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## OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3780th Council meeting

### Foreign Affairs

Brussels, 7 December 2020

President **Josep Borrell**  
EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security  
Policy

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- 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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## **ITEMS DEBATED**

### **Current affairs**

High Representative Josep Borrell briefed ministers on the legislative elections that took place on 6 December 2020 in Venezuela, which the EU considered not to be free, fair or democratic. The High Representative stressed that the EU, Latin American partners in the International Contact Group and other stakeholders should come together to help Venezuelans try to find a democratic, peaceful solution.

[Venezuela: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the elections for the National Assembly](#)

Ministers were informed about the situation in Georgia, where the majority and opposition parties must continue their efforts to find a way forward following the parliamentary elections.

The Council was updated on the latest developments relating to Turkey ahead of the European Council on 10-11 December. The High Representative reported that there had been no sign of a fundamental change of direction on the part of Turkey, and informed ministers that the European Council would assess how Turkey had responded to the EU's offer of a constructive agenda and dialogue.

Ministers reviewed the situation in Belarus, where the authorities' acts of repression against the population continue. They also assessed the latest developments in Ethiopia, in relation to which the High Representative emphasised that a return to dialogue and a peaceful and sustainable settlement of the conflict were essential, and that the EU strongly supported the African Union's initiative in this regard.

### **Transatlantic relations**

Following an initial exchange of views held during the video conference of foreign affairs ministers on 19 November, the Council discussed how to reinvigorate the strategic partnership with the United States and engage with the new administration taking office in January 2021. Ministers stressed that a strong, reciprocal and far-sighted partnership should become the backbone of a renewed global alliance between the EU and the US.

The Council adopted conclusions on EU-US relations on the basis of this discussion.

[Council conclusions on European Union – United States relations](#)

## **Strategic autonomy**

The Council had an exchange of views on how to improve and operationalise the EU's strategic autonomy from a foreign and security policy point of view. Ministers were invited in particular to identify concrete political initiatives and projects that could help strengthen the EU's capacity to act and to have an impact globally.

During the debate, it was emphasised that the discussion on strategic autonomy goes hand in hand with and complements efforts to increase the EU's resilience and strengthen multilateral engagement.

## **Other business**

### – *National security law imposed on Hong Kong*

The Council reviewed the implementation of the national security law imposed on Hong Kong on 30 June 2020 and noted that the political situation had deteriorated, with political pluralism and freedom of opinion having been severely affected. The EU will continue to implement the Council conclusions expressing political support for Hong Kong's autonomy under the 'one country, two systems' principle, and, if necessary, could consider further measures at a later stage.

### – *Global human rights sanctions regime*

Ahead of the international Human Rights Day on 10 December, the Council adopted a decision and a regulation establishing a global human rights sanctions regime that will allow the EU to target individuals, entities and bodies responsible for, involved in, or associated with serious human rights violations and abuses worldwide, irrespective of where they occur.

### [EU adopts a global human rights sanctions regime](#)

### – *Lebanon*

The Council adopted [conclusions on Lebanon](#).

### – *–2021 Civilian CSDP Compact*

The Council adopted conclusions on the [2021 Civilian CSDP Compact](#) reaffirming its commitment to strengthening the civilian arm of the Common Security and Defence Policy.

### – *EU peace mediation*

The Council adopted [conclusions on EU peace mediation](#).

## **OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

### **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

#### **Report on the EDA's activities in 2020**

The Council endorsed the European Defence Agency's report for 2020. The report summarises the key deliverables and future priorities for the development of EU military capability, namely the EU battle tank.

#### **Informal video conference of members of the EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Council**

The EU adopted its position on the EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Council due to take place on 17 December 2020. EU cooperation with Uzbekistan focuses mainly on rural development and the agriculture sector, including horticulture, irrigation, water management, livestock and professional education. The last Cooperation Council took stock of the developments that had been seen in relations between the EU and Uzbekistan over the previous year, and noted the intensity of contact at all levels.

[Delegation of the European Union to Uzbekistan](#)

#### **Conclusions on Lebanon**

The Council approved conclusions on recovery and reforms in Lebanon.

For more details, see the [press release](#).

#### **Informal video conference of members of the EU-Algeria Association Council**

The EU adopted its position on the EU-Algeria Association Council due to take place on 7 December 2020. Leaders are expected to discuss regional cooperation and the prevention of and fight against terrorism and radicalisation.

[Delegation of the European Union to Algeria](#)

#### **Conclusions on the Civilian CSDP Compact**

The Council approved conclusions on the Civilian CSDP Compact.

For more details, see the [press release](#).

## **Conclusions on EU peace mediation**

The Council approved conclusions on EU peace mediation in which it reaffirms its support for peace mediation as a key tool for both conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding when addressing risks to peace under the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

## **Council decision and regulation concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses**

The Council approved a new EU human rights sanctions regime. The framework will allow the EU to list individuals, entities and bodies (state and non-state) for committing gross and serious violations of human rights, irrespective of where they occurred.

For more details, see the [press release](#).

## **EU POSITIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS**

### **EU position regarding amendments to the interim partnership agreement with the Pacific States further to the accession of Samoa and Solomon Islands**

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken, on behalf of the EU, in the trade committee established under the interim partnership agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part, as regards the amendment to be made to the agreement to take account of the accession of the Independent State of Samoa and of Solomon Islands ([11629/20](#) and [11630/20](#)).

### **EU position regarding the amendment of certain provisions of protocol II (rules of origin) to the interim partnership agreement with the Pacific States**

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the EU in the trade committee established under the interim partnership agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part, as regards the amendment of certain provisions of protocol II concerning the definition of the concept of ‘originating products’ and methods of administrative cooperation ([10898/20](#) and [10899/20](#)).

**EU position regarding the establishment of the rules of procedure of the trade and special committees established under the interim partnership agreement with the Pacific States**

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the EU within the trade committee established under the interim partnership agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part, as regards the establishment of the rules of procedure of the trade committee and the rules of procedure of the special committees ([11958/20](#) and [11960/20](#)).

**AGRICULTURE**

**Listing co-formulants which are not accepted for inclusion in plant protection products**

The Council decided, by written procedure, not to oppose the adoption of a Commission Regulation amending Annex III to Regulation (EC) 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council listing co-formulants which are not accepted for inclusion in plant protection products ([12233/20](#) + [ADD1](#), [12688/20](#)).

