

European Neighbourhood Watch

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Thinking ahead for Europe

Implications of the Eurozone crisis for EU foreign policy - costs and opportunities

Europe, or more precisely the eurozone, has become a big problem for the world economy. This has profound implications for European foreign policy. Foreign ministers may turn the other way, with remarks like 'not our fault', and seek to get on with their business of making a better world with projection of European values into the international arena, no doubt stressing their continuing commitment to a normative multilateral order.

But this approach does not fly. The immediate consequence of the eurozone crisis is the degradation of reputation of the European Union as a whole on two accounts: as a model of competent economic policy management, and as a model of enlightened regional integration. The management of the crisis has been collectively incompetent, and the eurozone's governance structure has proved to be systemically flawed. This reputational degradation heightens resentment in the rest of the world at the overrepresentation of European states in the major multilateral organizations.

All of which is not just vague speculation, but concrete reality, in three major institutions, the IMF, World Bank and UN Security Council. The voting weights in the IMF were last revised in 2010, with ratification still pending, and with further revisions normally due at five yearly intervals. In 2010 Belgium and the Netherlands fought as their supreme national priority to retain their seats on the IMF Executive Board. They could only be pushed into giving some ground when the United States threatened to invoke a rule or procedure of the IMF, which meant that in the absence of agreement two states with smallest quotas would be ejected from the Board, these two happening to be India and Brazil – what a triumph of European diplomacy that would have been. While pretending in speeches to be the champions of a vigorous multilateral order, these Europeans were engaging in mere bureaucratic protectionism.

The new IMF affair concerns the \$460 billion firewall recently agreed to protect against contagion from the eurozone crisis. The new emerging world powers, notably the BRICS, agreed to make major contributions, whereas the United States and Canada declined to make any. Upon making enquiries about the precise amounts of the contributions by the BRICS we learned recently that at least some of them have so far declined to announce their offers since they want to see first progress on the revision of their voting weights. The conditionality tables are turned.

Now for the World Bank. The very recent election of a new President of US nationality, following the election of a European to the IMF in 2011, has renewed resentment over

the continuation of this Western leadership preserve. The voting weights are such that if the old West votes together in mutual support, as they have just done in both cases, they cannot be outvoted by the rest of the world. But now the BRICS begin to discuss the feasibility of setting up their own BRICS development bank, motivated at least in part by the slow and limited recognition by the West of their underrepresentation. The BRICS have ample capacity to do this on a grand scale. Brazil points out that its own development bank alone has a balance sheet twice that of the World Bank. Sidelining of the World Bank would have major implications for the economic policy norms prevailing in global finance. The Europeans in particular, supposedly multilateralism's best friend, would be fostering a structural development at the level of global finance over which they would have no voice at all. Hanging on to overrepresentation for as long as possible as the highest national priority thus becomes counterproductive.

Questions of reforming the UN Security Council have been debated for decades. The original P5 order (veto carrying permanent members: China, France, UK, US, and USSR succeeded by Russia), born of the outcome of the second world war 67 years ago, remains intact. France and the UK hold onto their P5 positions as diplomatic priorities. The claims of Germany, Japan, Brazil and India go on unanswered. Germany appreciates that its demand would only make the European overrepresentation worse, and has said it could agree to seat for the EU instead, but France and the UK do not agree to this.

What to do? Consolidated representation with a reduced weight compared to the total weights of EU member states is the logical solution, most clearly for the IMF and World Bank. At the IMF there should be single seat and voting weight for the eurozone, assuming its leaders can soon summon up enough wisdom to resolve the crisis before it is too late. At the World Bank there should be a single seat for the EU, which is the largest aid donor globally, with the Commission's programmes larger than any of the bilateral programmes of its member states.

For the UN Security Council population weights are arguably more relevant than economic weights. On this score there are now five state with over one hundred million population (i.e. double or more France or the UK) without permanent representation the Security Council: billionaire India here in a class of its own, followed by Indonesia, Brazil, Japan and Mexico. The EU did in 2011 secure improved status at the UN General Assembly, and at the UN Security Council the EU High Representative can be invited to speak on issues where there is an EU

Table of Contents

Editorial: “Implications of the Eurozone crisis for EU foreign policy - costs and opportunities”

European Neighbourhood Policy

EU bolsters its support to reformers in its Southern and Eastern neighbourhoods

Presentation of the European Neighbourhood Policy package
European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee

Eastern Neighbourhood

Customs training initiative boosts Transnistria confidence-building process

EU and the Republic of Moldova hold Human Rights Dialogue
HRVP Ashton and Commissioner Füle on the Parliamentary elections in Armenia

Fifteenth EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council

European Parliament demands an end to selective justice in Ukraine

Spokesperson of the HRVP on homophobic violence at “Pride” events in Kyiv

European Union supports the Public Defender Office with a new grant

Awareness raising event for ethnic groups in Georgia

EIB supports upgrade of road infrastructure in Georgia with EUR 170 million

23rd IPRM meeting takes place in Ergneti

Working groups of the European Dialogue on Modernisation held start-up meetings

Russia

Composition of the Russian Government

Iran

HRVP following the talks of E3+3 with Iran in Bagdad on 24th May 2012

Southern Neighbourhood

Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM and the UfM Secretariat to establish an operational collaboration

MEPs call for trade to build democracy in Arab Spring countries

A trade and investment strategy for the Southern Mediterranean
Reporting progress and proposing follow-up for de-polluting the Mediterranean by 2020

EBRD President sees investments flowing to Tunisia in September this year

HRVP Ashton and Commissioner Füle on the elections in Algeria

EU continues its support to the Palestinian Authority by contributing €22.5 million

EU-Israel Association Committee held in Jerusalem today

Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process

Council conclusions on Syria

HRVP Ashton on Syria

position. But this hardly solves the problem of reform demanded by the new major powers.

For how long can the legacy of the second world war continue, after 67 years so far? Conservatives in France and the UK whose population sizes are not even in the top 10 of the G20, want to hold on to the status quo as long as possible. They will need a strong strategic argument to shift their position, not just some vague appeal to fairness based on population and economic data. In fact one such argument becomes evident, with the rise of the BRICS as a group determined to achieve greater power in world affairs as their only common interest. The BRICS divide on many accounts, but the most salient here is that three style themselves as vibrant democracies (Brazil, India, South Africa, of ‘ISBA’ as a group), whereas two remain semi-authoritarian states (China, Russia). These divergences in domestic political norms spill over into foreign policy norms. The question of global strategic political significance is whether adherence to the kind of political norms favoured by the Europe can become predominant, to the point of persuading China and Russia to come closer to a normative global consensus. This will hang on whether West can increasingly converge with the ISBAs with whom it has much political ideology in common, inter alia supporting the claims of India and Brazil for permanent Security Council membership; or whether continued European conservatism over the status quo pushes the ISBAs into anti-Western positions with the other BRICS.

The voices that just lament European relative decline neglect the fact that the EU has in fact a huge opportunity, if only its institutions and member states can get round to exploiting it. Together the EU is number one in the world economy, and its population weight of 500 million puts in next in line after the two billionaires, China and India. The EU also has a clear doctrine in international relations, with its support for normatively ordered multilateralism. Salvation of the euro is going to require a federalistic strengthening of the economic competences at least of the eurozone, and probably in some degree for the EU as a whole. Europe’s foreign policy planners should be at work on how to follow this through synergetically with rationalization and strengthening of the EU’s role as global actor.

Michael Emerson
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EU bolsters its support to reformers in its Southern and Eastern neighbourhoods

Brussels, 15 May 2012. [Link](#)

In May 2011, in the midst of dramatic changes sweeping the Southern Neighbourhood, the EU completed a major review of its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). According to a policy of “more for more”, committed reformers in the EU’s Southern and Eastern neighbourhood would be awarded greater and broader EU support.

The ENP package presented today, by Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Commission Vice-President and Štefan Füle, EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, assesses the first year of implementation of the new approach. It also proposes a roadmap for giving further impetus to the implementation of the Eastern Partnership.

Over the last twelve months, the EU has responded with determination to a fast - changing situation in its neighbourhood. The joint Communication assesses the results of the new policy:

- The EU re-oriented assistance programmes and made EUR 1 billion more available in 2011-2013 to be channelled through new innovative programmes - SPRING for the Southern Neighbourhood and EaPIC for the Eastern Neighbourhood. It increased the lending ceilings of the European Investment Bank by EUR 1.15 billion, and successfully proposed the extension of the mandate of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to the EU’s southern neighbours.
- Applying the reform-rewarding logic of “more for more”, the EU has supported those partners embarking on political reforms. In Tunisia the EU has doubled its financial assistance from EUR 80 million to EUR 160 million in 2011. The EU has also been quick to curtail relations with countries grossly violating human rights, and impose wide ranging sanctions against those regimes, instead channelling its support towards civil society and affected populations.
- The resumption of official 5+2 talks on the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict in the Republic of Moldova was accompanied by intensified co-operation with the Government of Moldova, the launch of large-scale EU confidence building measures and a step-by-step review of EU sanctions against Transnistria.
- A Civil Society Facility covering all ENP countries was launched in September with an initial budget of EUR 26 million for 2011 and similar additional amounts planned for 2012 and 2013.

