..... | 28 |
| EVENTS IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL..... | 28 |

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://ue.eu.int>.
- 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.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

Please see "General Affairs" Press release 12767/04 Presse 275.

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

Czech Republic:

Mr Cyril SVOBODA

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Denmark:

Mr Per Stig MØLLER

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Germany:

Mr Joschka FISCHER

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Federal Chancellor

Estonia:

Ms Kristiina OJULAND

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Greece:

Mr Petros MOLYVIATIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Spain:

Mr Miguel Angel MORATINOS
Mr Alberto NAVARRO

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
State Secretary for the European Union

France:

Ms Claudie HAIGNERÉ

Minister with responsibilities for European Affairs,
attached to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ireland:

Mr Dermot AHERN T.D.

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Italy:

Mr Franco FRATTINI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Cyprus:

Mr George IACOVOU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Artis PABRIKS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Oskaras JUSYS

Permanent Representative

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Mr Nicolas SCHMIT

Minister with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Hungary:

Mr László KOVÁCS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Michael FRENDO

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Bernard BOT
Ms Anna Maria Agnes van ARDENNE-van der HOEVEN

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Development Cooperation

Austria:

Mr Gregor WOSCHNAGG

Permanent Representative

Poland:

Mr Włodzimierz CIMOSZEWICZ

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr António MONTEIRO

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Portuguese Communities
Abroad**Slovenia:**

Mr Ivo VAJGL

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Eduard KUKAN

Mr József BERÉNYI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Sweden:

Ms Laila FREIVALDS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr Jack STRAW

Mr Denis MacSHANE

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Minister of State for Europe

Commission:

Mr Chris PATTEN

Mr Günter VERHEUGEN

Mr Poul NIELSON

Ms Michaele SCHREYER

Member

Member

Member

Member

Council Secretariat:

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

IRAN

Ministers, over lunch, discussed Iran, with particular focus on the nuclear issue. They exchanged views on their approach for the weeks ahead, also with a view to the AIEA Board of Governors meeting on 25 November. The Presidency noted that the EU would remain engaged - notably through the efforts of France, Germany and the UK reinforced by High Representative Solana - with a view to achieving progress on the Iranian nuclear issue.

*

* *

The Council also adopted the following conclusions on the EU-Iran dialogue on human rights:

- "1. The Council recalled its previous conclusions on the subject (21 October 2002, 18 March 2003, 21 July 2003 and 13 October 2003), and welcomed the evaluation of the EU-Iran dialogue on Human Rights. This evaluation was prepared in accordance with the EU Guidelines on Human Rights dialogues and includes the fourth round of the dialogue, which took place on 14 and 15 June 2004 in Tehran.
2. The Council recalled the commitment expressed by the Government of Iran to strengthen respect for human rights in the country and to promote the rule of law.
3. The Council remains deeply concerned that despite this commitment, serious violations of human rights are continuing to occur in Iran.
4. The evaluation clearly establishes that with regard to the issues that this Council has designated as its priorities, although there seemed to be hopeful signs at some point, little overall progress has been achieved since the start of the dialogue in December 2002. These key areas of concern, which have been used as benchmarks to appraise the human rights situation in Iran and to measure the results of the dialogue, relate to Iran's cooperation with human rights mechanisms and implementation of their recommendations, ratification and implementation of key conventions; unhindered access for international observers and international NGOs; civil rights and political freedoms; reform of the judicial system; prevention and eradication of torture; criminal punishment; discrimination and the prison system.
5. The evaluation concluded that while Iran has extended a standing invitation for visits by UN Special Human Rights mechanisms and several such visits actually took place, little progress has been made on implementing the recommendations arising from them. With regard to the other priority issues, however, there has either been very little or no progress on the ground.

6. The Council noted that the situation with regard to the exercise of key civil rights and political freedoms such as freedom of expression, has deteriorated since the Parliamentary elections of February this year. The Council, bearing in mind its longstanding and firm position against the use of the death penalty, also expressed its concern about the recently increased number of reports about executions being carried out in apparent absence of respect for internationally recognised safeguards, and about the executions of juvenile offenders. It regretted that despite some recent legislative improvements numerous discriminatory practices continue against women as well as against persons belonging to religious minorities, both recognised and not recognised by Iran.
7. The Council reaffirmed that the human rights dialogue with Iran remains one of the means by which the EU can make a contribution to improving the human rights situation. While welcoming the efforts that Iran has so far put into its dialogue with the European Union, it reiterated that this dialogue is an effective instrument in human rights policy only if sufficient progress is achieved on the ground, both in the short and the long term. The dialogue itself should be able to make a positive contribution to EU-Iran relations in this regard. The EU remains committed to pursue the human rights dialogue, while however annually reviewing its modalities with the aim of improving its effectiveness in key areas of concern. Taking into account the outcome of the evaluation, the Council supported the need to attain a renewed commitment from the Iranian authorities to improve respect for human rights and promote the rule of law in the country and also supported the need to adjust the modalities of the dialogue with a view to enhancing its effectiveness.
8. The Council wishes to discuss with Iran a number of practical recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the dialogue, such as early agreement on themes and regular dates before each UN Commission on Human Rights and UN General Assembly, a more thorough preparation for both the round table meetings and the government-only meetings, and more transparency towards the public. This dialogue has generated great expectations within the civil society in Iran. The EU and Iran should do their best to meet these expectations.
9. The Council expressed its intention that an EU troika mission shall discuss the contents of these Council Conclusions with the Government of Iran shortly, and stressed the need to improve respect for human rights and promote the rule of law in the country, and discuss the way forward.
10. The Council further reaffirmed its position of principle that the dialogue remains without prejudice to the tabling of a resolution at the UN Commission on Human Rights or at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly. It agreed that at the 59th session of the UN General Assembly, the EU will convey its deep concern at the serious violations of human rights in Iran.
11. The EU will return to the matter in the light of developments in the situation of human rights in Iran."