

**ASSOCIATION  
BETWEEN  
THE EUROPEAN UNION  
AND EGYPT**

**The Association Council**

**Brussels, 20 November 2018  
(OR. en)**

**UE-EG 2801/18**

**MINUTES**

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Subject: 7th meeting of the EU-Egypt Association Council - Minutes  
25 July 2017  
Brussels

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The **Association Council between the EU and Egypt** held its seventh session on 25 July 2017 in Brussels.

This seventh session was co-chaired by Ms. Federica MOGHERINI the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and H.E. Sameh SHOUKRY, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The European Commission was represented by Commissioner Mr Johannes HAHN.

### **OPENING REMARKS**

Ms. MOGHERINI opened the meeting by welcoming Minister Shoukry and affirming that Egypt is a key partner for the EU, a partner that shares similar interests and whose sustainable stability and development is key for all Egyptians, for the region and for the EU. The seventh Association Council will be an opportunity to take stock of the strategic EU-Egypt partnership in an open, constructive and frank discussion.

Commissioner HAHN welcomed the Egyptian delegation and considered the Association Council an opportunity to give a new impetus to bilateral relations and engage more strongly on issues of common interest. He recalled the focus of recent cooperation to support Egypt's economic, social and political development to improve the prospects of its people and contribute to the stabilization and long-term prosperity of the country. This support provided by the EU together with its Member States has addressed a wide range of areas including education, health, energy, transport, environment, climate action, information society, research and innovation.

H.E. Sameh SHOUKRY, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, thanked for the holding of the session that is considered as an important progress in bilateral relations by providing a unique opportunity for Egypt and the EU to work together with a view to achieving mutual objectives of stability, security and prosperity for peoples in Egypt, the Middle East and in the European Union.

He referred to the recent improvement of bilateral relations, which resulted in the endorsement of the Egypt-EU partnership priorities 2017-20, in light of the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), based on co-ownership and jointly identified cooperation areas as well as the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt's vision 2030 (SDS). In this context, he specially commended Commissioner HAHN's leadership in crafting the ENP's new approach. He stated that Egypt will continue to work towards translating the partnership priorities into an effective package of programmes to build solid cooperation with the EU, with whom Egypt has strong historical, political, economic and cultural ties, besides the common interests and shared values. Both entities are two key players in the south of the Mediterranean that need to pool efforts to champion the cause of restoring stability and security in the area, which is essential for the emergence of a new strategic order in the Middle East to fulfil the aspiration of its peoples and protect the diverse societies while extending bridges of understanding and cooperation with partners in the geographic vicinity. The Minister recalled the unprecedented developments that have occurred in Egypt since the last Association Council, in 2010, and evoked events from January 2011 and June 2013, when the Egyptian people started the process of democratic transition leading to the adoption of a new Constitution, presidential and parliamentary elections and the successful conclusion of a transitional roadmap in 2015, thus enabling Egypt to implement a comprehensive political and socio-economic reform programme. The economic reform that addresses some structural difficulties in Egypt was designed in close cooperation with the IMF, and, therefore, entails a transition period of hardship. However, the Egyptian people continue to set a remarkable example of resilience and determination to build a better country for young generations. At this crucial juncture, the steadfast support from partners, namely the EU's support to Egypt's economic and social development process, remains a key element for its success, and stressed the importance of the EU's appreciation of the challenges of the transitional period, including economic and security challenges, towards building a democratic, civil and inclusive state.

Ms. MOGHERINI then gave the floor to Member States present in the meeting.

Mr. Pierre SELLAL, the Permanent Representative of France, welcomed the timing of the Association Council, which demonstrates the strategic importance of Egypt to the EU and its Member States and makes visible the shared determination to have a mutually beneficial partnership based on common interests and mutual benefits. He underlined four areas where Egypt has an important role: in the political field, Egypt has deployed great effort as a major actor and partner in the region to find a durable solution in Libya and facilitate dialogue among stakeholders, and, in the same way, France has contributed by organising consultations under the aegis of the UN Special Representative and also with General Haftar and PM Sarraj. On the economic front, Europe should remain a major partner and support for all the reforms that have been undertaken. On migration, a high level in-depth dialogue on migration is important, since Africa has an imminent role to play and there is a need to embark on further joint projects to tackle the root causes of migration and encourage development in the countries of origin. Finally, Europe and Egypt are hit by terrorism and extremism and there is a need to develop further cooperation to combat terrorism and violent extremism without disregarding respect for human rights and the protection of civil society's freedom for action.

Mr. Andreas PAPASTAVROU, the Permanent Representative of Greece, considered the Association Council a fundamental step towards strengthening the EU-Egypt relations and enhancing the mutually beneficial and constructive cooperation in all fields of common interest. He considered Egypt one of the main pillars of stability and security in the Arab world and the Horn of Africa due to its history, size and strategic importance, as well as to its overall influence in the region. Egypt has a key role in major international regional crises, such as the Middle East Peace Process MEPP, Syria or Libya, as demonstrated through its efforts in the mediation for stability in the Middle East and North Africa region. He highlighted the need for local ownership and a consensus-based approach in all initiatives promoting cooperation among the countries of the Nile River Basin and fully supported Egypt's constructive engagement. He deplored the threats and challenges to the stability and security in Egypt resulting from terrorism, as well as other destabilising activities, which have serious implications for the population, the State institutions and the country's economy. He underscored deep appreciation for Egypt's contribution in hosting refugees and its efforts to prevent illegal migration flows, and the smuggling and trafficking of human beings. He reiterated the high added value of strong relations and cooperation to achieve common strategic goals for the EU and Egypt.

Ms. Nektaria KAKOUTSI, acting PSC ambassador of Cyprus, welcomed the holding of the Association Council and considered it a major step contributing to construct a frank dialogue and strengthen the relationship between the EU and Egypt. She looked forward to a more structured cooperation between the EU and Egypt, a reliable partner engaged in answering the many challenges in the region, such as the Libya crisis, the Middle East peace process, migration issues and counterterrorism, as well as its role in the African Union or as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. On behalf of Cyprus, she expressed full support to Egypt's government determination to secure stability and security and recalled attempts to destabilize the country and subvert State institutions. She welcomed the decision of President el-Sisi to release prisoners in an effort to promote reconciliation in the Egyptian society, the government's initiatives to engage with the civil society, especially youth, and the approval of the new Church Law which modernises the functioning of churches in the country.

Mr Manuel ACERETE, PSC Ambassador of Spain, recalled the importance of EU-Egypt relations supporting the Association Council, which is expected to enhance the cooperation through the adoption of Partnership Priorities that will enable strengthening the relations in all the identified areas. He mentioned Egypt's prominence in the EU's neighbourhood, as well as its key role in the region that has been shattered by crises in Libya, Syria and the Middle East. He affirmed the EU's willingness to convey to Egypt a message of confidence and support to achieve peace, stability and prosperity in the region. He expressed some particular concerns about the country's domestic difficulties and called upon the EU to support Egypt in overcoming the socio-economic and security challenges, the constant threat of terrorism, the ongoing democratic process and the challenge of migration, among others. He expressed Spain's appreciation regarding Egypt's actions to tackle migration and called for a positive bilateral dialogue on this issue.

Mr Rui VINHAS, PSC ambassador of Portugal affirmed that Portugal considered Egypt to be a strategic partner of the EU playing a very important role in promoting regional stability. The EU and Egypt should work in tandem to address the many challenges of the common neighbourhood, such as the situation in Libya and the Middle East peace process. Egypt is also a key partner of Portugal at the bilateral level. He encouraged the reinforcement of EU-Egypt engagement and welcomed the increasing dialogue and the revival of the Association Agreement structures, as well as the full relaunch of bilateral cooperation and the formal adoption of the new partnership priorities. He acknowledged the serious security challenge that Egypt is facing and underlined the EU's readiness to cooperate with Egypt in the fight against terrorism and other security issues, which will also contribute to bolster safety of European populations. Furthermore, he stressed that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms helps to foster stability and a vibrant civil society, therefore, promotion of political dialogue and cooperation would solve any divergences on this issue. Portugal welcomed the bold economic reform plan that was recently launched by the Egyptian leadership. Finally, the Ambassador reiterated that the EU must resolutely support the Egyptian government's efforts to strengthening the national economy and respond to the serious challenges it faces, namely integrating the growing youth into the labour market.

**1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda of the meeting, as set out in doc. UE-EG 2803/17 was adopted.

**2. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SIXTH EU-EGYPT ASSOCIATION COUNCIL  
(LUXEMBOURG, 27 APRIL 2010/DOC. EU-EG 2802/17)**

The Association Council took note of the draft minutes of the previous meeting held in Luxembourg on 27 April 2010, as set out in doc. 2802/17.

### **3. ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATION FOR PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES**

The Recommendation No 1/2017 of the EU-Egypt Association Council agreeing the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities for 2017-2020 was adopted, as set out in doc. UE-EG 2801/17.