Upon finalisation of the assessment, High Representative Catherine Ashton declared: Last year, we relaunched our Neighbourhood Policy to reflect the historic changes going on around us. We now see the first results of this review, which sought to intensify assistance to those who went further in democratic and economic reforms. We have seen great

progress in some countries. In others, we need to encourage the political leadership to take bold steps down the path to reform. I have always said that we will be judged on our work with our immediate neighbours, and I am convinced that we are moving in the right direction. We will continue to help our partners in their efforts to embed fundamental values and reinforce the economic reforms which are necessary to create what I call ‘deep democracy’

Štefan Füle added “While we should not indulge in self-congratulation and we should always make a reality check about the effectiveness of our policy, we have set the new policy on solid grounds and have developed many initiatives that I am confident are already bearing fruit”.

There was substantial progress on political association with partner countries. Negotiations on an Association Agreement (AA) have been launched with the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Progress has been made on economic integration (so called Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas as an integral part of AAs); negotiations were launched with Moldova and Georgia, and will shortly be launched with Armenia. Similar negotiations with Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia are likely to be opened before the end of the year.

While AA (including DCFTA) negotiations were finalised with Ukraine, followed by the Agreement’s initialling in March, remaining concerns about the domestic political situation in Ukraine have cast doubts about the early signature and ratification of this agreement, unless these concerns are addressed.

Significant progress has also been made in the area of mobility. Steps were taken towards visa liberalisation with Eastern partners, namely the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia. A mobility partnership has been recently established with Armenia and negotiations on mobility partnership with Azerbaijan could be launched soon. A special offer in this area has been made to Belarus. In the South, dialogues on migration, mobility and security were launched with Morocco and Tunisia, opening the way to mobility partnerships. The Communication proposes to initiate a dialogue with Jordan.

Following the request made by the March 2012 European Council, the staff working document on the “Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity” proposes a Roadmap including objectives, instruments and actions for the implementation of EU policies towards Southern Mediterranean partners.

As agreed at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Warsaw in 2011, a separate joint Communication proposes A Roadmap to the autumn 2013 Eastern Partnership Summit. The Communication describes for the first time the full range of bilateral and multilateral activities under the Eastern Partnership. The Roadmap reconfirms the shared commitment of the EU and the Eastern European partner countries to democratic reforms and economic transformation, and sets out an ambitious work programme in view of next year’s summit in Vilnius. It will give impetus to objectives of the Eastern Partnership: to accelerate

political association and deepen economic integration of the partner countries with the EU; to increase the mobility of citizens in a secure and well managed environment; and to foster cooperation across a wide range of sectors.

“The Eastern Partnership addresses the issue of unfinished transformation” commented High Representative Ashton. “I am confident that the Roadmap will help partner countries accelerate their transition towards democracy and market-oriented economy by providing a monitoring tool in support of their reform process. The more partner countries achieve tangible progress in their reform efforts, the more the EU will be prepared to support them. It is also vital that partners make renewed efforts to resolve the conflicts which have blighted the region for far too long. The EU stands ready to strengthen our support to those who are ready to take courageous decisions and turn the page.”

Commissioner Füle added: “I am pleased to see that this policy tool has been developed in consultation with EU Member States, our Eastern European partners, and civil society. The Roadmap lays out in a transparent way for all partners the range of objectives of the Eastern Partnership, the expected policy actions on the part of our partners, the EU support to achieve these objectives, and an indication of what can be achieved by the next Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in autumn 2013.”

Presentation of the European Neighbourhood Policy package European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee
Strasbourg, 21 May 2012. [Link](#)

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here with you again to talk about the new European Neighbourhood Policy package. And I am very happy that my good friend the Council of Europe Secretary General, Mr Jagland, is here with us today.

Almost exactly one year ago, I presented the new approach of the European Neighbourhood Policy to you. Now, I would like to tell you about the delivery of this policy. I would also like to highlight our crucial cooperation with the Council of Europe in this domain.

The main goals of the renewed European Neighbourhood Policy are

- to provide greater support to partners engaged in building deep and sustainable democracies;
- to support more effectively inclusive economic development;
- to strengthen the two regional dimensions of the European Neighbourhood Policy, namely the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean.

The renewed ENP is based on the “more for more” approach: more support from the European Union in return for more progress towards democratic reform. It is also based:

- on mutual accountability between the European Union and its partners;
- on partnerships not only with governments but also with civil society;
- on the recognition of the role of women in societal and political transitions; and
- on increased differentiation by country, which makes our policies more effective and better suited to partners’ needs.

One year on, what have we done to implement this policy? First, let us take sustainable democracy.

To support democratic transition, we have helped a number of Southern neighbours conduct democratic elections with the participation of a diversity of political parties.

- The European Union has deployed fully-fledged Election Observation Missions in Tunisia and Algeria, and sent election experts to Morocco.
- It has also provided technical assistance to Egypt.
- Libya has invited the European Union to observe the forthcoming elections for a constitutional assembly and Cathy Ashton has recently decided to deploy an election assessment team (EAT) which will be present in all main Libyan cities.

And we have also stepped up co-operation with the Council of Europe. The European Union supported the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly offering “Partner for Democracy Status” to Parliaments of Southern Mediterranean countries, notably Morocco and the Palestinian Authority. We also backed Secretary General Jagland’s successful proposal for a new Council of Europe strategy towards its neighbours.

Co-operation with the Council of Europe is strategic for us. Our work is mutually re-enforcing. I am very grateful to the Council of Europe for the active role that it is playing in the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood which is essential for establishing sustainable democracies.

I also welcome the positive response of the Council of Europe to the European Union requests to expand our cooperation in the South Mediterranean. The objectives, priorities and actions identified as part of its new neighbourhood policy fully match the priorities and actions we have been discussing together during the past year.

The progress we have jointly made is remarkable, in particular in the Southern Mediterranean: Initial ideas have been developed into a fully fledged cooperation framework, including concrete projects on the ground.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members,

Second, to support democratic change, the European Union has thoroughly applied the principle of “more for more”. Despite the current economic crisis in Europe, funding for our neighbourhood has increased.

- One billion euro of additional grant funding is being made available to partners.

- We increased the lending ceilings to partner countries from the European Investment Bank by EUR 1.15 billion.
- And we successfully operated to extend the mandate of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to the Southern partners. In order to fast track the start of the EBRD activities in the South Mediterranean region, the Commission has granted EUR 20 million for supporting private sector development operations.

Third, we have also made progress in important policy areas with those partners that are making most progress in political and economic reforms. In the area of trade, in the context of the ongoing negotiations on Association Agreements with Eastern partners, we launched negotiations for Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, and we are about to do so with Armenia. The Council also adopted negotiating directives for Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

Fourth, in the field of mobility the European Union has recently concluded a mobility partnership with Armenia and plans to conclude mobility partnerships with Morocco and Tunisia. We have also made progress on more technical cooperation in a number of sectors, including agriculture and rural development, and on the participation of neighbours in European Union programmes and agencies, with Morocco as the latest partner to enjoy this benefit.

By contrast, we have reduced our cooperation with partners that are not making progress towards democratic reform. We have imposed sanctions not only on Syria but also on Belarus. As for Ukraine, respect for common values and the rule of law will be of crucial importance for the speed of political association and economic integration with the European Union.

Fifth, reduced cooperation with undemocratic governments should not result in reduced support and cooperation with civil society – quite the opposite. That is why we have launched a special Civil Society Facility for our neighbourhood with an initial budget of EUR 26 million for 2011 and similar amounts planned for the following years.

Last December, the Council agreed on the main principles for the establishment of the European Endowment for Democracy, with an initial focus on the European Union Neighbourhood. We have also greatly increased funding for education and scholarships. Our programmes and initiatives in support of civil society pay particular attention to women's participation in politics and society.

Finally, in line with the objective of strengthening the regional dimensions of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the package includes a Roadmap to the autumn 2013 Eastern Partnership Summit and an additional Roadmap for the Southern partners.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members,

A key feature of the new approach has been the focus on mutual accountability. This means that we in the European

Union are accountable to our partners for the support we promise, and our partners are accountable to us for their own progress towards political and economic reform.

The progress reports on each partner concern the partners' part of the bargain. The reports seek to measure progress made by each partner in the implementation of the commitments jointly taken in the Action Plan. To do this, we have closely consulted and drawn on the expertise of many stakeholders, civil society organisations, official reports and international organisations, including the Council of Europe.

For the first time, the reports also address recommendations to each partner. The recommendations encourage partners in particular to uphold freedoms of expression, association and assembly and to promote women's rights and gender equality.

They also call for efficient and independent judiciary systems, sustained efforts to tackle corruption and security sector reforms. The recommendations are not a diktat of European officials to the partner countries, but a clear indication of what we consider achievable and desirable in order to advance our partnership.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members,

We have done much over the past year to implement our renewed European Neighbourhood Policy. However, we need to do even more.

To provide effective incentives for reform, the European Union needs to step up even further the pace of delivery. For instance it needs:

- to promote European Union investments in partner countries;
- to accelerate the process leading to Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas;
- to encourage industrial cooperation and social dialogue.

