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THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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## **PRESS RELEASE**

3130th Council meeting

### **Foreign Affairs**

Brussels, 30 November and 1 December 2011

President            **Catherine Ashton**  
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and  
Security Policy

# **P R E S S**

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Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 9442 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026  
[press.office@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press.office@consilium.europa.eu) <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

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## **Main results of the Council**

*The Council discussed **Iran** and adopted conclusions, reiterating its serious and deepening concerns over the nature of Iran's nuclear programme. In the light of these concerns, the Council strengthened the EU restrictive measures against that country and agreed to broaden existing sanctions through additional measures, in close coordination with international partners. The Council also expressed its outrage over the attack on the British Embassy in Tehran, condemning it utterly.*

*The Council exchanged views on the situation in the EU's Southern Neighbourhood, in the light of the latest developments in the region. It adopted conclusions on **Egypt, Syria and Yemen**. In view of the gravity of the situation in Syria, the Council reinforced the restrictive measures on the country's regime. The Council also took stock of the **EU's response to the developments in its Southern neighbourhood**.*

*During lunch, ministers discussed the Arab Spring, the Middle East Peace Process and **relations with the Arab League** with Dr. Nabil El Araby, Secretary General of the League of Arab States.*

*In their six-monthly meeting within the Council, EU defence ministers discussed the state of play concerning the **Common security and defence policy (CSDP)** and adopted conclusions. The Council also established the **2012 budget for the European Defence Agency**. In addition, it approved a framework for cooperation between the European Defence Agency and the Federal Department of Defence of the Swiss Confederation, with a view to its conclusion by the EDA Steering Board.*

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<sup>1</sup> 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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**PARTICIPANTS**

**High Representative:**

Ms Catherine ASHTON

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

**Belgium:**

Mr Steven VANACKERE

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Institutional Reforms

Mr Pieter DE CREM

Minister for Defence

**Bulgaria:**

Mr Nickolay MLADENOV

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ms Avgustina TSVETKOVA

Deputy Minister for Defence

**Czech Republic:**

Mr Karel SCHWARZENBERG

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Alexandr VONDRA

Minister for Defence

**Denmark:**

Mr Villy SØVNDAL

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Nick HÆKKERUP

Minister for Defence

**Germany:**

Mr Guido WESTERWELLE

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Thomas de MAIZIÈRE

Federal Minister for Defence

**Estonia:**

Mr Urmas PAET

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Harri TIIDO

Ambassador, Representative to the Political and Security Committee

**Ireland:**

Ms Lucinda CREIGHTON

Minister of State with special responsibility for European Affairs (Departments of the Taoiseach and Foreign Affairs)

Mr Allan SHATTER

Minister for Justice and Equality, Minister for Defence

**Greece:**

Mr Stavros DIMAS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Dimitrios AVRAMOPOULOS

Minister for Defence

**Spain:**

Ms Trinidad JIMENEZ

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Ms Carmen CHACÓN PIQUERAS

Minister for Defence

**France:**

Mr Alain JUPPÉ

Ministre d'État, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

Mr Gérard LONGUET

Minister for Defence and Ex-Servicemen

**Italy:**

Mr Giulio TERZI DI SANT'AGATA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Giampaolo DI PAOLA

Minister for Defence

**Cyprus:**

Ms Erato KOZAKOU-MARCOULLIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Demetris ELIADES

Minister for Defence

**Latvia:**

Mr Edgars RINKĒVIČS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Artis PABRIKS

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Defence

**Lithuania:**

Mr Egidijus MEILŪNAS

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Vytautas UMBRASAS

Deputy Minister for Defence

**Luxembourg:**

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Jean-Marie HALSDORF

Minister for Defence

**Hungary:**

Mr János MARTONYI  
Mr Csaba HENDE

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for Defence

**Malta:**

Mr Tonio BORG  
Mr Chris SAID

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Parliamentary Secretary for Consumers, Fair Competition,  
Local Councils and Public Dialogue

**Netherlands:**

Mr Uri ROSENTHAL  
Ms Marjanne KWAASTENIET

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Ambassador, Representative to the Political and Security  
Committee