H.E. Minister SHOUKRY, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, commended the efforts undertaken by both delegations and highlighted Egypt's full commitment and endorsement of the work done. He acknowledged the arduous job done, in light of the difficult regional prospects, but recalled that Egypt sought to benefit from the EU's experience and knowledge.

Ms. MOGHERINI stressed that Egypt is a key partner for the EU and that the country's sustainable stability and development is fundamental not only for Egyptians but for the whole region and the EU. The adoption of the new EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities will allow both parties to move forward towards a stronger and more strategic engagement in all priority areas, including socio-economic reforms, energy, trade, research, governance, human rights, counterterrorism, migration, regional issues or even divisive issues. In any case, Egypt's growth and stability to the benefit of its people should be the first and foremost output of the partnership. She expressed appreciation for Egypt's Constitution and functioning elected House of Representatives and commended Egypt's active diplomatic role, including at the UN Security Council and in the African Union Peace and Security Council.

Commissioner HAHN underlined the strategic importance of Egypt to the EU and recalled that Member States' and institutions' financial support provided to the country in different forms amounted to more than 11 billion euros. This amount encompasses all the financial sources of investments, loans and assistance from the EU, its Member States and the European financing institutions, not including the 1/3 share of the IMF loan also provided by the EU. Beyond these, assistance to sectoral cooperation, for instance on energy, is also supporting the country's efforts to promote economic development and handle the social and economic implications of the reforms. The Association Council would allow to proceed with the cooperation agenda, including with the expected adoption of the Single Support Framework. In line with the Partnership Priorities, three main areas of cooperation will be: economic modernisation, energy and environment; social development and social protection; governance, enhanced stability and a modern democratic state. Additionally and, at Egypt's request, an envelope for capacity-building measures aiming at funding the public administration reform, enhancing its regulatory framework and contributing to the introduction of e-services had been proposed. Closely linked to these capacity-building measures, a specific provision for support to civil society is being considered. Concerns have been raised on the implementation of the new NGO law due to the impact it may have on future cooperation, since a large part of EU's assistance is implemented on the ground by civil society organisations. In 2017, cooperation should focus on three areas: inclusive growth and job creation by, supporting SMEs' access to finance, and institutional and regulatory reform; support to the Egyptian Parliament; and support to the national population strategy. Commissioner HAHN showed his appreciation for Egypt's high level support to EU activities and for H.E. Prime Minister Sherif Ismail's personal involvement in the area of population growth.

H.E. Minister SHOUKRY reacted to the Commissioner's intervention by reassuring that Egypt highly values the participation of NGOs in civil society and clarified that the new NGO law is intended to set up the appropriate regulatory framework due to previous years' instability without applying any restrictions to civil society's activities.

#### **4. PROSPECTS FOR ENHANCED DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NEW EU-EGYPT PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES**

##### - Egypt's sustainable modern economy and social development

Commissioner HAHN opened the topic by referring to the fact that Egypt's prosperity is important for regional stability and a major interest for the EU and its MS. The Economic Reform Programme with the IMF had entailed a number of ambitious and tough changes, for society at large, and should be seen as an opportunity to restore macroeconomic stability and ensure sustainable growth. On education and culture, Egypt has a good profile in innovation and skills and the EU is keen to help 700 000 young men and women to get the best education to match the needs of the job market in Egypt. Egyptian universities are participating in Erasmus+, with almost 1 000 students, volunteers and youth workers and researchers collaborating on EU initiatives that address societal challenges, foster economic growth and boost excellence in science, including through Horizon 2020. PRIMA is an excellent model on how research and innovation can contribute to tackling issues of shared concern in the Mediterranean area, for example environmental pressure, climate change mitigation and water issues, which are highly relevant to the agro-food sector and other areas of employment. On water resources management, the EU has 15 ongoing programmes with an overall contribution of 425 million euros. The partnership on energy is of mutual interest, as confirmed by ongoing work to revise the MOU on the Strategic Partnership on Energy, which could possibly be concluded in autumn 2017. The EU has supported the preparation of Egypt's energy strategy up to 2035 to solve the challenges related to increasing energy demand, and additionally, with the new gas discoveries in the region, there is an opportunity for Egypt to become a gas hub channelling gas to Europe. Perspectives for developing renewable energy are also excellent regarding solar and wind energy. The EU applauds the Egyptian government's decision to set a market based tariff system to manage increasing demand and enable development of renewables. The EU is supporting projects also in combination with European financing institutions, namely the German KfW, the French AFD, EIB and EBRD for the construction of photovoltaic farms and concentrated solar power generation plants in various sites in the country. The energy efficiency target of 20% by 2022 is commended and the EU is willing to increase cooperation in this regard in order to meet this target. On trade, the EU remains ready to support Egypt to undertake reforms in priority areas aiming to attract investment, improve competitiveness and help increase exports.

Moreover, the EU is eager to explore with Egypt ways to deepen trade relations either through negotiations on a DCFTA or through other approaches. The EU will continue to support Egypt in its efforts to reduce the trade deficit and boost Egypt's competitiveness and, in this regard, both sides should avoid adopting unnecessary trade barriers.

H.E. Minister SHOUKRY confirmed that, although the reform programme is harsh for the people at its first stage, it remains crucial for the future growth of the economy and the restructuring of the country's internal market. Therefore, commitment to this purpose is not just from the government but it is also taken by the Egyptian people that are commended for their ability and resilience to shoulder this burden. The government is doing its utmost to restrict government finances and limit the budget deficit but the economic track cannot be disassociated from the political track. The Egyptian people's support is a clear recognition of the confidence placed in the current leadership after having experienced the instability of the previous 7 years. There is a commitment to continue the internal reforms undertaken also on the basis of a close cooperation with Europe, and with a view to attracting European investment and support. Consequently, Egypt looks forward to enhancing and exploring new avenues of cooperation with the EU within their Association Agreement, not forgetting the bilateral track of cooperation with individual Member States of the EU.

- Enhanced dialogue and cooperation on migration and on Counterterrorism/security

Commissioner HAHN expressed appreciation for the cooperation with Egypt on migration and counterterrorism issues and commended efforts already undertaken by Egypt to prevent irregular departure from its coasts, host a huge number of refugees and contribute to the implementation of the Valetta Action Plan and the Khartoum Process. The EU emphasised that Egyptian involvement in Sea Horse would be of great benefit to other countries in the region and that it would also welcome the appointment of an operational contact point for Operation Sophia. He referred to the new migration dialogue as an important channel to discuss concrete measures, and expressed hope to continue on the basis of the agreed Terms of Reference, also in order to provide the framework for the implementation of the 60 million euros programme to be funded by the EU Trust Fund.

H.E. SHOUKRY affirmed that counterterrorism and terrorism, in general, have an impact on all societies, including Egypt and its population, which has suffered both in terms of loss of life or attempts to endanger the national unity and stability by specifically targeting the Christian citizens. Nevertheless, solidarity among all Egyptians has been reinforced through the support shown by all the population towards their brotherly Christians. In his regard, the fight against terrorism should be global and comprehensive and include all radical organisations which promote the terror ideology and the political objective of establishing the presumed Islamic Caliphate. There is a clear need to deal with all terrorist organisations, the radicalisation phenomenon, their finances, their recruitment tools and also address the issue of the religious aspect of terrorism. This is one of the main goals of President el-Sisi, who has had the courage to publicly call for reforming the religious discourse despite severe criticism from fundamentalists. On the other hand, it is also deemed necessary to set a clear definition between what constitutes freedom of expression and what is incitement, hate speech or glorification of terrorism. Egypt is looking forward to establishing the necessary legal mechanisms to address the issue of media broadcasts operating from Europe and has provided evidence to the EU indicating that stations are violating EU laws and, hopefully, this phenomenon should be dealt with effectively.

On migration, Egypt seeks a comprehensive approach to address the issues of countries of origin, transit and destination in an equal manner with a focus on providing economic support for countries of origin and transit. Egypt is currently hosting 5 million refugees: 500 000 Iraqis, 400 000 Syrians and Africans, including, Eritreans, Sudanese, Ethiopians, as well as Yemenis etc. These refugees are not placed in camps but are integrated in society, enjoying the same subsidy schemes as the Egyptians, thus increasing the burden on the national budget. Egypt has also expanded its navy surveillance and monitoring capacities to prevent illegal migration flows from the country's seashore, however, this also implies a huge cost in terms of money and human resources. From the humanitarian perspective, the loss of life at sea as well as the loss of life in the Libyan desert recently, clearly indicate the need for further action and Egypt is willing to do more in cooperation with the EU.

Ms. MOGHERINI then addressed the topic of a modern democratic state. She started by recalling that the Partnership Priorities reflect a common understanding of stability and democracy and recognised that both in the EU and Egypt the quality of governance and the human rights situation can always be improved. The EU acknowledged the serious challenges faced by Egypt, namely the terrorist threats to the country's stability and security. However, developments in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Egypt have created public pressure in what concerns the matter of the NGO law, the developments in the so-called "foreign funding case", as well as the nation-wide state of emergency. Even though the EU has recognised that Egypt has an excellent Constitution with robust provisions on human rights and fundamental freedoms, these provisions must be implemented in national legislation in line with Egypt's international commitments. In this regard, the EU stands ready to support Egypt, as agreed in the just adopted EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities, and to continue providing financial assistance through the civil society organisations on the ground.