As you can see in the progress reports, there are also reform challenges and sectors of co-operation on which we need to draw our partners' attention to improve the pace of reform. I look forward to the continued close cooperation with the Council of Europe in the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy. We will continue to draw on their knowledge, on their institutional scope and on their expertise to promote sustainable democracy in our neighbourhood.

I also look forward to the continued close involvement of the European Parliament. You have a crucial role to play in supporting sustainable democracy in our partner countries. As always, I am very grateful for the continued support of this Committee and your personal intense engagement with Parliaments and civil society of the countries in our neighbourhood.

Many thanks for your attention.

Customs training initiative boosts Transnistria confidence-building processChisinau, 21 May 2012. [Link](#)

In a further demonstration of the efforts of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) to support the process of confidence building on both sides of the Dniester river, EUBAM today brought customs experts from Chisinau and Tiraspol together for a landmark training initiative that will continue in Chisinau until Friday.

'Building customs capacity towards modernization' is the first EUBAM-organised customs training initiative that both parties have participated in together, and follows on from the resumption of rail freight traffic through Transnistria on 26 April after a suspension of approximately six years.

The rail-freight resumption came about thanks to a political agreement of 30 March reached by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, Vlad Filat, and new Head of Transnistria, Yevgeny Shevchuk, and the subsequent signing of a protocol on customs control, which took into account the technical proposals developed by EUBAM aimed at resolving the customs deadlock.

EUBAM efforts at assisting the process of rail-freight resumption also included a trilateral meeting in November 2011 that saw customs representatives from Chisinau and Tiraspol engage in face to face discussions for the first time in 10 years.

Now that rail freight traffic has resumed, the emphasis will be on developing close working relationships between the two parties and proper implementation of customs control on both sides of the Dniester river.

To that end, this week's training will aim to improve participants' understanding of trade facilitation tools, and also focus on issues such as rules of origin, examination of freight, and risk analysis. It is hoped that the event will also lay the foundations for further measures of customs cooperation in future, something that EUBAM will continue to support through the provision of technical assistance.

EU and the Republic of Moldova hold Human Rights DialogueBrussels, 25 May 2012. [Link](#)

The European Union and Republic of Moldova held third round of human rights dialogue in Brussels on 23 May 2012. The dialogue was held in a frank and constructive atmosphere, confirming Moldova's commitment to tangible improvements in the protection of human rights. The exchange of views on the human rights situation in the Republic of Moldova focused on the fight against all forms of discrimination, the human rights situation in the

Transnistrian region, the freedom of the media and the fight against impunity and ill-treatment.

The Moldovan law on ensuring equality (adopted today by the Moldovan Parliament) was discussed in detail. The EU received reassurances that the law is intended to cover all grounds for discrimination in line with the international commitments of the Republic of Moldova, even though some are only implicitly mentioned. At the same time, the Moldovan side committed to issuing guidelines on the implementation of the law, which will be monitored by the EU within the existing dialogue frameworks. The EU reiterated its attachment to the general principles and values stated in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Several other areas requiring further discussion and cooperation were identified. A follow-up expert seminar on fighting impunity will be organised in the second half of the year. The EU took note of the Republic of Moldova's commitments to human rights under international law and the ENP Action Plan. The EU expressed its readiness to continue supporting the Republic of Moldova in deepening reforms.

The EU and the Republic of Moldova also discussed their cooperation on human rights issues within international organisations, in particular at the forthcoming June 2012 session of the UN Human Rights Council. The delegation of the Republic of Moldova was led by Mr. Vladimir Grosu, Deputy Minister of Justice. The EU delegation was led by Ms. Riina Kionka, Head of Division for Human Rights Policy Guidelines at the European External Action Service.

In keeping with the EU's practice of incorporating the voice of society into its meetings on human rights with third countries, the EU met with representatives of Moldovan and international NGOs prior to the consultations, and invited them to attend the latter as observers.

HRVP Ashton and Commissioner Füle on the Parliamentary elections in ArmeniaBrussels, 8 May 2012. [Link](#)

The Cooperation Council noted Ukraine's restated commitment to a foreign policy based upon European integration, and recalled the ambition of both the EU and Ukraine to upgrade their contractual relations to the level of political association and economic integration.

In this context, the EU noted a renewed undertaking from Ukraine to make progress in the implementation of the Association Agenda, the joint instrument established to prepare the way for entry into force of an Association Agreement including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Both sides welcomed the initialling of the text of the Association Agreement on 30 March 2012, after five years of negotiation. The Council adopted two reports on the implementation of the Association Agenda and undertook to give urgent attention to accelerating its implementation.

Reviewing recent developments, the EU expressed its strong concern over the state of the rule of law in Ukraine, recalling a number of statements made by EU leaders on the criminal proceedings against members of the former government, including Yulia Tymoshenko, Yuriy Lutsenko, Valeriy Ivaschenko, and others. The EU repeated its call on Ukraine to clarify reports regarding the treatment of Mrs Tymoshenko in Kharkiv on 20 April, and to allow the Ombudswoman and other persons fulfilling independent functions to conduct their work freely. The EU stressed its assessment that selective justice was a systemic problem in Ukraine which could only be fully remedied through a comprehensive reform. Any progress towards political association and economic integration will depend on Ukraine's performance, notably in relation to respect for common values and the rule of law. The EU insisted on the full respect by Ukraine of the rights of detainees and defendants, in line with Ukraine's international obligations, including suitable medical care, legal advice, and access for visitors.

The Cooperation Council discussed a number of international and regional issues, including the response of both sides to the global economic situation. In this context, the importance of supporting a multilateral rules-based approach to economic governance was underlined.

The Cooperation Council looked forward to the strengthening of the Eastern Partnership initiative in the run-up to the 2013 Eastern Partnership summit, and the benefits of cooperation through both the bilateral and multilateral channels. The Council noted the positive example which would be set to all Eastern Partnership countries by the conclusion of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area.

The Cooperation Council underlined the importance of strengthened cooperation in the area of foreign and security policy, as well as in defence policy. It reiterated in particular the value of close cooperation in the regional framework, notably in the context of the 5+2 process for the settlement of Transnistria. The Council also discussed a number of other international issues including Belarus.

The Cooperation Council welcomed progress made by Ukraine in implementing the action plan on visa liberalization, and noted the joint conclusions of 2011 EU-Ukraine Justice and Home Affairs ministerial meeting, as well as other meetings of senior officials.

The Cooperation Council discussed the medium-term perspectives for the development of relations. The EU side stressed that Ukraine's commitment to the spirit of political association would be judged in particular on the basis of its response to the selective justice issue, as well as broader judicial reform, the preparation and delivery of free and fair parliamentary elections in October, and the acceleration of the reforms set out in the Association Agenda. The EU side urged Ukraine to build on recent reforms in areas such as criminal procedure and freedom of association, with systematic structural reforms conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner. Ukraine's renewed commitment to address business climate issues was also noted.

Both sides underlined the importance of ongoing energy reform, including the restructuring of the Joint Stock Company Naftogaz, and noted recent legislation in this area.

The Co-operation Council welcomed the ongoing efforts of the international community to overcome the legacy of the Chernobyl accident and prepare the decommissioning of the site.

The EU was represented by Villy Søvndal, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. Prime Minister Mykola Azarov led the Ukrainian delegation.

Fifteenth EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council Brussels, 15 May 2012. [Link](#)

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European Parliament demands an end to selective justice in Ukraine
24 May 2012. [Link](#)

MEPs criticize the recent decision of the High Court of Ukraine to postpone its ruling on the appeal by former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko against her seven-year prison sentence, in a resolution adopted on Thursday. They warn against delaying the legal proceedings, condemn the use of force against her by prison guards and remind Ukraine of its obligation to examine any complaints of cruel treatment.

Parliament says doctors must be sent to treat Ms Tymoshenko and a high-level observer must monitor the court cases against her, as agreed last week between EP President Schulz and Prime Minister Azarov.

It also calls on the Ukrainian authorities to set up an independent international panel to report on possible violations of fundamental rights in the cases of Yulia Tymoshenko and other opposition politicians. It urges the Ukrainian authorities to ensure adequate medical assistance, unrestricted access to lawyers and the right to visits for all prisoners sentenced on politically motivated grounds.

Parliament demands an end to the use of selective justice targeting political and other opponents: "The democratic struggle for political decisions must take place in parliament -- and must not be destroyed by personally or politically motivated acts of criminal prosecution and manipulated judgments in the criminal courts", the resolution states.

2012 European Football Championship

The text calls on European politicians who wish to attend Euro 2012 matches in Ukraine in June to make their awareness of the political situation in the country publicly clear and to visit political detainees in prison, if possible. It urges the politicians to attend in their private capacity and not as VIPs.

Parliamentary elections and EU-Ukraine relations

MEPs want a European Parliament delegation to observe the next parliamentary elections in Ukraine later this year, underlining the critical importance of free, fair and transparent elections.

They stress that the current problems in relations between Ukraine and the European Union can only be solved if the Ukrainian authorities show that they are willing to carry out the necessary reforms. They also insist that an independent judiciary is essential as a cornerstone for building closer relations with the Union.