**Austria:**

Mr Michael SPINDELEGGER

Vice Chancellor, Federal Minister for European and  
International Affairs  
Minister for defence

Mr Norbert DARABOS

**Poland:**

Mr Radosław SIKORSKI  
Mr Tomasz SIEMONIAK

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for Defence

**Portugal:**

Mr Paulo PORTAS  
Mr Paulo BRAGA LINO

Ministro de Estado, Minister for Foreign Affairs  
State Secretary attached to the Minister for Defence, with  
responsibility for defence

**Romania:**

Mr Teodor BACONSCHI  
Mr Viorel OANCEA

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Secretary of State for Defence Policy

**Slovenia:**

Mr Samuel ŽBOGAR  
Ms Ljubica JELUŠIČ

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for Defence

**Slovakia:**

Mr Ivan KORČOK  
Mr Róbert ONDREJCSÁK

Permanent Representative  
State Secretary for the Ministry of Defence

**Finland:**

Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA  
Mr Stefan WALLIN

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for Defence

**Sweden:**

Mr Carl BILDT  
Mr Johan RAEDER

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Defence Counsellor

**United Kingdom:**

Mr William HAGUE

First Secretary of State, Secretary of State for Foreign and  
Commonwealth Affairs  
Minister for International Security Strategy

Mr Gerald HOWARTH

**Commission:**

Mr Štefan FÜLE  
Mr Daniel CALLEJA CRESPO

Member  
DG Enterprise and Industry

**Other participants:**

Mr Pierre VIMONT

Executive Secretary General, EEAS

**ITEMS DEBATED**

**DEFENCE ISSUES**

**Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)**

The Council reviewed developments in CSDP and adopted conclusions, set out [here](#).

– *Operations*

The Council discussed the state of play concerning the EU's military CSDP operations and considered the way forward. These operations include Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EUNAVFOR Atalanta counter-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia, and the EU training mission for Somali forces. They also took stock of the latest developments with regard to Libya.

– *Partnerships*

The High Representative updated ministers on her efforts to strengthen EU-NATO cooperation in crisis management in line with the mandate of the European Council of September 2010, on the EU-UN cooperation, and on her contacts with strategic partners with regard to CSDP.

**Financing of the common costs of EU military operations - ATHENA mechanism**

The Council tasked its preparatory bodies to continue discussing a revised mechanism for financing the common costs of EU military operations (ATHENA mechanism).

**European Defence Agency**

The Council set the 2012 budget for the European Defence Agency at EUR 30.5 million.

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Western Balkans**

The High Representative briefed ministers about the latest round of the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, held on 30 November.

The Council took stock of recent developments in the region, focusing on the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue as well as on Bosnia and Herzegovina, and confirmed its continued support for the EU policy towards the Western Balkans.

The exchange of views will feed into the upcoming debate on EU enlargement in the General Affairs Council on 5 December, which will adopt conclusions.

**Iran**

The Council discussed the situation concerning Iran, following the publication of the new report by the International Atomic Energy Agency concerning Iran's nuclear programme.

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. "The Council reiterates its serious and deepening concerns over the nature of Iran's nuclear programme, and in particular over the findings on Iranian activities relating to the development of military nuclear technology, as reflected in the latest IAEA report. In this regard, the Council strongly supports the resolution adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors, which expresses deep and increasing concerns about unresolved issues and stresses the grave concern posed by Iran's continued refusal to comply with its international obligations and to fully co-operate with the IAEA.
2. In the light of these concerns, the Council has today designated a further 180 entities and individuals to be subject to restrictive measures. These designations include entities and individuals directly involved in Iran's nuclear activities, which are in violation of UNSC resolutions; entities and individuals owned, controlled or acting on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Line (IRISL); and members of, as well as entities controlled by, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).
3. In accordance with the European Council Declaration of 23 October, the Council further agreed that, given the seriousness of the situation, including the acceleration of the near 20% uranium enrichment activities by Iran, in violation of six UNSC resolutions and eleven IAEA Board resolutions, and the installation of centrifuges at a previously undeclared and deeply buried site near Qom, as detailed in the IAEA report, the EU should extend the scope of its restrictive measures against Iran.