H.E. Minister SHOUKRY reaffirmed Egypt's commitment to the democratic reform process, good governance, accountability and the separation of powers. Egypt's Constitution is well endowed with the necessary checks and balances and basic principles of democratic development. However, he recalled that, in this ongoing process, the impact of socio-economic challenges and the effect of cultural and historical perspective also play a role. On the issues of human rights and the NGO law, the standards and values are unified both in Europe and in Egypt; the only difference could be related to their application which is not devoid of the associated circumstances, economic conditions, education or provision of services to the population. Moreover, the individuals' confidence in the protection and promotion of human rights and the application of democratic principles is an important indicator that should not be ignored because of the opposition by the more vocal demonstrations by certain segments of human rights advocates. Conversely, public statements, particularly in multinational for a, and unsubstantiated allegations, have created considerable misunderstanding between the two sides, and proved counterproductive. Egypt strongly believes that such issues should be dealt with through existing bilateral mechanisms without going to public sphere so that the relationship is mutually protected from unnecessary external pressures. Another topic of great importance to Egypt is the adoption of the programme for transboundary water resources in the Nile Basin (NBI), an initiative that takes non-consensual decisions that have a detrimental impact on the potential rights of 100 million Egyptian inhabitants who are downstream on the Nile.

Furthermore, the path it chose to take contradicts international law when it relates to the need for consensus on transboundary water rights or when it is associated with prior notification. These principles have not been applied in the context of the NBI since the adoption of the Comprehensive Framework Agreement which led to Egypt's suspension of its participation in the technical activities of this initiative. Egypt has tried to show flexibility and engage in a dialogue with other riparian countries, but these fundamental principles of international law cannot be superseded. Egypt hopes that a way will be found to take into account all parties' interests and achieve progress for both sides. In this regard, the letter from the High Representative and the subsequent attachment might serve as a way to alleviate some concerns in case it could incorporate a clear indication on the principles that the EU would apply, even if not through the mechanisms of the NBI, but through its partnership with Egypt.

Ms. MOGHERINI confirmed that the EU shares the same views on the fact that the Nile waters should be dealt with in accordance with the existing international norms for transboundary water management. She noted the importance of the issue to Egypt; therefore considerable efforts and resources over the years have been devoted to try to support the Nile Basin Initiative as the existing body for transboundary water management of the Nile and a platform for building trust among all the riparian states. She underlined that, although the EU is well aware of the differences of views amongst the NBI members, the EU is neutral on this issue. The EU programme is not intended to influence the discussion among NBI members, and is open for full participation of Egypt, both inside and outside of the NBI, and the EU will chair its advisory committee to guarantee that all riparian states, and especially Egypt, are involved in its implementation.

H.E. Minister SHOUKRY observed that the prospect of the EU's implementation of a programme to a mechanism, which is fundamentally deficient because of its non-embracement of all of the Nile Basin countries, is difficult to understand. On this difficult topic, he concluded that there is room to find a way to alleviate relevant concerns, therefore discussions should continue with a view to finding a possible solution.

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

Ms. MOGHERINI thanked for the fruitful discussion and concluded by reiterating that this session represented a very important step towards setting the basis for a new phase of the EU-Egypt partnership. She recalled the immense work behind the agreement on the Partnership Priorities, which represent the beginning of a new way of working together in the fields where cooperation comes naturally and where it is deemed strategic from both sides. She thanked the Minister and the entire delegation for their presence in Brussels, and affirmed that she looks forward to continuing the work on numerous files of common interest.

### **5. POLITICAL DIALOGUE ON REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES**

*This point was treated in the informal part of the Association Council.*

### **6. A.O.B**

*No issue was raised under this item of the agenda.*

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ASSOCIATION  
BETWEEN  
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AND EGYPT  

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The Association Council

Brussels, 24 July 2017  
(OR. en)

UE-EG 2803/17

**NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Seventh EU-Egypt Association Council

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**I. PLENARY SESSION**

1. Adoption of the agenda of the 7th EU-Egypt Association Council
2. Adoption of the minutes of the 6th EU-Egypt Association Council
3. Adoption of the Recommendation of the EU-Egypt Association Council agreeing the EU-Egypt Partnership priorities 2017-2020
4. Prospects for enhanced dialogue and cooperation in the framework of the new EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities

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**DELEGATION OF EGYPT**

**Head of Delegation**

**His Excellency Sameh SHOUKRY**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt

**Ambassador Ihab TALAAT NASR**, Assistant FM for European Affairs

**Ambassador Raouf SAAD**, Secretary General of the Coordinating Secretariat for the implementation of the Association Agreement between Egypt and the EU

**Ambassador Ehab FAWZY**, Ambassador of Egypt in Brussels

**Minister Plenipotentiary Amr El-SHERBINI**, DCM, Embassy of Egypt, Brussels

**Counsellor Ahmed ABU ZIED**, Spokesperson of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry

**Counsellor Yahya AHMED**, Embassy of Egypt, Head of the Trade section

**Second Secretary Ahmed MONIB**, Embassy of Egypt

**Third Secretary Hoda El-ENGBAWY**, Cabinet of the FM (Europe Desk)

**DELEGATION OF THE EU**

**Federica MOGHERINI**, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy\*

**Johannes HAHN**, Commissioner European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations\*

**Oliver RENTSCHLER**, Deputy Head of Cabinet Mogherini\*

**Sabrina BELLOSI**, Member of cabinet Mogherini\*

**Maja KOCIJANČIČ**, HRVP spokesperson

**Emma UDWIN**, Member of cabinet Hahn\*

**Nick WESTCOTT**, Managing Director EEAS\*

**Michael KÖHLER**, Director DG NEAR\*

**Ivan SURKOS**, Head of Delegation of EU to Egypt\*

**Sibylle BIKAR**, Deputy Head of Division EEAS

**Fabienne BESSONNE**, Head of Sector DG NEAR

**Maria LENSU**, Policy officer EEAS

**Pablo VALENZUELA**, Policy officer DG NEAR

**Rachel GALLOWAY**, Co-chair, MaMa Working Group

**Kimmo PEIPPO**, Head of Unit, Council\*

**Wolfgang BÄRWINKEL**, Political Administrator, Council

**Kaenas O'CONNOR**, Political Administrator, Council

\* will attend restricted session as well

**SEVENTH MEETING OF THE EU-EGYPT ASSOCIATION COUNCIL  
(BRUSSELS, 25 JULY 2017)**

**Statement by the European Union**

1. The European Union welcomes the seventh meeting of the EU-Egypt Association Council. The EU-Egypt partnership, which we seek to strengthen, is based on the implementation of the Association Agreement that entered into force in 2004, and on the joint priorities identified in light of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which will guide our dialogue and cooperation for the next three years. In line with the EU Global Strategy, the EU has a strategic interest in Egypt's sustainable stability, security and prosperity, both internally and regionally, and is firmly committed to support Egypt's path towards a modern and democratic state.
2. The EU attaches great importance to its bilateral relationship with Egypt, as an important partner and regional player, as demonstrated by the visits of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the Commission (HRVP) Federica Mogherini, of Commissioners Hahn, Avramopoulos and Crețu, and of EUSR for Human Rights Lambrinidis, to Cairo, respectively in 2015, 2016 and 2017, as well as the participation of Egypt's Foreign Minister Shoukry in a Foreign Affairs Council informal lunch in March 2017 and also by mutual exchange of bilateral visits of Heads of states and governments.
3. The revival of the bilateral Association Agreement structures in 2015 and the holding of all the sub-committees between 2015 and 2016, as well as of the Association Committee in May 2016, allowed for increased dialogue on issues of common interest and concern and for the joint identification of areas of potential cooperation.

4. The EU welcomes the adoption of the new EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities (PPs) that were jointly identified and negotiated, in the framework of the revised ENP, and agreed ad referendum in December 2016. The PPs set the basis for the bilateral partnership and cooperation for the next three years. Their implementation will pave the way for a reinforced and mutually beneficial bilateral partnership and for enhanced cooperation in all fields of common interest. Priorities include support to Egypt's sustainable economic and social development, reinforcement of our partnership in foreign policy, and enhanced dialogue and cooperation in the stabilisation process, notably in the fields of democracy, good governance, rule of law, human rights, security, counter-terrorism and migration, with a special focus on the empowerment of youth and women as a cross-cutting theme.
5. In the past years, the EU, together with its Member States (MS), supported Egypt's efforts to address the challenges faced by the country in an important number of areas, including economic development, education, health, energy, transport, environment, climate action, information society, research and innovation. People-to-people contacts are also at the heart of EU-Egypt cooperation.
6. Total ongoing EU financial assistance commitments to Egypt amount to over EUR 1.3 billion in grants, with around 45% of the portfolio targeting the wider field of economic and social development, including employment creation, 45% devoted to renewable energy, water and sanitation/waste management and environment, and 10% dedicated to supporting governance, human rights, justice and public administration reform.
7. In 2016, EUR 105 million of new bilateral EU funding was committed to Egypt, with particular emphasis on employment, inclusive economic and social development, rural sanitation and women's rights. The combined volume of financial assistance from the EU, its Member States and European Financial Institutions to Egypt in its different forms (grants, loans and debt swaps) positions Europe as the most important donor in Egypt with an ongoing volume of over EUR 11 billion. The use of blending has leveraged around EUR 6.6 billion in investments and will be pursued under the External Investment Plan.