Spokesperson of the HRVP on homophobic violence at "Pride" in Kyiv
Brussels, 24 May 2012. [Link](#)

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Catherine Ashton, is deeply concerned about the violent disruption of peaceful event organized on 19-21 May as part of “Kyiv Pride”. She expresses her solidarity with the victims of these acts and urges the Ukrainian authorities to investigate them thoroughly and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The High Representative calls on the Ukrainian authorities to protect and to enforce the rights of all Ukrainians, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, to peaceful assembly and to freedom of expression.

The EU Head of Delegation received the organizers of the “Kyiv Pride” to express support and commitment of the High Representative to the protection of human rights of all Ukrainians without discrimination.

The European Union will use the forthcoming bilateral meetings to discuss the issue with the Ukrainian authorities.

European Union supports the Public Defender Office with a new grant Tbilisi, 07 May, 2012. [Link](#)

On the 7th of May, 2012, at the EU Delegation to Georgia, Ambassador Dimitrov and the Deputy Public Defender, Ms Tata Khuntsaria signed a new grant that will contribute to the further strengthening of the Public Defender Office. The support is totalling € 1.2 million, over three years (2012-2015). It will help to establish a more effective handling of individual complaints; and will also increase awareness of human rights among state institutions and Georgian citizens. The grant will also directly benefit persons placed in detention centres, and other structures like child-care or psychiatric institutions.

The European Union provides this new funding through the so-called Comprehensive Institution Building Programme that has been signed on April the 24th, 2012 by the Deputy Prime Minister Baramidze and ambassador Dimitrov. The programme provides € 9.7 million for building stronger institutions for successful negotiations on future agreements between the European Union and Georgia.

Awareness raising event for ethnic groups in Georgia 08 May 2012. [Link](#)

On 24 and 27 April, 2012 Energy Efficiency Centre Georgia in cooperation with Centres for Civic Engagement organized Intelligent Energy Days in Marneuli and Akhaltsikhe towns within the ESIB project.

Mentioned event had non-formal educational character which included presentation of ESIB project and energy saving measures in buildings; provision of pre energy audit

and introduction of EE measures and demonstration of Yann Arthus Bertrand’s film “HOME”.

Low awareness on energy saving issues and non sufficient information of low cost EE measures in buildings is characterized not only for urban but also for rural Georgians including ethnic Azeri and Armenians. Georgia is ethnically very diverse country where apart of Georgians majority there are ethnical groups.

Organization of Intelligent Energy Days (IEDs) within the ESIB Project in Marneuli and Akhaltsikhe municipalities increased awareness on energy saving issues and facilitated the involvement of ethnic groups in civic engagement as well.

Overall, 70 persons participated in the event including staff of Centres for Civic Engagement in Marneuli and Akhaltsikhe towns, representatives of local non-governmental and governmental organizations, students, local media and general public.

On 24 and 27 April, 2012 at the beginning of seminars the representative of EECG made introductory multimedia presentation on ESIB project including aims and scope of project as well as on specific energy saving measures in buildings (weatherization of walls, doors/windows, floor, attics; information on EE/ECO bulbs). After multimedia presentation ESIB National Coordinator Mr George Abulashvili has introduced the audience the basics concepts on how to make pre energy audit and introduce EE measures. During the seminars a discussion was arranged where the participants had the opportunity to ask questions and got answers on presented topics. At the end of seminars was demonstrated film “HOME”.

The event in Akhaltsikhe town was covered by the local media sources; more specific “Intellectual Energy Day” in Akhaltsikhe town was highlighted by local TV “9th Channel”. Besides, information about the event was published in local newspaper “Samkhetis Karibche” as well.

EIB supports upgrade of road infrastructure in Georgia with EUR 170 million Tbilisi/Luxembourg, 11 May 2012. [Link](#)

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is lending EUR 170 million to the Republic of Georgia to upgrade and rehabilitate the East-West highway, which is a priority transport infrastructure linking Georgia’s capital city, Tbilisi, and its Black Sea ports with Turkey and Azerbaijan.

This is the largest EIB loan ever granted to Georgia and the first supporting Georgia’s transport sector. The loan will finance the construction of 52 km of new motorway between Samtredia and Grigoleti at the most Western part of the East-West highway, as well as the rehabilitation of 16 km of existing roads leading South from Grigoleti.

EIB Vice-President Wilhelm Molterer stated: “The East-West highway is a key transport axis in Georgia, which is of great importance not only for Georgia and its neighbouring countries, but also for the EU as a strategic transit route for road transport between Europe and Central Asia. Better transport links are crucial to improving Georgia’s economic cooperation with neighbouring countries and its other trading partners, strengthening the competitiveness of the region and increasing transport safety and capacity with positive consequences for the quality of life of the country’s citizens”.

This is the seventh EIB loan to Georgia, bringing the EIB lending commitment in the country to EUR 360 million. To date, the EIB has provided funds for the development of Georgia’s energy and water infrastructure, including loans to support the construction of high-voltage power transmission lines, the rehabilitation of the Enguri and Vardnili cascade of hydropower plants and the repair and upgrading of municipal water facilities. The EIB has also provided in Georgia credit lines to partner financial institutions to support indirectly smaller projects usually implemented by small and medium-sized companies.

23rd IPRM meeting takes place in Ergneti

25 May 2012. [Link](#)

On 25 May, the 23rd meeting under the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism, co-facilitated by the EUMM and the OSCE, took place in Ergneti.

Participants reviewed the current situation, recent incidents and detentions and the possible release of a number of persons in detention. It was agreed that there should be further discussions about safety during agricultural work. The exchange of information regarding planned demining activities on both sides of the ABL was raised. There was also a discussion about forthcoming events, including possible military exercises.

The meeting was held in a productive and business-like atmosphere.

It was agreed that the next meeting will take place on 21 June 2012.

Working groups of the European Dialogue on Modernisation held start-up meetings

24 May 2012. [Link](#)

On 18, 21, and 23 May, the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus hosted start-up technical meetings of the four working groups of “the European Dialogue on

Modernisation”. The meetings were co-chaired by Member States’ Heads of Missions. The four working groups - (a) political dialogue and reform; (b) justice and home affairs, including mobility; people-to-people contacts; c) economic, social reform and sector policy issues, including privatisation; d) trade, market and regulatory reforms - exchanged views on potential work programme and priorities.

In March 2012, the Foreign Affairs Council welcomed the launching of a European Dialogue on Modernisation. The Dialogue was officially launched at an event in Brussels by Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy. The European Dialogue on Modernisation is a multi-stakeholder exchange of views with the following objectives: (i) to develop a clearer understanding by the EU and by Belarusian stakeholders on the vision of a modern and democratic Belarus, and on the necessary reforms; (ii) to clarify the related potential development of relations with the EU, based on the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership, as well as possible EU support in this regard; (iii) for Belarusian stakeholders to gain practical knowledge and insight from EU Member States’ experiences as regards transition processes.

Composition of the Russian Government

Dmitry MEDVEDEV, Prime Minister

Igor SHUVALOV, First Deputy Prime Minister

Shuvalov, 45, is retaining his post as First Deputy Prime Minister, where previously he oversaw international economic affairs, regional development and, after Aleksei Kudrin’s resignation last September, Financial Affairs. A lawyer by education, he had previously been a presidential adviser and the Head of the Government Administration. He has been Russia’s Sherpa in the G8 group since 2005. In the new government, he will oversee the Financial Unit, Privatisation and Housing.

Vladislav SURKOV, Deputy Prime Minister, Head of Government Administration

Surkov, 47, has kept his post as Deputy Prime Minister, and maintained his already existing powers over the Government Administration. Surkov holds a degree in economics. Previously he was First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration. Surkov will be responsible for Innovation, Science and Culture in the new government. Modernisation of the Russian industry is also included in his competences.

Arkadiy DVORKOVICH, Deputy Prime Minister - NEW

Dvorkovich, 40, previously held the role of Adviser to former President Medvedev. In this role he spoke frequently of the need for public investment and privatisation, including in the fuel and energy sectors. Dvorkovich holds two Master

degrees in economics from the Russian School of Economics and Duke University in North Carolina, US. In the new government he will be responsible for Industry (including Energy), Transport and Agriculture.

Dmitrii KOZAK, Deputy Prime Minister

Kozak, 53, has kept his post as Deputy Prime Minister. His previous posts also include Minister of Regional Development, President's Special Envoy in the Southern Region and Head of the Government Administration. Kozak is a lawyer by education. In the new government Kozak will be responsible for the Olympics project and the Construction Sector.

Olga GOLODETS, Deputy Prime Minister - NEW

Golodets, 49, was previously the Deputy Mayor of Moscow, where she led the social unit in charge of education and healthcare. She holds a degree in economics, and had been responsible for social issues in a range of foundations and companies, including Norilsk Nickel, and as a Deputy Governor of the Taimyr region. In the new government she will be responsible for Social Affairs, overseeing labour relations, pensions and healthcare reform.

Dmitriy ROGOZIN, Deputy Prime Minister

Rogozin, 48, has kept his post as Deputy Prime Minister, and will oversee the military-industrial complex and space industry in the new government. Before joining the government, he was Russia's ambassador to Nato in Brussels between 2008 and 2011 and Special Envoy for Interaction with Nato on missile defence. Rogozin holds degrees in journalism and economics.

Sergei LAVROV, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Lavrov, 62, has kept his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs, which he has held since 2004. He studied in the Moscow State University of International Relations and has spent his entire career inside the diplomatic service, including as Russia's permanent representative to the UN between 1994-2004.