4. In particular, the Council agreed to broaden existing sanctions by examining, in close coordination with international partners, additional measures including measures aimed at severely affecting the Iranian financial system, in the transport sector, in the energy sector, measures against the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, as well as in other areas. The Council tasked preparatory Council bodies to further elaborate these measures for adoption, no later than by the next Foreign Affairs Council.
5. The Council again reaffirmed the longstanding commitment of the European Union to work for a diplomatic solution of the Iranian nuclear issue in accordance with the dual track approach. The Council welcomes and fully supports the continuing efforts of the EU High Representative on behalf of the E3+3 aimed at convincing Iran to enter into meaningful talks on concrete confidence building measures. The Council calls upon Iran to respond positively to the offer of negotiations in the EU High Representative's latest letter by demonstrating its readiness to seriously address existing concerns on the nuclear issue.
6. The Council reaffirms that the objective of the EU remains to achieve a comprehensive and long-term settlement which would build international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme, while respecting Iran's legitimate rights to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the NPT."

The Council also adopted the following statement on the attack on the British embassy in Teheran:

"The Council is outraged by the attack on the British Embassy in Tehran and utterly condemns it. It is a violation of the Vienna Convention. It also deplores the decision to expel the British Ambassador from Tehran. The Council considers these actions against the UK as actions against the European Union as a whole. The EU is taking appropriate measures in response."

In the light of the EU's concerns, the Council reinforced EU restrictive measures. For more information, see press release [17877/11](#).

### **Camp Ashraf**

The Council discussed the situation regarding Camp Ashraf in Iraq, following an update by the High Representative about the latest developments.

## **Southern neighbourhood**

The Council exchanged views on the situation in the EU's Southern neighbourhood, in the light of the latest developments in the region.

### **– *Egypt***

The Council discussed the situation in Egypt and adopted the following conclusions:

1. "The Council welcomes the well-organized and peaceful start of the parliamentary elections in Egypt on 28 November and the significant voter turn out which proves the engagement of the Egyptian people in the political transition. It hopes this process will continue in a safe and transparent environment. The Council takes note of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces' (SCAF) recent announcement to hold Presidential elections before the end of June 2012.
2. The Council underlines that a swift move to civilian rule should take place as soon as possible. In this context, the SCAF has the responsibility of protecting the democratic rights of the population and must ensure that power is transferred as soon as possible to a representative, inclusive civilian government, that has all the necessary authority to lead Egypt through its transition process. It encourages the interim authorities to seek a peaceful and constructive way forward based on an inclusive and open dialogue with all political forces and civil society representatives while safeguarding the principles of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.
3. The EU is deeply concerned about the violence and unrest that took place in Egypt prior to the first round of elections. The Council deplores the loss of life and high number of injured people in recent clashes and expresses its condolences to the families of the victims. It condemns the excessive and unacceptable violence committed by the security forces against the demonstrators. The Council urges restraint on all sides and calls for an independent investigation bringing those responsible for violence to justice. It also urges the authorities to uphold the rule of law and respect for human rights.
4. The Council expresses its deep concern regarding the deterioration of the economic situation in Egypt, which makes it even more urgent to have representative authorities able to engage in the necessary social and economic reforms and to allow the effective use of available international assistance. The EU conveys its continued support to Egypt in this regard.

5. The Council reiterates its support for a democratic, pluralist and stable Egypt as a key EU partner in the region sharing the goal of building stability, peace and prosperity in the Mediterranean and Middle East region.
6. The EU will continue to stand by Egypt and its people in their quest for freedom and a democratic transition based on the goals of deep and sustainable democracy and inclusive economic development, in line with the Council conclusions on the European Neighborhood Policy of 20 June 2011."

– *Syria*

The Council discussed the situation in Syria.

In light of the continued repression, the Council reinforced the EU's restrictive measures against the Syrian regime, targeting its ability to conduct the brutal repression. For more information, see press release [17895/11](#).