8. In 2015 and 2016, Egypt witnessed a worsening of its balance of payments that led to a dramatic reduction in foreign exchange reserves. Economic growth averaging almost 4% per year, during this same period, has been insufficient amid the country's demographic expansion and job losses in high employment sectors like tourism and construction. The adoption, mid-2016, of an economic reform plan by the Egyptian authorities, aims at bringing back macroeconomic stability and inclusive growth. The EU welcomes the approval by the IMF of a USD 12 billion Support Programme under the form of an Extended Fund Facility in November 2016.
9. The EU firmly supports Egypt's efforts to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth, notably through the implementation of the IMF-supported economic reform programme. The government and the central bank have taken the right measures to rein in inflation, reduce the budget deficit, and set the Egyptian economy on a path to stability and growth. The EU welcomes the extensive and difficult economic reforms Egypt has already undertaken, including in overhauling subsidies and liberalising the currency. Substantial reforms should contribute to economic recovery, attract investment, boost growth and create decent job opportunities. The EU stands ready to support and contribute to Egypt's efforts in this direction, notably in establishing an enabling business environment, as well as in boosting small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and private sector development. The EU also recognises and encourages Egypt's efforts to address the expected social and economic impact of these reforms, particularly on the most vulnerable, in order to maintain stability in the country.
10. The EU and Egypt are major trading partners. With bilateral trade in goods amounting to EUR 27.3 billion in 2016 and EU foreign direct investments (FDI) stocks of EUR 41.7 billion in 2015, the EU ranks first both as Egypt's import and export partner, as well as in terms of investment. In 2016, the EU accounted for 30.4% of the total foreign trade value of Egypt. However, a number of long-standing trade and investment barriers continue to negatively affect EU-Egypt trade relations and it is important that such issues are resolved in due course in order to further facilitate trade and investment.

11. Egypt already has duty free and quota free access to the EU market for industrial goods and also for most agricultural products with only a few under a duty free quota. The EU will continue to support Egypt in its efforts to improve its export performance by boosting its general export capacity and competitiveness and achieving a closer integration into global value chains. The EU wishes to continue its ongoing dialogue on the implementation of the trade provisions of the EU-Egypt Association Agreement and on further enhancing bilateral trade relations e.g. through exploring ideas for additional steps to facilitate trade or deepen the existing FTA.
12. In a context of rapid population growth that represents a major challenge to the sustainable development of the country, the EU is committed to support Egypt's efforts to promote social development and protection, to address the social and demographic challenges the country is facing and to enhance its capacities in a way that will advance economic and social development, as well as employment, particularly for youth and women. In this regard, the EU will continue its support to the country in the areas of employment and social protection, rural and urban development, water management as well as education and health systems, including sexual and reproductive health, in order to contribute to improving the delivery of quality basic services across the country. It will also work to support Egypt's national population strategy.
13. The EU welcomes Egypt's progress towards achieving Education for All and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in expanding access to basic education, and closing the gap between the enrolment of boys and girls. The EU remains a strong supporter of the Egyptian education sector as a whole, with particular emphasis on increasing the access to education for the most vulnerable children, the modernisation and quality of education, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Egyptian Higher Education, to provide skills matching the labour market. In addition to the EU's substantial bilateral support in this sector, Egypt's active participation in EU programmes such as ERASMUS+ (in the fields of higher and non-formal education) also plays a key role. The EU and Egypt will continue to work together in the field of research and innovation, mainly through Horizon 2020 projects. Furthermore, the EU counts on Egypt's commitment and active support in the forthcoming Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA), aiming to develop innovative solutions for food production and water management systems across the Euro-Mediterranean area.

14. In its bilateral support to Egypt, the EU will continue to place particular emphasis on women and youth, taking into account their crucial role in socio-economic development and long-term political and overall stability. It will also continue to promote People-to-People contacts through enhanced cooperation in the field of culture and cultural heritage, at bilateral level, as well as via strategic regional EU programmes.
15. Sustainable energy security is key for the EU and Egypt's stability and development. The adoption by the Egyptian Supreme Energy Council in October 2016 of the Egyptian Sustainable Energy Strategy for the period 2016-2035, funded by the EU, is a positive step that paves the way toward further potential cooperation in the diversification of energy sources, with a particular focus on development of new gas resources, on further promoting renewables, electricity connectivity and on increasing energy efficiency actions. The EU stands ready to strengthen its energy dialogue with Egypt in order to identify potential areas of enhanced cooperation. The EU and Egypt acknowledge the value and the benefits of stepping up their energy dialogue for the benefit of both sides and the whole East Mediterranean region, as demonstrated by the EU high level energy mission that took place on 10-12 July 2017. A revision of the Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Partnership on Energy between the EU and Egypt will be drafted and adopted in the autumn.
16. Environment and climate change is another area of common concern. The EU welcomes the deposition of Egypt's instrument of ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Egypt's Nationally Determined Contribution as well as the launching of the development of an Action Plan to implement the national climate change adaptation strategy, provide an opportunity for the EU and Egypt to continue their cooperation in the area of climate change with the broader objective to achieve the goals identified, inter alia, in the 2030 Development Agenda. The EU will continue to support Egypt's efforts and reforms in the fields of solid waste management, water and sanitation, sustainable transport, as well as Egypt's contribution to the regional efforts on de-pollution of the Mediterranean.

17. The EU has a clear interest in Egypt's sustainable stability and security. As agreed in the PPs, establishing a modern and democratic state that delivers benefits equitably to all people is essential in this regard. The entry into force in January 2014 of the new Constitution, which includes robust provisions on human rights and individual freedoms, and the parliamentary elections held in October and December 2015, constituted two important steps towards enhancing democracy in Egypt. The EU looks forward to the provisions of the Constitution on the rule of law, human rights and individual freedoms being fully implemented and existing and new legislation being in line with these provisions. The EU stands ready to support Egypt in translating these rights into law as agreed in the EU-Egypt PPs.
  
18. The EU supports Egypt's commitments to enhance State institutions' accountability, efficiency, independence and transparency. In addition to the support that the EU has already been providing to Egypt in past years to reform the public administration, improve public finance management, and fight corruption, the EU stands ready to further support Egypt in these crucial areas, including supporting the Parliament in fully assuming its constitutional functions, including oversight functions and assist Egypt's efforts to empower local authorities and citizens.

19. Sustainable security is a shared objective for the EU and Egypt and a central element of the EU Global Strategy. The EU is fully aware of the serious destabilising threats and challenges that Egypt's stability and security is facing, primarily terrorism and the impact on the Egyptian population, the state institutions as well as the country's economy, including tourism. The EU strongly condemns acts of terrorism in Egypt including against security services and the military, as well as recent attacks against religious communities, including Copts, and places of worship and stands in solidarity with Egypt in its fight against terrorism. The EU and Egypt have a common interest in strengthening cooperation on security and the fight against terrorism. Following the high-level counter-terrorism consultation between the EU and Egypt, the EU will seek to cooperate more closely in this field, in particular on prevention of radicalisation to terrorism and violent extremism and any form of discrimination, on law enforcement and judicial cooperation, border control, explosive detection, as well as aviation and airport security in line with the EU-Egypt PPs' commitment to promoting and respecting democracy, fundamental freedoms and human rights as constitutional rights of all citizens and to enhancing the capacity of law enforcement institutions to provide security to all. The EU recognizes the positive engagement of Egypt as a working group co-chair in the Global Counterterrorism Forum.
20. The EU acknowledges the serious and destabilising security challenges faced by Egypt that led to the State of Emergency. In this respect, the EU strongly encourages Egypt to address the concerning consequences of the State of Emergency law and its recent amendments for the respect of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. The EU reiterates its position that arbitrary arrests, long pre-trial detention, poor prison conditions and torture contribute to fuelling radicalism and violent extremism. It highlights the importance of tackling terrorism and violent extremism while fully respecting human rights and international obligations and recalls the Constitutional provisions that apply to the declaration of a State of Emergency.