Anton SILUANOV, Finance Minister

Siluanov, 49, remains Finance Minister, which he became last September taking over from Aleksey Kudrin. An economist by education, he has built his career inside the Ministry of Finance. He maintains a conservative budgetary policy.

Andrei BELOUSOV, Minister for Economic Development - NEW

Belousov, 53, was Head of the Economics and Finance Department of the Government Administration under

Prime Minister Putin. Economist by education, he has the reputation of being an effective and pragmatic enforcer, removing obstacles from the business environment and encouraging state investment. He was originally Deputy Minister for Macroeconomics. In the new government he will be in charge of all forms of economic development.

Aleksandr NOVAK, Minister of Energy - NEW

Novak, 40, has been promoted to Minister of Energy after being Deputy Minister for Finance under Aleksei Kudrin. Previously he was Deputy Governor of Krasnoyarsk Region. With degrees in economics and management, he established himself a good reputation in the Ministry of Finance, especially on anti-crisis measures. As Energy Minister he wants to develop new oil and gas fields, develop competition in the energy market, attract investment, ensure the security of infrastructure and improve energy efficiency.

Aleksandr KHLOPONIN, Deputy Prime Minister, Permanent Representative of the President to the North Caucasus Federal Region

Khloponin, 47, has kept both his posts as Deputy Prime Minister and as the President's Permanent Representative to the North Caucasus. With a degree and experience in the financial sector, he was previously chairman of the board of Norilsk Nickel, and governor of Taimyr Region. His task is to elaborate and realise the strategic development of the North Caucasus region.

Vladimir KOLOKOLTSEV, Minister of Interior - NEW

Kolokoltsev, 51, built his career inside the police services. He was previously the head of the Moscow Police, where he gained a good reputation for the non-violent approach of his officers towards the protestors during the election period, despite his determination not to allow them to turn into serious disorders. He was known as a tough reforming head of police who conducted a successful dialogue with society. As Minister for the Interior he is expected to represent a serious effort to root out official corruption.

Aleksandr KONOVALOV, Minister of Justice

Kononov, 43, has kept his position as Minister for Justice. He is a student of Dmitry Medvedev, who taught him at the St Petersburg State University's Law Department. He previously held various posts in prosecution and was the Special Envoy to the Volga Region. His priorities are reform of the correctional system, and party system reform. Kononov is a member of Russia's Security Council.

Anatoliy SERDYUKOV, Defence Minister

Serdyukov, 50, has kept his post as Defence Minister. In his first term, he introduced some far-reaching reforms of Russia's military. His primary aim in this post is to turn the

military from one of mass mobilisation and conscription into a small contract force. Serdyukov is an economist and lawyer by education. He was previously the Head of the Federal Tax Service.

Denis MANTUROV, Minister of Industry and Trade

Manturov, 43, was confirmed as a Minister after holding the post of the acting Minister of Industry and Trade, following Viktor Khristenko's move to the Eurasian Economic Commission. With degrees in economics, sociology and law, he previously oversaw the Defence Industry from within the Ministry.

Mikhail ABYZOV, Minister for Relations with Open Government - NEW

Abyzov, 40, previously worked as an Advisor to President Medvedev. He is also a self-made billionaire primarily from his Energy Company E4, Russia's largest engineering company, of which he is currently chairman of the board of directors. He remains Director and Chairman of a number of other energy and engineering firms as well. Having been a Minister without portfolio in Medvedev's government, he now heads relations with the Open Government initiative.

Sergei DONSKOI, Minister for Natural Resources - NEW

Donskoi, 43, was previously Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, and Head of Rosgeologia. An engineer by training, his background was originally in Finance, before turning mid-career to the oil industry, of which he has a good understanding.

Oleg GOVORUN, Minister for Regional Development - NEW

Govorun, 43, previously held the position of Presidential plenipotentiary envoy to the Central Federal District. Before this he was also the Chief of the Presidential Domestic Policy Directorate. He has been working inside the Presidential Administration since 2000.

Viktor ISHAYEV, Minister for the Development of the Far East, Permanent Representative of the President to the Far East Federal District

Ishayev, 64, has been Presidential Plenipotentiary envoy to the Far East Federal District since 2009 and keeps that post in the new government, while also becoming Minister for the Development of the Far East. Previously he has also been the Governor of the Khabarovsk region. Ishayev holds a PhD in economics. He is a professor and an acting member of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Dmitriy LIVANOV, Minister of Education - NEW

Livanov, 45, has been made Minister for Education and Science, after previously being the Rector and a Professor of the Moscow State Institute for Steel and Alloys. He holds a PhD in physics and mathematics. Livanov previously worked as the Director of the Department for Science, Innovation and Intellectual Property in the Ministry for Education and Science. His career was originally as a researcher but for a long time he has now held management roles. He is known for an approachable and informal style.

Vladimir MEDINSKIY, Minister of Culture - NEW

Medinskiy, 41, was a member of the State Duma for United Russia prior to being made Minister for Culture. He has written more than 100 books on PR, advertising and politics, as well as patriotic books on Russian history. He was previously also the President of the Russian Public Relations Association. Medinskiy holds a degree from the Moscow State University of International Relations.

Vitaliy MUTKO, Minister for Sport

Mutko, 53, has kept his position as Minister for Sport. Tasks ahead of him remain the London Olympics this summer, the Sochi Winter Olympics, and Russia's hosting of the World Cup in 2018. Mutko is a former Senator and the founder of the Russian Football League.

Nikolai NIKIFOROV, Minister for Communications - NEW

Nikiforov, 29, has been made the Government's Minister for Communications, after holding the same post (as well as Deputy Prime Minister) for Tatarstan. Economist by education, he is the youngest minister and is being seen as a representative of the internet generation. In Tatarstan, Nikiforov oversaw the creation of an IT park, where his ministerial office was later situated. Commentators readily agree to his professionalism and openness to new ideas.

Vladimir PUCHKOV, Minister for Civil Defence, Emergencies, and Natural Disasters - NEW

Puchkov, 53, has been promoted from Deputy Minister for Emergencies, the post he held under Sergei Shoigu. Before he served as State Secretary for Emergencies. Puchkov holds degrees in civil defence and management and has built his whole career inside the Civil Defence System. He is known for the ability to both control the internal work of the Ministry and be on the front line of an emergency.

Veronika SKVORTSOVA, Minister for Health - NEW

Skvortsova, 51, was previously Deputy Minister for Labour and Health. She is also a Doctor of Cardiovascular diseases, and worked as a practitioner and in that area for most of her career. As deputy minister she kept in close touch with representatives of the health industries, and her nomination has satisfied the medical community.

Maxim SOKOLOV, Minister for Transport - NEW

Sokolov, 43, has been made Minister for Transport after being in charge of industry and infrastructure in the government staff. An economist by education, he previously worked in the St Petersburg City Hall. His priorities as Minister for Transport are not only the security of flights and travels, but also protection of key infrastructure from undue external influence.

Maxim TOPILIN, Minister for Labour and Social Security - NEW

Topilin, 45, was previously the Deputy Minister of Labour and Health. He was in charge of regional anti-crisis programmes. Prior to this he was in charge of the Federal Labor and Employment Service from 2004-2008, and was Chief Labour Inspector of the Russian Federation. Topilin holds a degree in economics.

Nikolai FEDEROV, Minister for Agriculture - NEW

Federov, 54, was previously a Senator for Chuvashia, and President of the region. Having served as the first Russian Minister for Justice between 1900-1993, he has spent most of his career as a civil servant in Chuvashia. He considers his chief task in his new post to make sure that modern agricultural practices are developed in all regions of the country. Another important task ahead of him is developing the agricultural sector under the WTO rules.

HRVP following the talks of E3+3 with Iran in Bagdad on 24th May 2012
Brussels, 24 May 2012. [Link](#)

First of all, I would like to thank the Iraqi government, and in particular Foreign Minister Zebari, for the excellent hospitality and organisation of these talks.

The E3+3 remain firm, clear and united in seeking a swift diplomatic resolution of the international community's concerns on the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, based on the NPT, and the full implementation of UN Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors Resolutions. We expect Iran to take concrete and practical steps to urgently meet the concerns of the international community, to build confidence and to meet its international obligations.

We have met with our Iranian counterparts over the last two days in very intense and detailed discussions.

In line with our agreement in Istanbul, the E3+3 laid out clear proposals to address the Iranian nuclear issue and, in particular, all aspects of 20% enrichment.

We also put ideas on the table on reciprocal steps we would be prepared to take.

Iran declared its readiness to address the issue of 20% enrichment and came with its own five-point plan, including their assertion that we recognise their right to enrichment.

Having held in-depth discussions with our Iranian counterparts over two days - both in full plenary sessions and bilaterals - it is clear that we both want to make progress, and that there is some common ground. However, significant differences remain. Nonetheless, we do agree on the need for further discussion to expand that common ground.

We will go back to our respective capitals and consult. We will maintain intensive contacts with our Iranian counterparts to prepare a further meeting in Moscow with arrival on 17th June, with talks on 18th and 19th June.

As we have already agreed, the talks will be based on a step-by-step approach and reciprocity.