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. "The European Union strongly supports the efforts of the League of Arab States (LAS) to bring about an end to the repression in Syria and provide protection to the civilians by deploying an observer mission on the ground. The EU welcomes the significant decision of the Arab League to impose sanctions against the Syrian regime due to its repeated failure to deliver on its promises and to its refusal to implement the Arab Plan of Action. The EU will continue to support the Arab League's efforts to restore peace and welcomes the commitment by the Arab League to engage with the UNSG to solve this crisis which represents a threat to regional stability.
2. The EU reiterates its condemnation in the strongest terms of the brutal crackdown by the Syrian government which risks taking Syria down a very dangerous path of violence, sectarian clashes and militarization. The EU salutes once more the unwavering courage of those in Syria who are protesting and their willingness to remain committed to non-violence. The EU reaffirms its support for the Syrian people, in their quest for dignity and freedom, to decide the future of their country through peaceful, democratic as well as non sectarian means. President Assad must step aside immediately to allow for a peaceful and democratic transition.
3. The EU is extremely worried about the deteriorating living conditions of the Syrian people in certain localities affected by the unrest, especially in the region of Homs. The Syrian authorities must immediately alleviate the suffering of the population living in these areas and must allow unhindered and sustained access to humanitarian agencies and workers and ensure the functioning of basic and health services.

4. The EU welcomes the resolution on human rights in Syria approved on 22 November in the UN General Assembly's Third Committee and welcomes in particular the Arab support for its adoption. The resolution sends a strong signal of wide and united condemnation of the Syrian regime's systematic abuses and underlines international support for the Arab League. The EU welcomes the publication of the report of the independent international commission of enquiry on the violations of international human rights law in Syria since March 2011. The upcoming Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council on Syria, for which the EU has called, could also contribute to the international efforts to push the Syrian government to end the appalling violence against its population. The EU will continue to press for strong UN action to increase international pressure and urges all members of the UN Security Council to uphold their responsibilities to end the violence in Syria and support the Syrian people in their desire for greater freedoms and political rights.
5. The EU reiterates its strong support to the Syrian people and encourages the Syrian opposition to establish a united platform and to continue to engage with the Arab League towards a successful transition. The EU will continue to actively engage with representative members of the Syrian opposition which adhere to non violence, inclusiveness and democratic values. It welcomes the Syrian National Council's commitments in this regard.
6. In light of the continued repression in Syria, the EU has decided today to place further restrictive measures targeting the regime's ability to conduct its brutal repression. These new measures are related to the energy, financial, banking and trade sectors and include the listing of additional individuals and entities that are involved in the violence or directly supporting the regime. In line with the European Council Conclusions of 23 October, the EU will continue to impose additional and more comprehensive measures against the regime, not the civilian population, as long as the repression continues. The EU will continue to consult closely with the Arab League on this matter and calls on the international community to join its efforts and those of the Arab League to target those responsible for or associated with the violent repression and those who support or benefit from the regime.
7. As soon as President Assad steps aside and a genuine democratic transition begins, the EU is ready to develop a new and ambitious partnership with Syria across all areas of mutual interest, including by mobilizing assistance, and strengthening trade and economic links."

– *Yemen*

The Council discussed the situation in Yemen and adopted the following conclusions:

"The European Union welcomes the signature on 23 November of the agreement for political transition in Yemen and its implementation mechanism. The EU commends the Gulf Cooperation Council for its initiative and its sustained efforts to broker this settlement, in close and constructive cooperation with international partners.

The EU calls now on all parties to deliver in good faith on their commitments to a peaceful and orderly transition, which remains essential for an inclusive, Yemeni-led process of democratic renewal. The challenges facing Yemen are immense. The new transitional government of national unity will need to act as a matter of urgency to tackle the humanitarian, economic and security crises which now confront Yemen.

The EU deeply deplores ongoing violence since the signature on 23 November and reiterates its call upon all actors to immediately stop all violence and provocations and commit constructively to the transition.

The signature of the agreement is a critical first step towards the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2014, unanimously adopted on 21 October 2011. The Resolution sets out the serious concerns of the international community about the situation in Yemen and calls for a peaceful transfer of power. The subsequent reports of the Secretary General, starting with that issued on 28 November, provide an important means for the international community to continue following actively and closely the evolution of the situation.

The EU strongly hopes that the transition process which has just begun will become a solid platform for national reconciliation in Yemen. It should meet the legitimate demands and aspirations of all Yemenis from throughout the country and all parts of Yemeni society, including civic organisations, women and young people.

