



Council of the
European Union

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COAFR 52
CFSP/PESC 115
RELEX 109
DEVGEN 20
COHOM 14
COHAFA 6

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Zimbabwe
- Council conclusions (17 February 2020)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on Zimbabwe, as adopted by the Council at its 3747th meeting held on 17 February 2020.

Zimbabwe

- Council conclusions -

1. Zimbabwe is going through a multifaceted, prolonged and deep crisis. The transition in Zimbabwe nevertheless opened doors for economic and political reforms which the then newly elected Government committed to implement. The European Union (EU) remains ready to support these policies, as underlined in the Council Conclusions adopted on 22 January 2018. Seizing opportunities for real transformation would facilitate steps towards deeper re-engagement of the EU, based on mutual commitments and shared values in line with the 2030 Agenda, and focused on human rights, democracy, governance and the rule of law.
2. The EU is engaged on the basis of the Government's own agenda, in line with the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe, as well as the recommendations of both the Motlanthe Commission on post-electoral violence and the Final Report of the EU Electoral Observation Mission to Zimbabwe. The EU welcomes the resumption of a formal political dialogue in 2019, as a step towards a more constructive EU-Zimbabwe relationship.
3. The lack of substantial reforms, the further shrinking of democratic space and corruption, have however contributed to the current deteriorating humanitarian crisis and to the economic and social situation.
4. The EU calls on the government to accelerate the political and economic reform process as a matter of urgency, for the benefit of its population. Perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses should swiftly be brought to justice and the recommendations of the Motlanthe Commission of Inquiry should be implemented without further delay. In addition, an inclusive national dialogue is key to finding structural and durable solutions to the challenges faced by Zimbabwe.

5. Sound political and economic governance are paramount if the business and investment climate in Zimbabwe is to be improved, and inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development are to be achieved. The Economic Partnership Agreement, applied since 2012, remains a driver to attract both foreign and domestic investment.
6. Zimbabwe is currently experiencing an acute humanitarian crisis, including a severe food security emergency further exacerbated by climate change. The EU is supporting the people of Zimbabwe in various sectors, such as economic development, primary health care, resilience building, as well as through humanitarian assistance. To that end, the EU has stepped up its support substantially since 2019.
7. The EU has decided to renew its arms embargo and to maintain a targeted assets freeze against one company, Zimbabwe Defence Industries, for one year, taking into account the situation in Zimbabwe, including the yet to be investigated alleged role of the armed and security forces in human rights abuses. The restrictive measures against four individuals are suspended. The arms embargo, as well as the asset freeze against Zimbabwe Defence Industries, do not affect the Zimbabwean economy, foreign direct investment, or trade. They are motivated by the EU's intention to encourage a demonstrable commitment by the Zimbabwean authorities to upholding the rule of law and human rights.
8. The EU is ready to review the whole range of its policies at any time, when justified, based on developments in the country. The EU will seek increased collaboration with international partners, most importantly the African Union, SADC and its member countries, and international financial institutions, who can play a key role by supporting Zimbabwe in enabling an inclusive dialogue and in accelerating progress in reforms.