21. An effective Counter Terrorism effort needs the support of the public, and respect of the rule of law. The EU is concerned about amendments to the Judicial Authority Law. The EU recalls the importance of the independence of the Judiciary, as guaranteed by the 2014 Constitution. The EU considers that other recent legislative amendments raise serious questions in terms of due process and fair trial guarantees.
22. The EU is concerned about the progressive restriction of space for civil society in Egypt and the pressure put on human rights organisations and defenders, including through arrests, asset freezes, travel bans, electronic surveillance and court summons. The EU calls on the Egyptian authorities to shed light on the circumstances of the death of the Italian citizen Giulio Regeni and the French citizen Eric Lang. Civil society is a key contributor to social and economic development and to the democratic consolidation processes, helping to build sustainable stability and security. It needs to be allowed to operate in an enabling environment. The EU welcomes the Egyptian government's objective of promoting women's rights and social and economic empowerment as illustrated by the designation by the Egyptian government of 2017 as "the Year of the Egyptian Women" and urges Egypt to seize this opportunity to address concerns about recent restrictive measures against women's rights organisations and defenders.
23. The EU is concerned about the subsequent consequences of the new NGO law on NGOs' activities and the space for debate and discussion in the country. It is necessary to ensure that the future implementation of the law does not additionally undermine fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Egyptian Constitution and constrain civil society's contribution to political, economic and social development as highlighted in the PPs. To this end the EU urges Egypt to open a meaningful dialogue with civil society. Some provisions, such as the ones related to the registration process, the activities NGOs are allowed to perform and the procedure for receiving domestic and foreign funding, are also likely to directly affect European cooperation assistance to Egypt. Indeed, a large part of EU and MS cooperation relies on non-governmental organisations as important implementing partners.

24. The EU is concerned about the efforts to limit free expression, as seen with the arrest and the sentencing of journalists on anti-state charges, the recent blocking of an important number of news websites and other measures limiting internet freedom, the arrest of political activists from opposition parties, as well as the closure of the Al-Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence. The EU calls on Egypt to be in line with its commitments to promote freedom of expression, association and assembly, as well as the freedom of the press, as guaranteed by the 2014 Constitution and according to Egypt's international obligations. The EU encourages Egypt to improve the situation with respect to civil and political rights, including freedom of expression both on and offline, and to review its legislation in line with international law and with the Constitutional guarantees with respect to human rights and fundamental freedoms.
25. The EU notes that Egypt is party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and has been elected to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The EU encourages Egypt to join The Hague Convention on the civil aspects of international child abduction.
26. The EU remains concerned about reports of torture, enforced disappearances and poor detention conditions, that were identified by the Egyptian National Council for Human rights, in its 11th annual report for 2015-2016, as one of the most common rights violations committed in Egypt and encourages Egypt to address these issues. The EU underlines the need for accountability for all violations. The handing down of death sentences and mass trials, as well as extrajudicial killings are also of particular concern. The EU reiterates its principled position against the death penalty and calls on Egypt to establish a formal moratorium with a view to its abolition.
27. In line with the 2013 transition roadmap to democracy, the EU also encourages Egypt to take steps to foster national reconciliation and youth inclusion that are key to Egypt's long term stability.

28. The EU highly appreciates Egypt's contribution in hosting refugees and migrants and its efforts in working to significantly reduce irregular migration flows, as well as smuggling and trafficking of human beings. It welcomes the adoption, in November 2016, of a new anti-smuggling law that provides a shift in legislation through criminalisation of smugglers, and including a provision for the creation of a fund to protect smuggled individuals in line with Egypt's international obligations. The EU will seek to support Egypt's efforts to strengthen its migration governance framework and its border management as well as its capacity to protect migrants' rights and to provide protection to those who qualify for it, in line with international standards. The EU and Egypt will reinforce cooperation on return of irregular migrants to their country of origin, in accordance with international law. This will go hand in hand with cooperation in addressing root causes of forced displacement and drivers of irregular migration, in particular underdevelopment, poverty and unemployment. Facilitation of regular migration and mobility in full respect of national competences can contribute to the development of skills and knowledge which could in turn contribute to the development of Egypt.
29. The EU and Egypt have a mutual interest in strengthening dialogue and cooperation in this field, through implementation of the Joint Valletta Action Plan and the existing multilateral fora, such as the Khartoum process, in which Egypt is actively involved, but also on a bilateral basis as set out in the new EU-Egypt PPs. In this regard, the EU looks forward to the agreement on terms of reference for the establishment of a formal EU-Egypt migration dialogue, as agreed during the EU Senior Officials' mission on migration that visited Egypt in January 2017 to identify avenues for a stronger, more strategic and comprehensive cooperation on migration. The EU also stands ready to support Egypt's efforts in addressing the migration challenges faced by the country, notably through the North Africa window of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), as illustrated by the EUR 60 million programme that was presented in the board of the North Africa window of the EUTF on 23 May.

30. With its current seat in the UN Security Council and in the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Egypt has an important role to play in contributing to peace and security in the whole region. As important and responsible regional actors, the EU and Egypt have a shared interest in reinforcing their cooperation in foreign policy and in particular to address the main regional challenges, including in Libya, Syria, the Middle-East Peace Process (MEPP) and in Africa. It is in our interest to enhance dialogue and cooperation on these issues both at the bilateral and multilateral levels.
31. The EU acknowledges that the instability in Libya poses significant security and humanitarian pressures on its neighbours, including Egypt. The EU and Egypt share the view that there is no solution to the Libyan crisis through the use of force and will continue their respective efforts, bilaterally or within regional organizations, to support the UN-led political process aimed at bringing stability, peace and prosperity for all Libyans. The EU remains fully committed to an inclusive inter-Libyan political process and warmly welcomes the appointment of Ghassan Salamé as new Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, whose mediation role, based on the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), will be central. The EU commends ongoing efforts to bridge political differences and calls for the House of Representatives and the High Council of State to take forward consultations on limited amendments to the LPA, which remains the abiding framework for a solution to Libya's crisis, to make it more inclusive and to fully implement it.
32. Regarding the situation in Syria, the EU reaffirms the primacy of the UN-led Geneva process and calls for full support for the intra-Syrian talks in view of promoting a political transition in Syria.. Initiatives in view of reducing violence should be framed in support of the Geneva process. It is in our common interest to support steps to re-establish a full and effective cessation of hostilities and to reaffirm that the implementation of any agreements is key and should also be accompanied by country-wide sustained humanitarian access. Protection of civilians and territorial integrity is fundamental and all parties to the conflict and their supporters are expected to live up to their commitments. The EU reaffirms that only a credible political solution, as defined in UNSCR 2254 and the 2012 Geneva Communiqué will ensure the stability of Syria and enable a decisive defeat of Da'esh and other UN-designated terrorist groups in Syria. The EU welcomes Egypt's ongoing support to that effect.

33. The EU recognises Egypt's indispensable role and will continue to engage closely with Egypt in pursuing a just, sustainable and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the two state solution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign, and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security and mutual recognition in line with relevant Council Conclusions. The EU and Egypt will continue to work towards that end with both Israeli and Palestinian counterparts, and all other relevant stakeholders in the region, in particular in the framework of the Arab Peace Initiative. The EU welcomes Egypt's efforts to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza which is impacting especially on the health sector and encourages all stakeholders to support the efforts by the UN Special Coordinator to achieve a sustainable solution to the electricity crisis.
34. The EU expresses its deep concern regarding the ongoing crisis across the Gulf and a strong interest in the stability of the Gulf region and the unity of the GCC which is key for the efficiency of our collective fight against terrorism and to deal with all regional issues. As key interlocutors and partners in the fight against terrorism and in finding a way out of some of the conflicts of the region, we want to preserve it from being exposed to further tensions. The EU encourages des-escalation, calls on all parties to engage and supports the mediation role of Kuwait which should lead to meaningful direct political dialogue. The EU stands ready to assist these mediation efforts in all ways that might be requested. The EU has the firm intention to keep strong relationships and ties with all the Gulf countries and hope that they will manage to restore good working relations among them.
35. In Africa, the EU and Egypt have a common interest in working together constructively to promote closer regional cooperation to reinforce this region's capacity to address the many challenges it is facing. The EU will work with Egypt and other stakeholders in a cooperative and predictable manner on issues regarding the Red Sea, while preserving the local buy-in and the local ownership of the region, as well as issues regarding the Nile basin for which the EU is aware of the political importance of a concerted and consensual approach. The EU and Egypt will continue to work together as co-chairs of the EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation to address key societal challenges affecting both continents, such as food and nutrition security, sustainable agriculture, climate change and sustainable energy.