The EU will do all it can to assist the Yemeni people, notably through urgently needed humanitarian and development assistance. The EU will continue to monitor the situation."

– *EU response to the developments in the Southern neighbourhood*

The Council took stock of progress in implementing the EU's horizontal approach to the transitions in its Southern neighbourhood and adopted the following conclusions:

1. "Reaffirming the strategic importance of the EU neighbourhood, the Council reiterates its commitment to a new partnership with the EU's Southern neighbours, based on mutual accountability and adherence to universal values of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, gender equality, fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, good governance and democratic security reform in the wake of the historic events earlier this year. In this regard, it recalls the European Council Conclusions of 11 March and 23/24 June and the Council Conclusions on European Neighbourhood Policy of 20 June 2011. The EU notes the significant remaining challenges in partner countries and stands ready to use EU mechanisms and instruments to continue supporting them in their efforts towards democracy and prosperity.
2. The EU's response to these developments is based on the new Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity for the South Mediterranean adopted in March 2011, and the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy in May 2011. Based on the principles of differentiation, joint ownership and mutual accountability, the EU is committed to offering more support to those partners who make greater commitments and greater progress towards democratic reform. In particular, the EU is offering its partners closer political association, assistance in economic and social reforms, progressive economic integration with the EU internal market, improved mobility of people and financial support. The EU will withdraw support where regimes have chosen to oppress their people rather than follow the path of reform, and has done so already. In its response to the developments in the Southern Neighbourhood, the EU has worked in close cooperation with key international partners including the UN and Arab League. The EU is ready to explore ways of giving the EU - Arab League dialogue a more visible and engaged format. The Council also welcomes the Deauville Partnership and the G8 support to the countries in democratic transition as well as activities and initiatives of the Community of Democracies.
3. Since these momentous events began, the High Representative and Member States have engaged politically with a wide range of government, opposition and parliamentary interlocutors and with civil society, and will continue to do so. The work of the EU Special Representative for the Southern Mediterranean will help deepen the EU's relationship with the countries of the Southern Mediterranean region and enhance the coordination of the EU's response to the developments in the Southern Neighbourhood.

4. In Tunisia, the EU welcomes the success of the democratic elections of 23 October, which it has supported through training, capacity-building and an EU Electoral Observation Mission. On 28-29 September, the High Representative/Vice President and the Tunisian Prime Minister co-chaired the first meeting of the EU-Tunisia Task Force that brought together governments, institutions and businesses to support Tunisia's democratic transition process through renewed partnership. This successful event will inspire future Task Force meetings with other countries, taking into account the specificity of each partner.
5. The EU welcomes the holding of parliamentary elections in Morocco on 25 November. This is an important step in the ongoing process of democratic reform. The EU notes in particular that the elections were properly organised and conducted in a peaceful atmosphere. The EU looks forward to working with the new government and will continue to support Morocco in implementing reforms in accordance with the aspirations of the Moroccan people.
6. The EU also welcomes the appointment of a Transitional Government in Libya and looks to it to take forward a process of inclusive, democratic transition in accordance with the aspirations of the Libyan people based on a continuing commitment to uphold human rights. In full respect of the principle of Libyan ownership and in cooperation with the UN, the EU is ready to combine all its instruments, including CSDP if appropriate, in order to provide further assistance to the new Libya across a range of sectors, as already set out in the FAC Conclusions of 14 November. In this context, the EU has opened a fully-fledged Delegation in Tripoli on 12 November.
7. The EU has strengthened and substantially stepped up its partnership with and support to civil society in its neighbourhood, particularly in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, including through the launch of the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility. In this regard, the Council underlines the importance of freedom of expression and association. The Council notes with satisfaction the useful work of the Anna Lindh Foundation and the progress achieved on mechanisms for cooperation between the EU and the Council of Europe to promote democracy in the Southern Neighbourhood.
8. The Council stresses the key role that women have played in these developments in the Southern Neighbourhood and underlines that women's rights, gender equality and women's participation in the political process are essential components of a democratic society and important for inclusive economic development.