We remain determined to resolve this problem in the near term through negotiations, and will continue to make every effort to that end.

Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM and the UfM Secretariat to establish an operational collaboration
02 May 2012. [Link](#)

The President of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM (AP-UfM), Martin Schulz, and Secretary General Sijilmassi, highlight the importance of promoting projects that foster job creation and socio-economic development in the Mediterranean regions.

Barcelona - The Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Fathallah Sijilmassi, welcomed the President of the European Parliament, Mr Martin Schulz, at the premises of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean.

During his first visit to the Secretariat of Union for the Mediterranean, Mr Martin Schulz, who assumed his position as President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM (AP-UfM), during March 2012 for a period of one year, reiterated his support to the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean and underlined the operational role in implementing concrete projects, with tangible impact for the populations of the Mediterranean.

President Schulz and Secretary General Sijilmassi agreed on initiating an operational collaboration through the various divisions of the Secretariat and the concerned parliamentary committees of the AP-UfM, with the aim of promoting projects that cater, above all, for job creation and socio-economic development in the Mediterranean region.

The President of the European Parliament commended the commitment of the Secretary General and Deputies Secretary-General, stating that “The Secretariat is the cornerstone of a necessary and ambitious partnership for the Mediterranean region. This partnership must succeed to ensure, means of solidarity and mutual respect, welfare and prosperity for our citizens”.

Secretary General Sijlmasi stressed on the importance of the Parliamentary Assembly in the architecture of the UfM as a space for dialogue and promotion of Euro-Mediterranean relations. “The Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM is an essential medium in the public opinion of the 43 countries of the UfM, to gather and engage policy makers to conduct effective regional projects at a time when the Mediterranean region is undergoing major political and socio-economic changes.”

A cornerstone of co-ownership and shared responsibility, the UfM is the sole regional structure bringing together 43 representatives from Euro-Mediterranean countries.

MEPs call for trade to build democracy in Arab Spring countries

10 May 2012. [Link](#)

The EU must do more to promote democracy and stability in its southern Mediterranean neighbourhood by boosting mutually-beneficial trade relations in the wake of the Arab Spring, says Parliament. Efforts should be focused on small businesses as the main drivers of job creation and wealth.

In a report on the EU’s trade for change policy in the southern Mediterranean, adopted on Thursday by 479 votes to 64, with 40 abstentions, MEPs demand greater efforts by the EU and Member States to support the transition to democracy in the Arab Spring countries. “So far, the political response to the Arab Spring has been weak”, said rapporteur Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE, IT). My report sets out what Europeans can do to help these people, who are getting closer to democracy and realize that there are prospects for a better life.”

Empowering small business

Parliament wants the EU’s trade strategy to focus on supporting small and medium-sized businesses, which provide as much as 30 per cent of employment in some countries and are, says Mr Rinaldi, “crucial in dismantling the oligarchies as key players.”

It calls on the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to target investment at small and medium-sized firms and asks the European Investment Bank to provide micro-credits and counter-guarantee schemes for SMEs. It also wants incentives to register the high number of black-market businesses, visa facilitation measures for businesspeople and support for trade diversification.

MEPs suggest that Member States should set up Euromed Erasmus and Da Vinci programmes for visiting students and EU Chambers of Commerce in partner countries.

Free trade issues

Parliament hopes the momentum created by the Arab Spring can spur progress towards a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area and supports talks on deep and comprehensive free-trade areas. During the debate, Mr Rinaldi sought to reassure MEPs concerned about the potential impact on EU farmers of free trade, pointing to the EU’s significant trade surplus in agriculture with these countries and the benefits to EU consumers of opening up our markets.

Southern Mediterranean economies after the Arab Spring
The report highlights poverty as “a persistent evil in the countryside” and stresses that “chronic unemployment” affects young people in particular, with 45% of Tunisia’s university graduates, for example, being jobless.

Parliament points to the new opportunities created by the overthrow of most of the region’s dictators to develop a true market economy.. The EU must, it says, use its exclusive competence over trade and investment policy “to provide an effective response to the upheavals and to contribute to economic and social progress in the Southern Mediterranean countries”.

A trade and investment strategy for the Southern Mediterranean

Brussels, 10 May 2012. [Link](#)

The President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz welcomed the adoption in plenary of the resolution on “Trade for change: the EU trade and Investment Strategy for the Southern Mediterranean following the Arab Spring Revolutions”.

President Schulz, who also chairs the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean until March 2013, stated:

“Thanks to its increased power in the oversight of international agreements following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament will ensure that the EU commercial and foreign policy interests match with its core values of human rights, democracy and a free society.

This resolution serves as a valid blueprint for the strengthening of Euro-Mediterranean economic and commercial relations following the Arab Spring. It stands as a proof of the European Parliament’s coherence and genuine commitment in deepening cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean. The end-goal remains the creation of a functioning and inclusive Euro-Med Free Trade Area.

The resolution proposes a number of useful initiatives which should be fully explored and implemented with the specific aim of reducing chronic unemployment, particularly concerning for young people and beefing-up the potential of small and medium sized enterprises.

These ideas include the increased role for the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the support for rural development through the programme European Neighbourhood Facility for Agriculture and Rural Development.

However, in order to make Euro-Med trade a success, countries in Northern Africa and the Middle East need to increase the pace of regional integration through institutionalised dialogue such as through the Agadir Group and the Union of the Maghreb.”

Reporting progress and proposing follow-up for de-polluting the Mediterranean by 2020

02 May 2012. [Link](#)

The Steering Committee of the Horizon 2020 Initiative to depollute the Mediterranean by 2020 met in Barcelona on 19 April 2012 for its 5th meeting since 2008, bringing together the majority of the participating country representatives and the key regional environmental actors such as the European Commission, the Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat, the Mediterranean Action Plan of UNEP and its Regional Activity Centers, the European Investment Bank, regional associations of local authorities, NGOs, and others.

The focus of the meeting was on progress achieved in the Horizon 2020 components, namely investments for pollution reduction; monitoring, review and research; and capacity building, financed mainly by ENPI funded projects. Replication and environmental mainstreaming were also discussed on the basis of the collaborative efforts between three ongoing programmes Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (MedPartnership), Sustainable Water Integrated Management Support Mechanism (SWIM-SM) and H2020 CB/MEP. The state of play with the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was outlined as well as perspectives for the future. In addition, the progress and evaluation of UNEP/MAP's National Action Plans to address land-based pollution were presented.

Marta Subirá, Director General for Environmental Policy of the Generalitat de Catalunya welcomed the participants while Rafiq Husseini of the UfM Secretariat said about H2020, which is a UfM flagship initiative, “On a regular basis during the implementation of an initiative such as the H2020, we should always ask ourselves - and attempt to answer- four fundamental questions: Where are we now? Where do we want to be next year? How do we get there? And, how do we know that we have gotten there?”

Nick Hanley, Head of the International Relations and Enlargement Unit in DGENV of the European Commission, pointed out that “By addressing concrete actions with our projects we've managed to continue cooperation under Horizon 2020 throughout this period of sweeping change”. The day before the Steering Group, two other H2020 meetings took place. The third meeting of the H2020 Capacity Building Sub-Group assessed the implementation

of its work programme so far and took decisions for the next steps to be taken till 2014. An expert group also met in the framework of the ENPI Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in order to formulate a set of indicators for monitoring de-pollution progress.

EBRD President sees investments flowing to Tunisia in September this year

04 May 2012. [Link](#)

EBRD President Thomas Mirow visited Tunisia, the cradle of the “Arab Uprising”, this week and said he expected EBRD funds to start flowing to the country in September this year.

Tunisia was the country that triggered a wave of political change across countries of the Middle East and North Africa over the last year and a half.

In response to calls from the international community, the EBRD is extending its mandate to the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) region to support much-needed economic reforms in the region.

Along with Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Jordan are all seeking to benefit from EBRD funding.

During his visit to Tunisia, his first official trip to the SEMED region, President Mirow held discussions with senior Tunisian officials, including Prime Minister, Hamadi Jebali; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rafik Abdesslem; Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Riadh Bettaieb; and the Governor of the Central Bank, Mustapha Kamal Nabli.

He also met Donald Kaberuka, the President of the African Development Bank, to discuss the coordination between the two financial institutions.

During his discussions, the President underscored the EBRD's commitment to supporting economic development across the SEMED region, applying to these new countries its 20 years of experience in supporting transition in eastern and central Europe.

Speaking at a news conference in Tunis on Friday, President Mirow said, “By the beginning of September we expect to begin investments in Tunisia in a number of projects.”

He also drew parallels with central and eastern Europe, which the EBRD has been supporting since its creation shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

“The EBRD was created 20 years ago in similar circumstances. We are aware of the needs of countries in transition and we can offer our expertise and our “Know How” to Tunisia,” President Mirow said.

The Bank's operations will focus on strengthening the financial sector and developing the private sector in Tunisia and the SEMED countries. The Bank's emphasis will be to

encourage the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises – fertile ground for job creation, in a region where, in particular, youth unemployment is a major problem.

The EBRD is extending the remit of its activities in a three-stage process that has already seen the first flow of technical assistance funded by grants from donors.

At the EBRD's Annual Meeting in London this month, shareholders will be asked to approve the creation of a €1 billion special fund to kick-start investments ahead of full ratification of an extension of the Bank's remit.