36. The formal adoption of the new EU-Egypt PPs offers a unique opportunity to reinforce the EU-Egypt bilateral partnership, based on a set of jointly identified priorities. This reinforced partnership should allow for closer dialogue both on issues on which we agree and on which we differ, in a spirit of mutual trust and openness. Regular assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the PPs, through the various mechanisms foreseen in the PPs and through regular political dialogue, should allow us to maintain this positive momentum, in the interest of our people and region.
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**Statement by  
the Arab Republic of Egypt on the occasion  
of the Seventh Meeting of the Egypt- EU Association Council  
(Brussels- July 25<sup>th</sup> 2017)**

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1. Egypt and Europe enjoy historic, multifaceted and diverse relations. Traditional ties between both sides have been consolidated further through the conclusion of the Egypt-EU Association agreement and its entry into force in 2004. Egypt welcomes convening the seventh meeting of the Egypt-EU Association Council in Brussels. Since holding the last Association Council in April 2010, unprecedented transformations have taken place in Egypt, the Middle East and Europe that served as a stark reminder of the profound value of the Egypt-EU partnership to the stability, security and prosperity of the Middle East Region and Europe. Today's endorsement of the new Egypt-EU Partnership Priorities for 2017-2020, is a strong signal of our mutual commitment to take the Egypt-EU partnership to new horizons, and to inject new momentum into trajectories of cooperation that realize our mutual political, economic and cultural interests. Egypt looks forward to working closely with the EU in the years ahead to consolidate and develop this partnership further and to address common challenges and threats in the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Europe.
2. Egypt has engaged intensively with the EU to revitalize the institutional frameworks of the Egypt-EU partnership over the past two years. This effort was motivated by a strong political will to usher in a new era of cooperation between both sides. Convening meetings of all the Egypt-EU Association Subcommittees amidst a constructive atmosphere amplified both sides' genuine appreciation of the importance of the EU-Egypt partnership in various sectors, and paved the way to holding the Egypt-EU Association Committee in May 2016, and the 8th meeting of the Economic Dialogue between Egypt and the EU in June 2017 in Cairo.
3. The resumption of the meetings of the Egypt-EU Association Council for the first time since 2010 crowns this progressive impetus in the relationship between Egypt and the EU since 2014. The exchange of visits between the Egyptian leadership and numerous European heads of states and governments, consolidated ties between Egypt and EU member states on the bilateral level further, and confirmed the mutual commitment between Egypt and individual EU member states to develop deep and strategic partnerships. Such momentum was also highlighted by the exchange of visits on the ministerial and high official levels between Cairo and Brussels. Most recently, at the invitation of H.E. Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, H.E. Sameh Shoukry, Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt, met with foreign ministers of EU member states in conjunction with the March 2017 FAC meeting in Brussels. In 2015 and 2016 Cairo welcomed several EU Commissioners and senior officials, including H.E. Dimitris Avramopoulos, EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, H.E. Johannes Hahn, EU-Commissioner for Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Mr. Gilles de Kerchove's, EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, EU Special Envoy for Human Rights, Mr. Christian Danielsson, Director General for Enlargement at the EU Commission, and Mr. Christian Leffler, Deputy Secretary General of the EEAS. These high profile visits all marked significant steps towards putting bilateral relationships between Egypt and the EU on the right track, and were welcome opportunities for closer consultations on important regional and global issues of mutual interest.
4. Exchanges between the Egyptian House of Representatives and the European Parliament, proved to be instrumental for facilitating deeper mutual understanding of the transformations and developments in Egypt and Europe by elected representatives of the people on both sides. Two delegations from the Egyptian HoR visited Strasbourg and Brussels in April 2016 and January 2017, respectively, and held useful consultations with their counterparts from various party groups and the Foreign Affairs Committee in the European Parliament. In 2016 and 2017 Cairo received several delegations representing various parliamentary groups and committees of the European Parliament, who met with their Egyptian parliamentary counterparts as well as with various government officials and other stakeholders (Foreign Affairs Committee, Feb. 2016; Delegation for Relations with the Mashreq Countries DMAS, Oct. 2016; EPP, Nov. 2016; ECR Dec. 2016; Egypt's Friends Group, Feb. 2017). In addition, the last two years also witnessed an intensification of mutual visits between members of the Egyptian House of Representatives and their counterparts from national parliaments in several EU countries. This track of political exchange and dialogue between elected representatives from Egypt and Europe continues to have a positive impact on consolidating Egypt-EU relations.

5. The seventh meeting of the Egypt-EU Association Council takes place after completing intensive consultations between the Egypt and the EU that led to agreeing the Egypt-EU Partnership Priorities for the coming 3 years (2017-2020). Egypt welcomes this agreement as a crucial step towards opening a new chapter in our bilateral relations. The Partnership Priorities are a positive reflection of a revised ENP based on co-ownership, differentiation and tailor-made cooperation. They focus on collaboration in sectors that are both crucial to long-term socio-economic development in Egypt, and of great importance to EU strategic political and economic interests. Of particular significance in this regard is the prospective cooperation in the fields of enhancing the role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs); facilitating investments in mega development projects across Egypt, particularly in the 'Suez Canal Area Development Project (Hub)'; and energy security, in light of significant new discoveries in Egypt's territory that promise to make Egypt one of Europe's most reliable future sources of energy supply.
6. The value of a strong and healthy partnership between Egypt and the EU is amplified even further in the wider context of Egypt's implementation of an ambitious socio-economic reform program. As much as this reform is set to decisively address structural macro-economic malaises, it is designed to capitalize on Egypt's rich human and natural resources and unleash the country's promising potential. The program provides a solid vision to tackle long-standing challenges in the areas of economic growth, sustainable development, improving the investment climate, energy security, youth employment, women empowerment, poverty alleviation, education and research, public administration and good governance. Egypt's future socio-economic vision, as set out in "The Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt's Vision 2030" launched by President El Sisi in February 2016, is designed to maintain the necessary balance between the imperatives of structural reform and the requirements of social justice and the protection of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Egypt looks forward to cooperating with the EU towards supporting different aspects of this vision, as outlined in the Egypt-EU Partnership Priorities (2017-2020).
7. The conclusion in November 2016 of an agreement between Egypt and the IMF on a USD 12 Billion Extended Fund Facility is a certificate of confidence in the soundness and prospects of Egypt's socio-economic reform vision. Egypt welcomes our EU partners' support to the agreement with the IMF and the reform program on the bilateral level, and considers cooperation with EU institutions within the framework of the agreed Egypt-EU Partnership Priorities a key part of the program's successful implementation. Egypt has already taken substantial steps, including through the promulgation of several landmark legislations, towards removing investment barriers and creating a favorable investment environment, increasing the competitiveness of the Egyptian economy, unleashing the potential of innovation and leadership, particularly among youth, reforming public administration, and promoting SMEs. In this context, Egypt remains keen to preserve and develop the EU's role as one of our traditional development partners. Egypt firmly believes that the scope of this role should reach beyond the provision of assistance programs towards actively encouraging more EU investors to partner with Egypt, and to open EU markets even further to Egyptian exports.
8. The EU is Egypt's largest trade partner, and Egypt attaches great importance to promoting its trade relations with the EU. To this end, Egypt looks forward to agree on more measures to lower trade barriers, granting Egyptian products larger access to EU markets and creating long-term partnerships between the European and Egyptian industrial sectors, with a special focus on increasing the international competitiveness of Egyptian SMEs.

9. Empowering Youth and Women is an integral part of Egypt's future sustainable development vision, as a reflection of the relevant provisions in the 2014 Constitution. This was clearly reflected in President El-Sisi's declaration of 2016 as the "The Year of Youth", and the launch of a range of initiatives designed to prepare young leaders in several sectors under the auspices of the "Presidential Program for Enabling Youth", as well as through establishing "The Knowledge Bank", one of the largest information libraries in the world designed to pool ideas produced by young Egyptian minds and explore ways of translating them into practical contributions towards the country's progress in various fields. Egypt considers its young demographic composition to be a rich resource for the country's future progress, stability and prosperity. The Egyptian government is thus committed to focusing on development strategies and policies which put Egypt's youth, their rights, aspirations, and future prospects at the heart of the ongoing socio-economic reform process.
10. President El-Sisi declared 2017 as the 'Year of Egyptian Women', emphasizing women's central role in building Egypt's future, and the government's obligation to safeguarding their constitutional rights. In April 2017 The National Council for Women launched the "2030 Egyptian Women Empowerment Strategy", including pioneering schemes that offer social, economic and legal support services to women across Egypt, with a view to further enhance gender equality and women empowerment in the public sphere and political life. In this context, notable successes have been registered over the past few years in vital areas such increasing girls' access to education, women's health and social protection, and efforts aimed at eradicating the harmful practices of FGM, and child, early and forced marriages.
11. Egypt's current Parliament has the largest women representation in the country's extended parliamentary history. Women occupy 16% of seats in the House of Representatives, a staggering increase from 1.5 % percent in the previous parliament. Much work is under way to establish a solid legislative infrastructure that reflects the 2014 constitutional guarantees for women's rights. In 2014, the Egyptian Penal code was amended to add harsher penalties on sexual harassment. Moreover, the National Council for Women is currently studying introducing amendments to several legislations in line with the relevant constitutional provisions on gender equality, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity for women, including the personal status affairs and inheritance laws. Egypt's belief in the profound impact of women's empowerment on the prospects of achieving our sustainable development goals is as steadfast as ever, and cooperation in various fields with a view to the substantial enhancement of the role of women in society continues to be one of the pillars of our partnership with the EU.
12. Preserving freedom of religion and belief is an advanced priority for the Government of Egypt. This comes as a reflection of the relevant safeguards outlined under the 2014 constitution. Reforming religious discourse, rebuilding churches damaged by extremist elements in the summer of 2013, promulgating a new legal code on building and repairing churches, an unprecedented level of Coptic representation in parliament, and a public commitment at the highest level to the values of citizenship, equality and tolerance are examples of important steps taken in this direction.
13. The renewed commitment to the Egypt-EU partnership acquires additional significance given the unprecedented set of challenges faced by the Middle East and Europe in recent years. In this regard, countering and combating terrorism and its underlying extremist ideologies must be a top priority. Egypt is committed to establishing an effective trajectory of cooperation with the EU in this field guided by a comprehensive approach that effectively targets various components of terrorist and extremist networks, such as terrorist finances, propaganda tools, procurement mechanisms, and logistical support, especially with regards to the movement of 'foreign fighters'. Egypt urges members of the EU to take a firm stance against regional actors, including States, in the Middle East who render ideological, political, and in many instances logistical support to extremist and terrorist groups, thereby playing dangerously destabilizing roles in the region that directly threaten the security of Egypt and the EU.

