**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

Brussels, 21 October 2021

**NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF**

**DSG POL, DSG CSDP-CR, DSG ECO, MD GLOBAL, MD AFRICA, MD AMERICAS, MD ASIAPAC, MD EURCA, MD EUROPE, MD MENA, MD CSDP-CR, DG EUMS**

**Subject: Foreign Affairs Council of 18 October 2021**

This note sets out the operational follow-up to the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council on 18 October. The tasking below should be carried out in consultation with all relevant services and under the authority of the DSGs concerned.

**I. Discussion Items**

1. **Gulf**

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| **FAC Outcomes:** |
| * Scale up EU engagement in the Gulf in light of more positive dynamics in the region [GCC normalization, Abraham accords, Baghdad conference] also taking account of remaining tensions and increased influence of other actors [China, Turkey and Russia].
* Strengthen dialogue with Gulf partners [with Qatar on Afghanistan, but also Yemen, Syria, Libya, the Horn, Sahel, CT].
* Prompt resumption of JCPOA negotiations
* On broader regional security, strong support was voiced for local initiatives (e.g. Baghdad Conference and the importance of supporting the stability of Iraq post elections).
* Support for confidence building measures on maritime safety, climate change, green transition and digital
* Planned opening of new EU Delegations (Qatar, Oman), bilateral cooperation arrangements and ambition to hold a EU-GCC Joint Council next year. Re-engage on a FTA with the GCC
* Several Member States supported the appointment of a EU special envoy to the Gulf
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| **Follow-up actions:** | **Timeline:** |
| MENA.1🡪 1. Prepare EU-GCC Joint Council
2. Follow up on invite GCC Secretary General to Brussels

MENA.4 🡪 1. Reflect FAC discussion into the Joint Communication
2. Follow up on invite Qatari FM to the FAC
3. Reflect on possibilities regarding Member States’ proposal for an EU special envoy for the region.
 | * Early 2022, in coordination with MS and COM
* 19 October 2021
* Q1 or Q2 2022, with COM
* December FAC (poss)
* Ongoing
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1. **Eastern Partnership**

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| **FAC Outcome:** |
| * Continue preparations for the upcoming Summit, including a joint declaration.
* Continue preparatory work for the implementation of the renewed EaP agenda.
* Continue working on socio-economic recovery, reinforcing conditionality and pushing partner countries for reforms particularly on democracy, human rights, rule of law and anti-corruption.
* Continue supporting partner countries on vaccines and equivalence of vaccine certificates.
* Preserve the right balance between differentiation and inclusivity, while keeping the partners motivated.
* Consider possibilities for further engagement with partner countries on cyber and hybrid threats, disinformation as well as in the context of the European Peace Facility and PESCO.
* Consider ways to further support Moldova in light of the energy crisis the country is facing.
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| **Follow-up actions:** | **Timeline:** |
| EURCA.1 (with EURCA.2 and COM) 🡪 1. Convey main outcomes of the FAC to PEC, in view of EUCO
2. Prepare annual Eastern Partnership Ministerial and Summit, notably: (1) negotiate Summit declaration with partner countries, (2) consider concrete options for enhanced sectoral cooperation and new ways of engagement with interested partners, (3) continue exchanges and engagement with the opposition and civil society in Belarus,

EURCA.2 (with COM) 🡪 1. Close engagement with Moldovan authorities and MS on the current gas crisis, including at the EU-Moldova Association Council.
 | * 21-22 October
* Ongoing
* Ongoing
 |

1. **Ethiopia**

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| **Outcome:** |
| * Increase pressure on humanitarian access, ceasefire, accountability for human rights violations, withdrawal of foreign troops, while keeping political engagement with the government.
* Ms welcomed the upcoming joint visit by Cssr Urpilainen and EUSR Weber.
* Implement a stronger collective political and financial pressure, in close coordination with Bretton Woods institutions, while “doing no harm”
* Start considering response to the OHCHR/EHRC report, that will be issued on 1 November on human rights violations, including restrictive measures.
* Continue principled humanitarian action; support for the UN and Mediation carried out by AU Special Envoy Obasanjo
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| **Follow-up actions:** | **Timeline:** |
| AFRICA.5 (with COM and EUSR) 🡪1. Maintain dialogue with Ethiopian authorities and other actors. Visit by CSSR Urpilainen and EUSR to Addis
2. Prepare options on how to implement a stronger collective political and financial pressure.
3. Continue work towards increasing humanitarian access and respect of international humanitarian law. Explore options to invite other partners to join the humanitarian air bridge.
4. Start internal work on possible restrictive measures, possibly under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, after publication of UNHCR/EHRC report. Stand ready to react publicly after its publication.
5. Support mediation by AU Special Envoy Obasanjo.
 | * Ongoing
* Immediate
* Ongoing
* November
* Ongoing
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1. **Nicaragua**