9. As part of the decision of the EU to step up its financial engagement towards its Neighbourhood, the EU SPRING package of €350 million has been adopted in September 2011. It provides additional funding for Southern neighbours undergoing transition to strengthen their emerging democratic institutions, to promote deep and sustainable democracy and to improve inclusive growth and job creation. The Council welcomes the fact that the EIB lending mandate for the Southern Neighbourhood has been increased by €1 billion and that the EBRD has made good progress towards extending the scope of its operations to some Southern partners. The Council stresses the importance of a coordinated and comprehensive approach of the EIB, the EBRD and other international partners in supporting the Southern Neighbourhood.
10. In line with the ENP conclusions of 20 June 2011, the Council welcomes the Commission's proposal for negotiating directives for Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, which aim at the progressive integration of the economies of these partners into the EU single market and at enhancing economic governance and improving substantially market access opportunities in an asymmetrical way. It looks forward to the start of these negotiations as soon as the necessary preparatory work is completed. Steps have also been taken to re-launch ongoing trade liberalisation negotiations, and the regional convention on PanEuromediterranean Rules of Origin has been opened for signature, which opens the door to the rapid revision of PanEuroMed Rules of Origin.
11. The Council also underlines the importance of further strengthening cooperation with partners to improve employment through better education, to promote industrial cooperation, strengthen infrastructure connections and improve the business climate, which will help small and medium-sized companies, leading to job creation. Other important areas of cooperation are social inclusion, children's rights and gender issues, innovation and development, education and training, and environmental, climate and energy issues. In this context, it reaffirms its commitment to regional cooperation, including through continued support to the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean in the rapid launch of concrete regional projects bringing tangible benefits to the people of the region.
12. The Council welcomes the launch of Dialogues on Migration, Mobility and Security with Tunisia and Morocco, which should lead to the conclusion of mobility partnerships. Such partnerships will foster people-to-people contacts and further promote mutual understanding as well as business contacts. The Council reaffirms its commitment to utilise fully the potential of the EU Visa Code facilitating legitimate travel and will consider to launch, on a case by case basis, negotiations on readmission and visa facilitation agreements with Southern partners. EU engagement will depend inter alia on effective cooperation against illegal migration including on readmission and border management. The Council also welcomes a major expansion of youth scholarships and exchanges.
13. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to continue their efforts for the effective implementation of the EU's response to the developments in the Southern Neighbourhood and looks forward to their report, in April 2012 on the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2011."



**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Export controls on military technology and equipment**

The Council took note of the thirteenth annual report according to article 8(2) of Council common position 2008/944 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment.

**EU-Georgia Cooperation Council**

The Council took note of preparations with a view to the twelfth meeting of the EU-Georgia Cooperation Council, held in Brussels on 1 December 2011.

**European Endowment for Democracy**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"Recalling its conclusions of 20 June on the proposal to create a European Endowment for Democracy, the Council welcomes the preparatory work done notably by the EEAS and the Commission and it takes note of the submitted draft declaration. The Council looks forward to continuing the work swiftly and invites Coreper to steer the process towards the establishment of the European Endowment for Democracy."

**Relations with Russia**

The Council took note of progress in the preparations for the EU-Russia summit, to be held in Brussels on 14-15 December 2011.

**COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY**

**EU police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The Council prolonged the European Union police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina for a further six months until 30 June 2012. At the same time, it transferred certain tasks of the mission to the EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**EDA - Cooperation with the Swiss Confederation**

The Council approved a framework for cooperation between the European Defence Agency and the Federal Department of Defence of the Swiss Confederation, with a view to its conclusion by the EDA Steering Board. The Swiss Department of Defence and the European Defence Agency can accordingly collaborate on research and technology and armaments cooperation at project and programme level. The framework sets out procedures for mutual consultation as well as for Swiss participation in ad hoc programmes and projects of the European Defence Agency.

**European Defence Agency report**

The Council took note of a report from the head of the European Defence Agency.

**Guidelines for the European Defence Agency**

The Council approved guidelines for the work of the European Defence Agency in 2012.

**EU military capabilities**

The Council took note of the single progress report on the development of EU military capabilities for the second semester of 2011 and approved its transmission to NATO for information purposes.

**2011 report on CSDP and CSDP-related training**

The Council took note of the 2011 comprehensive annual report on the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and CSDP-related training.