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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on Common Security and Defence Policy as adopted by the Council on 23 July 2012.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON
COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY
(FAC, 23 JULY 2012)**

1. The Council, recalling its December 2011 Conclusions, welcomes the progress on CSDP that has been achieved since then, as set out in the report by the High Representative. The Council in particular looks forward to the imminent launch of three new CSDP missions, EUCAP Nestor in the Horn of Africa, EUCAP SAHEL Niger, and EUAVSEC South Sudan as well as the continued planning for EU support to border security in Libya. The Council also underlines its full commitment to the success of ongoing CSDP missions and operations.
2. The Council underlines the concrete impact of CSDP missions and operations on the ground. Operational engagement of the Union through CSDP is a very tangible expression of the EU's commitment to contribute to promote and preserve peace and stability, strengthening the EU's overall ability to respond to security challenges with civil and military crisis management instruments.
3. The Council emphasizes that the focus and impact of such operational engagement is enhanced when it is embedded in an overarching strategy, such as the strategic frameworks for the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region. This allows for a comprehensive approach that makes full use of the role of the High Representative who is also one of the Vice Presidents of the European Commission, and that mobilises the different tools at the EU's disposal in close interaction with the Member States to achieve the EU's objectives, in close cooperation with other international actors and making optimal use of scarce resources. The Council looks forward to the development of a joint communication on the comprehensive approach by the European Commission and the High Representative. The Council underlines the importance of CSDP as an essential element for such a comprehensive approach. In this context, the Council notes the ongoing revision of crisis management procedures aimed at accelerating and improving the effectiveness of CSDP planning, decision-making, execution and

evaluation, keeping Member States involved throughout the process. The Council looks forward to concrete proposals on this revision by the end of the year. Furthermore, existing financial rules and procedures could be examined in order to better reflect the operational needs of CSDP.

4. The Council welcomes the activation of the EU Operations Centre in support of the CSDP missions and operations in the Horn of Africa, namely Operation Atalanta, EUTM Somalia, and EUCAP Nestor, with a view to increasing efficiency, coherence and synergies. It looks forward to its first review in September 2012.
5. In line with the December conclusions on CSDP, the Council recalls the need for improvements to enable earlier and more effective advanced planning.
6. The Council reiterates the importance of adequate resourcing of CSDP missions and operations as well as EEAS crisis management structures, in order for them to be able to deliver on their mandate. In this context, the Council renews its commitment to support sustainable military and civilian capability development by the Member States, to address capability gaps and ensure that in the future also the required capabilities will be available.

It reiterates the need for a long-term, structured approach to the pooling and sharing of military capabilities and welcomes the EDA's work in this regard in view of the changing strategic environment, the constraints on the defence budgets, and taking into account the need to continue promoting synergies with wider EU policies. It also looks forward to the development of a more systematic approach to the provision of EU Battlegroups. The Council will revert to these issues in November.

Furthermore, the Council welcomes the approved multi-annual work plan on civilian capabilities which aims at helping CSDP civilian missions to be staffed with highly qualified personnel as well as promptly receiving needed services and equipment. To this effect, in 2012-13, concrete action will focus on, inter alia, finalization and implementation of the

Goalkeeper, strengthening ties between the CSDP and Freedom, Security and Justice (FSJ) actors, enhancement of civilian rapid deployment parameters, incorporation of lessons learned and best practices as well as fostering national strategies. The Council encourages the European Commission and the EEAS to take work forward on the possible establishment of a Shared Services Centre and looks forward to the launch of the warehouse facility.

7. The Council notes with satisfaction ongoing work on developing further cooperation with partner countries in view of their participation in and support to CSDP missions and operations. Further development of CSDP cooperation in particular with partner countries in the Southern and Eastern neighbourhood will contribute to enhancing regional security and stability. The Council also encourages further cooperation with regional and multilateral organisations, in particular with the UN, NATO and AU, and welcomes the ongoing work aimed at strengthening EU cooperation with the UN on crisis management.
8. The Council stresses the need for further dynamic progress on CSDP, decides to remain actively seized of all matters relating to CSDP and looks forward to review progress on the basis of concrete steps. The Council encourages the High Representative to take forward work on CSDP, in close cooperation with Member States, with a view to the next FAC discussion by the end of this year. Furthermore, the Council looks forward to the European Council discussion in the course of 2013, on defence issues as foreseen by the President of the European Council.