The EBRD has the capacity to invest, in the medium term, up to €2.5 billion a year across the SEMED region. Any decision by shareholders to begin full-scale investments will take into account political and economic reforms undertaken in the relevant countries.

HRVP Ashton and Commissioner Füle on the elections in Algeria

Brussels, 12 May 2012. [Link](#)

We welcome the holding of legislative elections in Algeria in a peaceful and orderly atmosphere.

We consider these elections to be a step forward in the reform process which started in April 2011 in Algeria, expected to be concluded by a revision of the Constitution later this year to consolidate democracy and the rule of law in line with the legitimate expectations of the Algerian people. The newly elected Assembly will be called to play an important role in this process. We welcome the increased participation of women in this Assembly.

Algeria's invitation to the EU to observe these elections is a mark of trust and engagement.

We take note of the preliminary results of the elections announced by the Ministry of Interior and of the Local Communities and the official voter participation rate. The preliminary findings of the EU's Election Observation Mission, led by MEP M. Salafranca, have acknowledged positive developments in the electoral process while underlining some areas where improvements can be made. More detailed recommendations will be outlined in the final report which will be made available in the coming weeks.

The EU is fully committed to continuing an open, comprehensive and constructive dialogue with Algeria in order to further strengthen the partnership. The EU looks forward to the newly elected Parliament taking forward the reform process based on democratic principles and the respect for human rights and the rule of law.

EU continues its support to the Palestinian Authority by contributing €22.5 million

Jerusalem, 10 April 2012. [Link](#)

Today, the European Union (EU) is contributing €22.5 million to help the Palestinian Authority pay the April salaries and pensions of around 84,500 Palestinian public service providers and pensioners. This contribution is channelled through PEGASE^[1], the European mechanism for support to the Palestinians, and is being funded by the European Commission.

"In these very challenging times for the Palestinian Authority, this new contribution shows again the EU's continuing financial support to its institutions and their ability to provide essential public services to the Palestinian people", said EU Representative John Gatt-Rutter. "The EU calls on all parties concerned to fulfil their obligations with regards to the PA in a timely and reliable manner", added the EU Representative.

[1] Mécanisme Palestino-Européen de Gestion de l'Aide Socio-Economique (PEGASE)

EU-Israel Association Committee held in Jerusalem today

Jerusalem, 02 May 2012. [Link](#)

The annual meeting of the EU-Israel Association Committee took place in Jerusalem today. Held at the level of senior officials, the annual meeting is an opportunity for both the European Union and Israel to review current developments as well as progress made throughout the past year in the 10 sub-committees established under the EU-Israel Action Plan in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Hugues Mingarelli, Managing Director North Africa, Middle East, Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq department at the European External Action Service (EEAS) led the EU delegation. The Israeli delegation was led by Raphael Shutz, Deputy Director General Western European Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Committee reviewed the implementation of the EU-Israel Action Plan starting with an exchange of views on political issues including the Middle East Peace Process, Iran, the situation in the Arab world, human rights, combating terrorism, combating anti-Semitism, shared values and cooperation in the UN and international organisations.

The meeting continued with a review of and updates on the main conclusions of the other subcommittees established under the EU-Israel Action Plan and held since the last Association Committee: economic & financial matters; social affairs, migration & health; customs cooperation & taxation; agriculture & fisheries; internal market; industry, trade & services; justice & legal matters; transport, energy & environment and research; innovation, information society, education & culture.

Further development of Israel-EU relations were also discussed, including activities aiming at further exploring the opportunities offered by the current EU-Israel Action Plan and the identification of areas for potential future cooperation.

Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process

Brussels, 14 May 2012. [Link](#)

1. “The EU reaffirms its commitment to a two-state solution and its conviction that the ongoing changes across the Arab world make the need for progress on the Middle East peace process all the more urgent. Heeding the aspirations of the people in the region, including those of Palestinians for statehood and those of Israelis for security is a crucial element for lasting peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

2. Ending the conflict is a fundamental interest of the EU as well as of the parties themselves and the wider region, and it can be achieved through a comprehensive peace agreement, based on the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the Madrid principles including land for peace, the Roadmap, the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative. The EU recalls the applicability of international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilians.

3. The EU welcomes the exchange of letters between the parties initiated on 17 April, following the Quartet efforts facilitated by King Abdullah of Jordan and Foreign Minister Judeh and encourages the parties to continue on this path. The EU welcomes Prime Minister Netanyahu’s statement that the new Israeli government will try to advance the peace process. It stands ready to support the resumption of substantive negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians with a view to achieving a two-state solution. The EU strongly urges both sides to build on the current contacts, including the Joint Statement of 12 May, to resume direct negotiations on the basis of the Quartet statement of 23 September 2011. The EU fully supports the Quartet statement of 11 April and calls on the parties to pursue actions conducive to an environment of confidence necessary to ensure meaningful negotiations, to refrain from actions that undermine the credibility of the process and to prevent incitement.

4. The EU and its Member States reiterate their fundamental commitment to the security of Israel, including with regard to vital threats in the region. The EU is appalled by recurring rocket attacks from Gaza and condemns in the strongest terms violence deliberately targeting civilians. The EU reiterates its call on all partners in the region for the effective prevention of arms smuggling into Gaza.

5. The viability of a two-state-solution must be maintained. The EU expresses deep concern about developments on the ground which threaten to make a two-state solution impossible:

- the marked acceleration of settlement construction following the end of the 2010 moratorium, the recent decision of the government of Israel regarding the status of some settlements outposts as well as the proposal to relocate

settlers from Migron within the occupied Palestinian territory, while all outposts erected since March 2001 should be dismantled, according to the Roadmap.

- in East-Jerusalem the ongoing evictions and house demolitions, changes to the residency status of Palestinians, the expansion of Givat Hamatos and Har Homa, and the prevention of peaceful Palestinian cultural, economic, social or political activities.

- the worsening living conditions of the Palestinian population in Area C and serious limitations for the PA to promote the economic development of Palestinian communities in Area C, as well as plans of forced transfer of the Bedouin communities, in particular from the wider E1 area.

- the risk of jeopardising the major achievements of the Palestinian Authority in statebuilding if the current financial difficulties are not addressed by a common effort of the PA, Israel and donors.

6. Concerning these developments, the EU reiterates its positions and determination to contribute to maintaining the viability of the two-state-solution in accordance with international law and its positions, including the conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs

Council in December 2009, December 2010 and May 2011:

- Settlements remain illegal under international law, irrespective of recent decisions by the government of Israel. The EU reiterates that it will not recognise any changes to the pre- 1967 borders including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties. The EU and its Member States reaffirm their commitment to fully and effectively implement existing EU legislation and the bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products. The Council underlines the importance of the work being carried out together with the Commission in this regard.

- The EU reiterates that a way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. Until then, the EU calls for an equitable provision of resources and investment to the city’s population. The EU calls for the reopening of Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem in accordance with the Roadmap.

- Social and economic developments in Area C are of critical importance for the viability of a future Palestinian state, as Area C is its main land reserve. The EU calls upon Israel to meet its obligations regarding the living conditions of the Palestinian population in Area C, including by accelerated approval of Palestinian master plans, halting forced transfer of population and demolition of Palestinian housing and infrastructure, simplifying administrative procedures to obtain building permits, ensuring access to water and addressing humanitarian needs. The EU calls upon Israel to work together with the PA to allow more access and control of the PA over Area C. The EU will continue to provide financial assistance for Palestinian development in Area C and expects such investment to be protected for future use. The EU will engage with the Government of Israel to work out improved mechanisms for the implementation of

the donor funded projects for the benefit of the Palestinian population in Area C.

- The EU is the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority. It notes that the majority of the

Palestinian Authority's budget is met by its own customs and tax revenues and therefore it urges for swift implementation of improvements, currently discussed between the parties, to the mechanism by which these are collected and transferred, which should be transparent and predictable. The European Union underlines that these transfers by Israel are an obligation under the Paris Protocol. The EU calls on the PA to continue pursuing reforms. The EU calls on other donors, especially donors in the region, to increase their financial support to the Palestinian Authority.

7. The EU expresses deep concern regarding settler extremism and incitement by settlers in the West Bank. The EU condemns continuous settler violence and deliberate provocations against Palestinian civilians. It calls on the government of Israel to bring the perpetrators to justice and to comply with its obligations under international law.

8. The EU remains committed to the Palestinian state building process, including through CSDP missions and within the Quartet, aiming at a Palestinian state based on the rule of law and respect of human rights. The EU is concerned about recent reports of arrests of journalists and underlines the importance of freedom of expression, including via traditional and new media. In this regard, it welcomes President Abbas' instructions to lift the ban on several websites, as indicated in the official Palestinian communiqué.

Recalling the Palestinian institutions' responsibility under the Roadmap to end incitement, the EU expresses concern for recent incidents of incitement in Palestinian media and elsewhere.

9. The European Union has consistently called for intra-Palestinian reconciliation behind

President Mahmoud Abbas, in line with the principles set out in his speech of 4 May 2011, as an important element for the unity of a future Palestinian state and for reaching a two-state solution. In this regard, it recalls its Council Conclusion in May 2011. The EU looks forward to the holding of elections as an important contribution to Palestinian state-building.

