



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 12 April 2024
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LIMITE
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DRAFT MINUTES
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
(Foreign Affairs)
18 March 2024

Non-legislative activities

3. Current affairs¹

The Council discussed Armenia and Azerbaijan, Niger and Haiti.

4. Russian aggression against Ukraine²

Exchange of views

The Council held an exchange of views on the EU's response to the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

5. Belarus

Exchange of views

The Council had an exchange on the situation in Belarus **and the country's external action.**

6. Situation in the Middle East

Exchange of views

The Council discussed the latest developments in the region and the EU's response.

7. Any other business

The Council took note of the information provided by Italy and Austria on Bosnia and Herzegovina (document 7658/24), by Italy on its 'Food for Gaza' initiative (document 7861/24) and by Belgium on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) (document 7764/24).

¹ Including an informal exchange of views with the United States Secretary of State (via videoconference)

² Including an informal exchange of views with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (via videoconference)

Statements to the non-legislative "A" items set out in doc. 7739/24

Ad "A" item 1: **Council Decision on the conclusion of the Interim Agreement on Trade
between the European Union and Chile**
Adoption

STATEMENT BY BELGIUM AND FRANCE

- “1. Belgium and France attach particular importance to relations with Chile, which they regard as a reliable supporter of multilateralism and an important democratic partner.
2. Belgium and France therefore welcome the modernisation of the Association Agreement in force since 2003 between the European Union and Chile and the signing on 18 July 2023 of the Memorandum of Understanding between the EU and Chile on a strategic partnership on sustainable raw materials value chains. The modernisation of the Association Agreement was necessary in order to take account of new political and economic realities and the progress made in the partnership between the European Union and Chile.
3. In particular, Belgium and France welcome the addition of new provisions and commitments on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD). Throughout the negotiations, Belgium and France called for the inclusion of ambitious, binding and enforceable provisions on the environment, climate and social rights.
4. In that regard, Belgium and France welcome the joint statement by the European Union and Chile on trade and sustainable development, which demonstrates not only the willingness of the parties to implement the common trade and sustainable development priorities identified in the Agreement – and to do so by fully involving civil society – but also their commitment to further strengthen the provisions on trade and sustainable development by initiating a formal review process of TSD commitments as soon as the Interim Free Trade Agreement enters into force, and to conclude that process within 12 months of that entry into force.
5. With regard to the elements relating to trade and sustainable development already present in the Agreement, Belgium and France attach particular importance to the parties’ commitment to respect, promote and effectively implement the core principles of the ILO, and to work on the ILO’s new fundamental principle on health and safety at work, as well as their commitment to respect and effectively implement the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Climate Agreement, including the Paris Agreement's commitments as regards its nationally determined contributions, and the Convention on Biological Biodiversity.

6. Also in relation to trade and sustainable development, Belgium and France stress the importance of the commitments made in Chapter 7 of the Agreement in terms of cooperation on sustainable food systems, and will closely monitor the work of the relevant subcommittee, in particular with the aim of agreeing annually on the actions to be taken to pursue the objectives of that chapter. The same applies to Chapter 8 on energy and raw materials, and in particular to the joint commitment to carry out assessments of environmental impact in respect of projects or activities relating to energy or raw materials that may have a significant impact on population; human health; biodiversity; land, soil, water, air or climate; and cultural heritage or landscape. The involvement of local communities will be a focal point in that regard.
7. As regards the procedure for reviewing the ‘Trade and Sustainable Development’ chapter of the Agreement, Belgium and France call for alignment with the June 2022 Communication on the TSD Review, inter alia to further improve the applicability mechanism of the ‘Trade and Sustainable Development’ chapter, including the possibility of applying a compliance phase, and relevant countermeasures as a last resort.
8. It is on the basis of this work plan that Belgium and France agree to sign the EU-Chile agreements.
9. Belgium and France will closely monitor the implementation of the common priorities identified in the Agreement, as well as the negotiations on the review of the TSD chapter and compliance with the 12-month period following the entry into force of the Interim Free Trade Agreement for the finalisation of that review process. Belgium and France call for full transparency from the Commission during that process.”

STATEMENT BY GREECE

- “1. Greece recognises the political and economic importance of the Interim Agreement on Trade between the European Union and the Republic of Chile.
2. Greece underlines the importance it attaches to the protection of geographical indications and expresses its concern regarding the practice of registering trademarks in bad faith, which undermines the effective implementation of the protection of geographical indications provided for in the Agreement.
3. Greece expects that Chile, acting in good faith, will conform to the commitment undertaken in the letter of the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs on 28 February 2022, according to which the final decision on objections to trademark applications would have been taken before the signature of the modernised EU-Chile Association Agreement and the results of this process would have been communicated to the EU.
4. Greece calls on the Commission to continue its efforts to address the issue in the context of the effective implementation and enforcement of the Agreement.”

Ad "A" item 2:

Conclusions on green diplomacy
Approval

STATEMENT BY AUSTRIA, GERMANY, PORTUGAL, SPAIN AND LUXEMBOURG

“We underline the importance of the EU Green Diplomacy and support the Council Conclusions. However, we hold the view that nuclear power is neither a green nor a renewable source of energy and that it is neither a safe nor a sustainable technology and therefore not covered by the reference to “deployment of safe and sustainable low-carbon technologies”. We reiterate that cooperation and support on EU-level should only be focused on renewable technologies as well as energy efficiency.

Furthermore we consider that the reference to the diversification of nuclear fuel supplies shall not be interpreted in a way that EU diplomacy receives an additional competence. The trade in nuclear technology and fuel and related activities shall continue to be exercised in the strict respect of the competences of the Member States and the European Union. The efforts of the EU energy diplomacy in the diversification of natural gas supply shall not serve as a precedent to be replicated in the nuclear energy sector.”

Ad "A" item 6:

**Council Decision amending Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509
establishing a European Peace Facility**
Adoption

STATEMENT BY GREECE

“While recalling our previous statement of May 2023 regarding Council Decision 2023/927 in all its aspects, we would like to underline the following:

1. Greece is committed to providing support to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, including through the European Peace Facility. We support the establishment of the Ukraine Assistance Fund, provided that our security and defense interests be duly taken into account.
2. In this regard, Greece considers that the provisions of this Decision do not constitute a precedent regarding any terms and conditions of future decisions or regulations concerning the European defense industry.
3. Moreover, flexibility vis-à-vis operators established or having their production outside of the Union or Norway should be granted only in exceptional cases and in full accordance with the rules of origin and nationality provided in the EPF Implementing Rules.
4. Finally, in view of the financing of activities included in future assistance measures to support the Ukrainian Armed Forces, Greece underscores the obligation of Member States to provide information on the suppliers and subcontractors involved.”