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| **Outcome:** |
| * Agreement on five strategic lines proposed by the HR/VP:
	+ strong statement following the elections to make clear that the electoral process was not free, transparent nor credible, and will continue its policies based on respect for democracy, human rights and rule of law. In coordination with like-minded partners
	+ consider the possibility of further sanctions.
	+ continue its cooperation in Nicaragua, but not with Nicaragua (i.e. the Government) in order to support the most vulnerable groups in the country.
	+ explore the option of suspending the trade part of the EU-Central America Association only for Nicaragua, and for a number of selected tariff lines, while making sure that such action does not impose additional hardship on the population.
	+ consider calibrated restrictions on Nicaragua’s support from International Financial Institutions (IFIs).
* Agreement on the use of sanctions as a possible tool.
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| **Follow-up actions:** | **Timeline:** |
| AMERICAS.2 🡪1. Prepare a draft declaration by the HR on behalf of the EU
2. Explore possibility of new individual sanctions
3. Reflect on possible actions, for instance on International Financial Institutions
4. Continue close cooperation with like-minded partners
 | * ready to be published immediately after the elections of 7 November
* Immediate
* Immediate
* Ongoing
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**II. Current Affairs**

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| **Follow-up actions:** | **Timeline:** |
| **Afghanistan**ASIAPAC.2🡪 1. Continue work towards establishing a minimal EU presence in Kabul
2. Continue work towards the achievement of the five benchmarks
3. Continue working for a Regional Platform
4. Continue evacuation efforts and follow-up on HRVP plea for MS support (visas)
 | * ongoing
* ongoing
* ongoing
* ongoing
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| **Tunisia**MENA.3🡪1. Reflect on optimal way to convey balanced and coordinated messages, including on whether it could be useful to task Member States to visit the region
2. Reflect on options to support Tunisia in holding an inclusive national dialogue.
 | * ongoing
* ongoing
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| **Western Balkans** EUROPE.2🡪1. Continue monitoring and assisting the implementation of the agreement of 30 September
2. Prepare a full discussion item for at the November FAC meeting
 | * ongoing
* November
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| **Climate Diplomacy** GLOBAL.GI.3 (with EUDELs and MS)🡪 1. Continue to deliver the COP26 demarche; diplomatic outreach in preparation of and at G20 summit.
2. Conduct outreach with MS on the EU-US Global Methane Pledge
3. Prepare for an exchange on the geopolitics of energy policy at an upcoming FAC
 | * COP26/ 31 October – 12 November
* Ongoing
* TBC
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| **Varosha** EEAS.POL and EUROPE.3 🡪1. Prepare an options paper (analysis of the situation, options to support the UN process)
2. Continue supporting UN facilitation and peacekeeping efforts
 | * Immediate
* Ongoing
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| **Belarus**EURCA.2 (with STRAT2; GLOBAL.4, POL.DPD.1.Sanctions) 🡪 1. Continue monitoring the situation at the EU’s external border with Belarus, continue outreaching to relevant third countries
2. Reinforce our action for countering disinformation from the Lukashenko regime
3. Advance work on the fifth sanctions package, proactively facilitating its finalisation with MS.
4. Evaluate all options for action against responsible airlines and travel operators.
5. Continue monitoring the worsening human rights situation inside the country and react accordingly
6. Continue outreach in multilateral fora and with international partners (including IOM and UNHCR)
 | * Ongoing
* Ongoing
* November FAC (poss)
* ongoing
* ongoing
* ongoing
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| **Mali**AFRICA.3 (with MS) 🡪Also in view of the upcoming discussion on Sahel at FAC November: 1. Monitor developments in relations with the Wagner Group.
2. Options on how to ensure a successful transition.
3. Continue supporting ECOWAS.
4. Develop options orf restrictive measures
 | * ongoing
* Immediate
* ongoing
* November FAC (poss)
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| **Libya**MENA.3🡪1. Options for potential EU assistance (regional dimension of the conflict).
2. Capacity building for the election commission, grants and trainings for CSOs
3. Look into developing operational details for an Election Observation Mission
 | * ongoing
* Immediate
* ongoing
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| **Egypt**MENA.5🡪1. Continue to engage with Egypt on migration management.
2. Option of visit by EUSR for human rights
 | * ongoing
* ongoing
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| **Israel** MENA.2 🡪 1. Continue exploring what EU can internally agree on before approaching Israel on the issue of EU-Israel Association Council
 | * ongoing
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(signed)

Stefano Sannino

Copy: Deputy MDs, Working Group Chairs, Political assistants to SG, DSGs and MDs, Heads of Divisions, SG.COORD Council Team

CAB HRVP: P. Serrano, M. Briens