10. Fully recognising Israel's legitimate security needs, the EU continues to call for the immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from the Gaza Strip, the situation of which is unsustainable as long as it remains politically separated from the West Bank. Despite limited progress, the EU urges the government of Israel to take further meaningful and far-reaching steps allowing for the reconstruction and economic recovery of the Gaza Strip, including by allowing trade with the West Bank and Israel.

Council conclusions on Syria

Brussels, 14 May 2012. [Link](#)

1. The EU reiterates its call on the Syrian authorities to fully and immediately comply with the Joint UN-League of Arab States Special Envoy Kofi Annan's plan as endorsed by UNSC resolutions 2042 and 2043 and abide by all their commitments to the UN. The EU recalls that the main responsibility for the ceasefire and the successful implementation of the plan lies with the Syrian authorities. The Syrian government must ensure without delay the necessary conditions for an effective operation and full and fast deployment of the UN observation mission, including full freedom of movement and agreement on the use of air assets. It must fully withdraw its troops and heavy weapons from population centres. The EU is deeply concerned about the continued violence in Syria, including the recent deadly bomb attacks, notably the ones in Damascus on 10 May. Acts of terrorism cannot be justified under any circumstances.

2. The EU underlines that a complete cessation of violence by all parties is an essential step in the full implementation of Kofi Annan's Plan, whose crucial goal is to facilitate a peaceful Syrian-led and inclusive dialogue leading to a political solution that meets the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, UN General Assembly and League of Arab States.

3. The EU recalls its full support to Kofi Annan's six point plan, welcomes the progress to date to deploy members of the UN supervision mission to Syria (UNSMIS) and urges continued prompt deployment of the full mission. It recalls that the Syrian authorities are responsible for ensuring the security and safety of the mission. The EU and its Member States are providing support to the mission, as requested by the UN. The EU calls on all States concerned, and in particular the Members of the UN Security Council, to continue to support Kofi Annan and use all their influence to ensure that the UNSC resolutions 2042 and 2043 are fully implemented. The EU underlines that the six-point plan is not an open-ended offer and that the plan and the deployment of UNSMIS constitute the best opportunity to support a peaceful solution to the crisis. It recalls that the UNSC remains seized of the matter.

4. The EU remains extremely concerned by the human rights situation in Syria, in particular the systematic and widespread human rights violations committed by the regime. It condemns the Syrian government's increased use of targeted assassinations and arbitrary detentions as a means of repressing all opposition. The Syrian regime must immediately release all political prisoners and human rights defenders, and ensure freedom to demonstrate peacefully. The EU recalls that all those responsible for human rights violations should be held accountable.

5. The EU calls on all sides to respect the safety of humanitarian workers and deplores the death of two humanitarian workers killed on 24 and 26 April. The EU reiterates its call on the Syrian authorities to grant immediate, unimpeded and full access of humanitarian organisations to all areas of Syria in

order to provide relief to the one million people identified as in need of humanitarian assistance. The UN Humanitarian Response Plan needs to be implemented immediately and humanitarian capacities in the country strengthened. The EU continues to support the efforts made by neighbouring countries to host Syrian refugees who fled violence in Syria.

6. The European Union remains committed to the Syrian people's struggle for freedom, dignity and democracy. The EU urges all opposition groups to continue to support Kofi Annan's efforts and to be ready to provide leadership and engage in a national political process as foreseen in the six point plan endorsed by UNSC. The Syrian National Council and other opposition groups must pursue their efforts to put aside their differences and to agree on a set of shared principles and mechanism under the auspices of the League of Arab States for working towards an inclusive, orderly and peaceful transition in Syria.

7. The EU approved today further designations of individuals and entities to be subject to restrictive measures. The EU will continue its sanctions policy targeting the regime, not the civilian population, as long as repression continues. The EU will also continue to urge the international community to join its efforts, in taking steps to apply and enforce restrictive measures on the Syrian regime and its supporters. It calls on all Syrians to dissociate themselves from the repressive policy of the regime in order to facilitate a political transition.

HRVP Ashton on Syria

Brussels, 27 May 2012. [Link](#)

I am appalled by the reports of the brutal massacre by the Syrian armed forces in the town of Houla, Syria, today, claiming the lives of over 90 people of whom many are children. I condemn in the strongest terms this heinous act perpetrated by the Syrian regime against its own civilian population, despite the agreed ceasefire and presence of UN observers.

I call upon the Syrian regime to immediately cease all forms of violence and provide its full support to the UN observation mission. I call on the government to fully implement Special Envoy Kofi Annan's six point plan endorsed by UNSC resolution 2043. The EU fully supports Kofi Annan and his team's efforts paving the way for a political process.

I will talk to Kofi Annan tomorrow to affirm the EU's full support. I also urge the members of the UN Security Council to remain seized of the matter. The international community must continue to speak with one voice, demanding an end to the bloodshed and urging Assad to step aside and allow a democratic transition.

European Neighbourhood Watch index

Issue 81 • March

Editorial: "Do the BRICS make a Bloc?"

Yulia Tymoshenko must be allowed medical treatment, says Euronest Parliamentary Assembly

EU-Ukraine: Concerns about treatment of Ms Tymoshenko

Press Service of the Party of Regions Statement

EU on the explosions in Dnipropetrovsk in Ukraine

HRVP on the release of Belarusian former Presidential candidate Andrei Sannikaw

Launching European Dialogue on Modernisation with Belarus

'Belarus should immediately abolish the death penalty' say MEPs

EU deals with Azerbaijan and Armenia should make the region safer

Euronest records progress despite tensions on Nagorno Karabakh

EU, OSCE enhance co-operation with Armenia on election administration

Local EU Statement on Journalist Idrak Abbasov

EU-Azerbaijan workshop on wind energy

US\$ 15 million to AccessBank for loans to small businesses in Azerbaijan

EU on the cancelled meeting of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism

Building strong institutions for successful negotiations on future agreements between the EU and Georgia

EU and UNDP announced Georgian pre-election media monitoring 2012 – 2013

HRVP on the '5+2' meeting in Vienna

Van Rompuy after his meeting with President of the Republic of Moldova

President Barroso following his meeting with President of Moldova

HRVP on behalf of the E3+3 following the talks with Iran

Council conclusions on Syria

Commissioner Georgieva condemns killing of first-aid volunteer in Syria

HRVP on the situation in Syria

Middle East Quartet Statement

Local EU statement on Gaza executions

HRVP on the decision of the Israeli Authorities regarding the status of the settlements of Sansana, Rechelim and Bruchin in the occupied Palestinian territory

Local EU Statement on the eviction of the An-Natsha family in Beit Hanina, East-Jerusalem

President Barroso following his meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan

The launch of negotiations for a new EU-Morocco fisheries agreement protocol

EU-Lebanon: Increased support for reforms

Issue 80 • March

Editorial: "The Ukraine Question"

ENPI Info Centre: EU Neighbourhood Library – your online ENP and ENPI documents database

EU and Ukraine to initial association agreement

EEAS Deputy Secretary General Helga Schmid meets with Eugenia Tymoshenko

Council conclusions on Belarus

Council reinforces restrictive measures against Belarusian regime

Spokesperson of HRVP on the execution of Uladzislaw Kavalow in Belarus

HRVP Ashton and Commissioner Füle on the election of the President of the Republic of Moldova

Schulz congratulates Timofti for election as Moldova's president

Statement in agreement with the EU Heads of Mission

Commission President following his meeting with Mr Serzh Sargsyan, President of Armenia

President of the European Council following the meeting with Serzh Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia

Local EU Statement on the release of Mr Elshan Hasanov

The negotiations on Visa Facilitation between Azerbaijan and the EU started

Intimidation Campaign against Azerbaijani Journalist Khadija Ismayilova

Spokesperson of HRVP on the elections in the breakaway region of South Ossetia in Georgia

Local EU Statement on the elections in the breakaway region of Abkhazia in Georgia

EU increases its support to the Criminal Justice Reform process in Georgia

HRVP on the presidential elections in Russia

Council conclusions on Syria

Council tightens EU sanctions against Syrian regime

HRVP following her meeting with Secretary General of the League of Arab States

More EU support for the victims of Syria's humanitarian crisis

Middle East Quartet Statement

HRVP Ashton and Palestinian PM Fayyad sign agreements worth €35 million

EU-Israel aviation agreement: Israel joins Europe in aviation

Jobs and stability: EU-Tunisia industry cooperation forges ahead

EU-Algeria: first ever election observation mission

Launch of the Euro-Mediterranean Guarantee Network

The Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean meets EP President

Commissioner Füle in Pristina to launch feasibility study

Start of the High Level Accession Dialogue with the government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Egypt: EPP Group Presidency cancels official visit to Cairo

First meetin

Issue 79 • February

Editorial: "Some European comments Putin's foreign and security policy"

Council conclusions on Syria

Council tightens restrictive measures against the Syrian regime

HRVP following the veto of the UNSC Resolution on Syria

MEPs deplore Russian and Chinese veto on UN resolution on Syria

Council conclusions on Egypt

Egypt: EPP Group Presidency cancels official visit to Cairo

First meeting of EU-Jordan Task Force to support the ongoing reforms in Jordan

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