14. Egypt places great importance on tackling the ideological roots of terrorism and is therefore committed to exert serious efforts, through its religious institutions and scholars, led by Al-Azhar, to modernize religious discourse and draw on the true essence of Islamic values to defeat the radical and hate-preaching terrorist rhetoric, in line with UNSC resolution 2354 on 'Countering Terrorist Narratives'. In this regard, Egypt has repeatedly urged the EU to take decisive action towards stopping the broadcast of extremist media channels from European satellites, especially 'Eutelsat', and amend European Directive 2007/65/EC to allow for shutting down these channels, as per the amendment proposed by 'Eutelsat' itself and approved by France's CSA. It is deplorable that although Egypt has provided the EU with extensive evidence of the continuous and relentless incitement of violence, violations of human dignity, and proliferation of radical ideologies by these channels to audiences in Europe and the Middle East, competent authorities in EU member states have not taken appropriate measures to stop these channels from broadcasting and prevent them from circumventing EU regulations. The EU's continued tolerance of such extremist and terrorist propaganda materials and broadcasts, that are in clear contravention of international law, is harmful and contradicts the EU's declared commitment to implement effective counter-extremist policies.
15. Egypt welcomes the ongoing preparation to launch the high level 'Migration Dialogue' with the EU, and believes that the migration issue should be tackled in a balanced and comprehensive manner. Proper focus needs to be placed on medium and long term strategies tackling the socio-economic root causes of migration, as opposed to short term security-driven solutions based exclusively on the interests of countries of destination by focusing primarily on means of intercepting the flow of migrants and refugee seekers. Migration is best tackled through supporting sustainable development and boosting inclusive growth in countries of origin and transit, particularly by creating employment opportunities and viable revenue-generating activities, as well as opening safe and orderly channels of legal migration. In that spirit, Egypt participated actively in the Valletta Summit on Migration in November 2015 and continues to play a pivotal role in the context of the Khartoum process as well as the AU-Horn of Africa initiative, and considers them vital tributaries to the implementation of the Joint Valetta Action Plan. Despite the EU's commitment to swiftly assist African countries in addressing migration issues through the 'European Union Emergency Trust Fund', proposed projects between Egypt and the EU under the fund are still stalled, and EU promises of effective and quick support have not been realized.
16. Based on its humanitarian responsibility and moral obligation, Egypt shoulders a considerable burden by hosting several million migrants and refugees, allowing most of them free access to public services such as education and healthcare. Moreover, Egypt's competent border control and law-enforcement agencies have been highly successful in countering and stopping illegal migration from Egyptian shores, and dismantling organized criminal networks involved in human trafficking. Egypt has also taken strides towards strengthening the relevant legislative framework, including through the promulgation of a pioneering legislation on combating and preventing illegal migration and the smuggling of migrants in 2016, the establishment of an inter-ministerial 'National Coordination Committee for Combating Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons', and the launch of a national strategy for effective implementation of these legislations. Despite the many verbal assurances by the EU of commitment to shoulder the burdens related to addressing migration effectively, Egypt has yet to see adequate practical support by our European partners in sharing this responsibility.
17. Egypt is deeply concerned by the worrying rise of far-right political streams in several EU member states. This disturbing trend contributes to the substantial increase of hate speech, reported incidents of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia (including *islamophobia*), and are commonly associated with a remarkable increase in incidents of hate crimes and racially motivated violence, including on some occasions the excessive use of force by law enforcement officials in some EU countries based on "racial profiling". Egypt understands that the unprecedented flow of migrants and refugees to the EU over recent years has brought new realities to social, economic and political life in EU countries. However, EU member states have a moral and political responsibility to take effective steps to promote inclusion and tolerance, and build bridges across ethnic divides within European communities, including through

ensuring proper accountability in the face of any of the aforementioned violations. In the same context, Egypt is concerned with reports of the significant human rights violations and abuses faced in EU member states by groups including migrants, refugees, Muslims, Arabs, and persons of African descent and other minorities. Alleged violations and abuses including violence and discrimination, as well as disparities in access to public services such as housing, education, social protection and healthcare should receive immediate attention by the EU and its member states.

18. The situation of migrants and refugees stranded in detention and reception centers constitutes a specific source of genuine concern. International organizations and several civil society organizations have reported situations where human dignity is being severely undermined due to unlimited renewals of detention, overcrowding, deteriorating standards of living, and breaches of due process. Such violations of human rights standards are direct manifestations of an increasing reliance on a security-driven perspective in addressing issues of human mobility, which we shall continue to call upon the EU to consider revisiting and overturning in favor of a more balanced and comprehensive approach. The lack of serious efforts by the EU to eliminate and prevent these violations indicates a double standard in light of EU's policy of passing judgments on human rights issues in other parts of the world while ignoring immoral and inhumane violations of human dignity within its borders.
19. Egypt is concerned that in the context of combating terrorism, several EU states have recently taken measures that can represent an infringement on human rights and fundamental freedoms including the right to privacy, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, freedom of movement and respect for due process and guarantees of fair trial. Egypt recalls the necessity to ensure the respect for the rule of law and effective administration of justice at all times. The fight against terrorism should always be guided by the principles established under the global strategy on combating terrorism, including an emphasis on the consistent compliance of measures taken in this regard with international law.
20. An additional source of concern stems from measures taken in some EU Member States to expand the mandate of security agencies to facilitate subjecting individuals to arbitrary interrogations and extended pre-trial detentions. These practices are often observed based on ethnic, racial or religious backgrounds of the individuals concerned. In the same context, reports of violations and abuses inside detention facilities against individuals belonging to ethnic, racial and religious minorities warrant a prompt, transparent and impartial investigation with a view to ensuring effective accountability.
21. Egypt continues to convey its concerns regarding the extraterritorial abuses reportedly committed by European-based business enterprises, including private security companies. Egypt will recurrently underscore to the EU the need to install reliable legal frameworks to regulate the activities of these private entities in compliance with the obligations of EU Member States under international law. There is an urgent need for the EU to ensure that operations of European Multinational Companies (MNCs) observe workers' rights in full compliance with international labour standards and promote corporate social responsibility. To that effect the EU ought to do more towards enacting regulations that monitor the adherence by European MNCs to the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
22. The Egypt-EU Partnership Priorities 2017-2020 clearly emphasize the important role of civil society in supporting the process of economic and social development in Egypt in accordance with relevant provisions of the Egyptian constitution and the relevant national legislations. Egypt firmly believes that a vibrant and empowered civil society is a key partner to achieving our sustainable development goals. Egypt is thus keen on maintaining an effective balance between preserving and promoting civil society's valuable role, and the need for transparent regulation of civil society activities. The new NGOs legislation enacted by the House of Representatives is an important step in this direction, as it provides several measures that will effectively enhance the role of civil society, while ensuring transparency, accountability, adherence to best practices and the preservation of Egypt's national security and interests. More than 48 thousand law-abiding NGO's continue to make prominent and valuable contributions to Egypt's progress in various fields.

