



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 22 April 2013

8691/13

**COASI 55
ASIE 14
PESC 436
COHOM 68
COPS 161
DEVGEN 97
COHAFA 47**

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Council Conclusions on Myanmar/Burma

At its meeting on 22 April 2013, the Council adopted the Council Conclusions set out in the Annex to this note.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

on

Myanmar/Burma

1. The European Union has watched and supported the remarkable process of reform in Myanmar/Burma. It welcomes the developments towards democracy, a strong Parliament, freedom of expression, and the government's efforts against corruption, as well as the efforts towards the release of remaining political prisoners.
2. The EU is willing to open a new chapter in its relations with Myanmar/Burma building a lasting partnership and to promote closer engagement with the country as a whole. In response to the changes that have taken place and in the expectation that they will continue, the Council has decided to lift all sanctions with the exception of the embargo on arms which will remain in place.
3. The EU congratulates the government of Myanmar/Burma on what has been achieved, but is conscious that there are still significant challenges to be addressed. It looks forward to working in partnership with the government, by establishing a regular political dialogue involving all concerned stakeholders:
 - To achieve sustainable peace in Myanmar/Burma by addressing long-standing differences in an inclusive way, and in particular calling for an end of hostilities in Kachin State;
 - To consolidate the democratic achievements so far and to move further towards full transition; in this regard, the EU is ready to share with Myanmar/Burma the recent experience on political transition and democratisation in some of its Member States;

- To strengthen human rights and the rule of law including through enhanced cooperation with the UN, in particular to ensure the protection of all minorities; to this end, the EU will explore ways to promote a regular human rights dialogue with Myanmar/Burma;
- To establish Myanmar/Burma as an active and respected member of the international community, by adhering to international agreements, including in relation to human rights, land mines, non-proliferation and disarmament, particularly supporting President U Thein Sein commitments to comply with the relevant UNSC resolutions;
- To encourage responsible trade and investment while promoting transparency and environmental protection. Furthermore, a swift reinstatement of the Generalized Scheme of Preferences to Myanmar/Burma will contribute to the EU's policy of supporting the economic reforms. As a next step, the EU will explore the feasibility of a bilateral investment agreement;
- To promote inclusive and sustainable growth, as well as good governance to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in line with the government's plans. The task is now to ensure that reforms are translated to economic benefits for ordinary people. The EU will maintain increased levels of development assistance, in coordination with other donors.

4. The EU stands ready to cooperate with Myanmar/Burma with regard to the following complex challenges while underlining its concerns on:

- The need to unconditionally release the remaining political prisoners, while noting with satisfaction the creation of a review mechanism and looking forward to the early completion of its work;

- The need to deal with inter-communal violence. The EU welcomes President U Thein Sein promise that all perpetrators of violence will be prosecuted, and his commitment to a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-faith society which should include addressing the root causes of the violence. In this context, the EU is studying the possibility of assisting the reform of the police service in Myanmar/Burma, in partnership with all appropriate stakeholders, in particular with the country's Parliament;
 - The need for urgent action to deal with humanitarian risks for all displaced people in the Rakhine State. At the same time, the government should continue to pursue and implement durable solutions to the underlying causes of the tensions that include addressing the status of the Rohingya;
 - The need for unhindered and full access for humanitarian and development aid workers to all communities affected by conflict and sectarian violence.
5. Recognising that the period leading to general elections in 2015 is critical for the country's overall transition, the Council underlines the importance of coordination and coherence in the EU's response. Consequently, building on the elements above, as well as on its conclusions in April 2012, the Council invites the High Representative/Vice President to discuss and propose a comprehensive framework with priorities for the EU's policy and support to the ongoing reforms for the next three years. Furthermore, the Council encourages relevant authorities in Member States and EU institutions to proceed without delay to joint programming of development aid for Myanmar/Burma while respecting the existing harmonisation efforts.
6. The EU will use all means and mechanisms at its disposal to support Myanmar/Burma's political, economic and social transition and in this context welcomes the initiative of a Task Force to be launched later in the year, building on the Joint Statement agreed on 5 March 2013 during the visit of President U Thein Sein to Brussels.
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