23. Frank and open political dialogue is an important component of the partnership between Egypt and the EU, as enshrined in the Egypt-EU Association agreement and as outlined in the Egypt-EU Partnership Priorities 2017-2020. Egypt reiterates that the approach adopted by the EU in the UNHRC and the UNGA's 3<sup>rd</sup> committee, can hamper the sustainability of this aspired dialogue and can also result in politicising these the multilateral fora and diluting their effectiveness and credibility within the international human rights system. EU criticisms in this area are overshadowed by selectivity, inaccuracy and clear double standards, and continue to rely on misconstrued information. The EU's insistence on this biased and politicized approach harms the EU's political and moral credibility.
24. Democratic foundations such as the separation of powers, freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion and expression, and the right to peaceful assembly, are all guaranteed in Egypt under the 2014 Constitution and the respective legislations in accordance with Egypt's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). As Egypt renews its steadfast commitment to uphold human rights and civic liberties to all its citizens, we remain as ready as ever to constructively engage in addressing issues of concern to Egypt and the EU in this area through the proper bilateral channels within a true spirit of partnership.
25. Egypt and the EU are key regional partners and have a mutual interest in the stability, security and prosperity of our shared neighbourhood. To that end, the Egypt-EU Partnership Priorities (2017-2020) have clearly emphasized the significance of keeping active channels of consultations on foreign policy and regional and international issues of mutual interest. Egypt is committed to work with our EU partners on resolving regional situations which continue to destabilize the Middle East and produce threats to Egypt's and Europe's security. In this regard, Egypt invites the EU to consider the lessons of past policies that harmed stability in various parts of the region, created dangerous power vacuums that played into the hand of terrorist groups and elements, and opened the door for foreign intervention that continues to promote sectarian tensions and strife in communities in various parts of the region.
26. Reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East remains a top priority for Egyptian foreign policy and one of the vital prerequisites of overall stability in the region. Egypt and the EU share the conviction that the only viable settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the two state solution, and Egypt is committed to continuing our unwavering efforts with all parties towards this end. The just and legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to establish their independent state and their right to self-determination must be realized through putting an end to the Israeli occupation and establishing a viable Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Egypt will continue to coordinate with our EU partners and other key players on ways to revive an effective and conclusive Middle East Peace Process.
27. Egypt and the EU share the view that the only way to resolve the Libyan Crisis is through the political solution, based on the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). The recent meetings that took place in Cairo marked an important landmark to this end, during which, Libyan stakeholders agreed that the LPA remains the only framework for political dialogue and resolving the Libyan Crisis. They identified a limited number of articles in the agreement that need to be re-visited and amended, through the formation of a joint committee from the members of the House of Representatives and the State Council, in accordance with article 12 of the LPA. Meanwhile, Egypt continues to encourage and facilitate meetings between Libyan leaders and key stakeholders, with a view to build confidence and furnish a favorable environment for implementing an inclusive political settlement of the situation in Libya, and counts on the EU support to these efforts.
28. Egypt's priority in Syria is twofold; supporting the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, whilst preserving the national unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian state and maintaining its core institutions; and combating terrorism. Egypt welcomes the recent agreements regarding the de-escalation zones, as a necessary condition for facilitating the political negotiations. Egypt also welcomes the progress achieved during the seventh round of the Syrian talks in Geneva, including technical consultations that demonstrated that the three opposition groups can reach a joint vision on the constitutional issues, and that there is a reasonable chance to reach an agreement on the other three baskets, namely, political transition, elections and counter-terrorism.

29. Egypt stresses the need to encourage the UN special envoy Staffan de Mistura to capitalize on such progress and to pave the way for more profound direct talks between the opposition and the Syrian government by presenting a draft negotiating text, that outlines his vision on how to reach an attainable solution that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, and is based on the feedback received from all parties over the previous rounds of negotiations.
30. Egypt is dismayed that the EU intentionally employs divisive policies that seriously undermine cooperation in the Nile basin, by condoning and even supporting the Nile Basin Initiative's practice of non-compliance with its founding principle of consensus, in violation of the principles of international law. Such policy contradicts the EU's proclaimed principles of promoting peace and stability in the region. It negatively interferes with efforts to restore all-inclusiveness in the NBI, and frustrates the serious efforts Egypt has exerted to resume participation in NBI activities based on the principles of consensus and prior notification. It is indeed a double standard that the EU member states have chosen to apply these principles amongst themselves while actively promoting their disregard in other regions of the world, thus entrenching divisiveness in a manner reminiscent of colonial practices. Egypt reiterates its unwavering commitment to Nile basin cooperation based on the principles of mutual benefit, no harm, and the principles of international law.
31. As Egypt and the EU inaugurate a new phase of their partnership guided by mutual respect, shared interests and common values, Egypt reiterates the significance of objectivity, transparency, equality and judgment free approaches as fundamental guiding principles of political exchange between both sides. Differences in views on certain issues are a normal component of a strong partnership. Egypt stands ready to address mutual concerns on any aspect of Egyptian-EU relations within the proper bilateral frameworks outlined by the Egypt-EU Association Agreement, as reiterated in the agreed Egypt-EU Partnership Priorities (2017-2020).
32. Addressing differences with prudence in a true spirit of partnership is the proper approach in line with both sides' commitment to constructive political dialogue. Over the past six years, Egypt has been undergoing a challenging historical transformation towards a vibrant and genuine democracy. As the Egyptian people lay the foundations of a civic, democratic, and modern country that can realize the aspirations of its young generations, it expects our partners in the EU to understand the challenges associated with this difficult transformation, and to render unequivocal support to the Egyptian people in this respect.

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**PRESS**  
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STATEMENTS AND REMARKS

496/17  
25/07/2017

## Joint statement following the EU-Egypt Association Council

### Joint statement by Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Sameh Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt following the 7th session of the EU-Egypt Association Council

After seven years since the Sixth session of the Association Council (AC) of the European Union and the Arab Republic of Egypt, the seventh session took place in Brussels on 25 July 2017. Both sides took this decision in recognition of the great importance of their partnership in addressing their political, economic social, security and cultural interests and in confronting their common challenges in the region.

The seventh session was co-chaired by HE Sameh Shoukry, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in the presence of Johannes Hahn, the Commissioner of European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations.

The session confirmed the broader engagement of the EU-Egypt relations based on the resumption of the bilateral Association Agreement structure in 2015 and on the joint priorities identified in light of the revised European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) as well as the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, which will guide our dialogue and cooperation for the next three years.

The Association Council welcomed the adoption of the jointly negotiated EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities that pave the way for a reinforced and mutually beneficial bilateral partnership and towards a stronger strategic engagement in areas of common interest, to address common challenges, to promote joint interests and to guarantee long-term stability on both sides of the Mediterranean. This partnership will include support to Egypt's sustainable economic and social development, good governance, the rule of law, human rights, migration, security, counterterrorism, and cooperation in foreign policy through intensified consultations on regional and international issues.

The Association Council welcomed the solid and accumulated EU assistance to Egypt which amounts to over EUR 1.3 billion, of ongoing grants to support Egypt's economic, social and political development to improve the future prospects of its people and contribute to stabilization and long-term prosperity. This work is carried out in parallel with efforts to help in particular youth and women.

The EU reiterated its support to Egypt's efforts to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth, notably through the implementation of the IMF supported reform programme. Restoring macroeconomic stability, fostering sustainable economic growth and the same time mitigating the social impact of the reforms are all key priorities.

The EU and Egypt remained committed to combat terrorism which threatens the social fabric of nations across both sides of the Mediterranean. Combating these threats represents a common goal of the EU and Egypt who can cooperate through a comprehensive approach that will address the root causes of terrorism with due respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in order to enable both sides to successfully counter and prevent radicalization and enhance socio-economic development.

The Association Council acknowledged Egypt's contribution in hosting refugees and migrants and working to prevent and combat irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling of human beings, including identifying and assisting victims of trafficking. It welcomes the adoption of a new anti-smuggling law that represents a key transformation in legislation through criminalization of smugglers. The EU and Egypt will strengthen their cooperation on migration.

The Association Council provided an opportunity to identify areas where the EU and Egypt could enhance cooperation. In this regard, the EU and Egypt expressed their commitment to cooperate in diversification of energy sources, with a particular focus

on renewable energy sources, energy efficiency actions and energy governance, where the EU could provide technical assistance to establish a regional energy hub in Egypt. Strengthening the energy dialogue is underway between the EU and Egypt and will contribute to the joint research, sharing experience and best practice, technology transfers, as well as sub-regional cooperation.

The Association Council welcomed the commitment undertaken by both sides, faced with the common challenge of climate change, via ratification of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The EU reiterated its willingness to support Egypt in this area.

The Association Council also noted the importance of student staff and researcher exchanges and welcomed Egypt's active participation in EU programs such as ERASMUS+. In this regard, Egypt and the EU highlighted their interest in intensifying cooperation in the field of research and innovation, mainly through Horizon2020 projects and programs. Research and innovation has a key role in tackling issues of shared concern in the Mediterranean area. In particular, the Association Council welcomed the upcoming initialing of the international agreement between Egypt and the EU governing the participation of Egypt in the Partnership on Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA). PRIMA is expected to mobilize joint research and innovation in two fields of strategic importance for the Mediterranean area: water provision and food production.

Egypt and the EU expressed their commitment to enhancing democracy, fundamental freedoms and human rights as constitutional rights of all their citizens in line with their international obligations, and agreed that human rights are a common value and constitute a cornerstone of a democratic, stable and prosperous state.

The EU and Egypt agreed that civil society is an important and potent contributor to the implementation of their Partnership Priorities and to transparent, participatory governance and can support the sustainable development process underway in Egypt. They will work with civil society in contributing effectively in the economic, political and social development process in compliance with the Egyptian constitution and national legislation.

The EU and Egypt have a shared interest in reinforcing cooperation in foreign policy at the bilateral, regional and international levels. In line with the Partnership Priorities, Egypt and the EU expressed their readiness for greater cooperation and a common understanding of a range of issues, including in the multilateral sphere. The Association Council noted the importance of the partnership between the EU and Egypt for the stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Africa. Further cooperation between the EU and Egypt, including within regional fora, will aim to contribute to the resolution of conflicts, to building peace and to tackling political and economic challenges in these regions.

#### Delegation of the European Union to Egypt

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