



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



7939/06 (Presse 95)

PRESS RELEASE

2723rd Council Meeting

General Affairs and External Relations

External Relations

Luxembourg, 10-11 April 2006

President **Ms Ursula Plassnik**
Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria

* Some external relations items were adopted without debate at the 2722nd meeting on General Affairs (ST 7938/06 Presse 94).

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 8239 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.eu.int <http://ue.eu.int/Newsroom>

7939/06 (Presse 95)

1
EN

Main Results of the Council

*In view of the recent events in **Belarus**, the Council adopted restrictive measures against President Lukashenko, the Belarusian leadership and officials responsible for the violations of international electoral standards and international human rights law, as well as for the crackdown on civil society and the democratic opposition. The individuals concerned will be subjected to a visa ban and possible further targeted measures. Such measures will not be directed against the Belarusian population. The Council also reiterated its commitment to engage with Belarusian society by further strengthening its support for civil society and democratisation, intensifying and facilitating people-to-people contacts and enhancing access to independent sources of information.*

*On the **Middle East**, the Council indicated that, consistent with Quartet policy, the EU was reviewing its assistance to the Palestinians against the new government's commitment to the Quartet's principles. It recalled that the absence of such commitment will inevitably have an effect on direct assistance to that government. The Council underlined that it remained committed to supporting the Palestinian people and that the EU will continue to provide assistance necessary to meet the basic needs of the Palestinian population.*

*The Council reviewed EU development policy and adopted in particular conclusions on the effectiveness of **EU development aid**.*

At its "General Affairs" session, the Council:

- *established an EU planning team with a view to a possible EU crisis management operation in **Kosovo** in the field of rule of law and other areas that might be identified by the Council in the context of the future status process;*
- *approved an agreement - which was signed the same day - between the European Union and the **International Criminal Court** on cooperation and assistance.*

CONTENTS¹

PARTICIPANTS.....	5
ITEMS DEBATED	
WTO/DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA.....	8
UKRAINE.....	9
BELARUS - <i>Council conclusions</i>	10
MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS	13
IRAN - <i>Council conclusions</i>	15
EU-JAPAN SUMMIT.....	16
DEVELOPMENT POLICY	17
– ACP-EU PARTNERSHIP - 10th European development fund (2008-2013).....	17
– EU AID EFFECTIVENESS PACKAGE - Council conclusions	17
– DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION INSTRUMENT	21
– MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT.....	22
– HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.....	22
– OTHER DEVELOPMENT ISSUES	22
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.....	23
OTHER BUSINESS	24
– Southeast Europe - Free trade agreement.....	24
– United Nations world summit follow-up	24
EVENTS IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL	25

¹

- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- The documents whose references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site <http://ue.eu.int>.
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the abovementioned Council Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

Please see General Affairs press release 7938/06.

ANNEXES

- ANNEX I: Financing for development and aid effectiveness: delivering more, better and faster - *Council conclusions*27

PARTICIPANTS

The Governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Karel DE GUCHT
Mr Didier DONFUT

Minister for Foreign Affairs
State Secretary for European Affairs, attached to the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Minister for Development Cooperation

Mr Armand DE DECKER

Czech Republic:

Mr Cyril SVOBODA
Mr Tomáš POJAR

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs with responsibility for
Bilateral Relations

Denmark:

Mr Per Stig MØLLER
Ms Ulla TØRNÆS

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Development Assistance

Germany:

Mr Frank-Walter STEINMEIER
Ms Heidemarie WIECZOREK-ZEUL

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and
Development

Estonia:

Mr Urmas PAET

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Greece:

Ms Theodora BAKOYANNIS
Mr Ioannis VALINAKIS
Mr Theodoros SKYLAKAKIS

Minister for Foreign Affairs
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs
General Secretary

Spain:

Mr Alberto NAVARRO GONZÁLEZ
Ms Leire PAJÍN IRAOLA

State Secretary for the European Union
State Secretary for International Cooperation

France:

Ms Catherine COLONNA
Ms Brigitte GIRARDIN

Minister with responsibility for European Affairs
Minister with responsibility for Cooperation, Development
and the French-speaking World

Ireland:

Mr Dermot AHERN
Mr Conor LENIHAN

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs
with special responsibility for Overseas Development and
Human Rights

Italy:

Mr Rocco CANGELOSI

Permanent Representative

Cyprus:

Mr George IACOVOU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Latvia:

Mr Artis PABRIKS
Ms Maija MANIKA

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Deputy State Secretary, Economic Relations and
Development Cooperation Policy, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs

Lithuania:

Mr Antanas VALIONIS
Mr Oskaras JUSYS

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean ASSELBORN

Mr Nicolas SCHMIT

Mr Jean-Louis SCHILTZ

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Minister with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Minister for Cooperation and Humanitarian Action, Minister with responsibility for Communications

Hungary:

Mr Ferenc SOMOGYI

Mr András BÁRSONY

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Political State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Michael FRENDO

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Netherlands:

Mr Bernard BOT

Ms Agnes van ARDENNE-van der HOEVEN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Development Cooperation

Austria:

Ms Ursula PLASSNIK

Mr Hans WINKLER

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Poland:

Mr Stefan MELLER

Mr Rafał WISNIEWSKI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Portugal:

Mr Fernando DE OLIVEIRA NEVES

Mr João GOMES CRAVINHO

State Secretary for European Affairs

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Slovenia:

Mr Dimitrij RUPEL

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Eduard KUKAN

Mr József BERÉNYI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Finland:

Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA

Ms Paula LEHTOMÄKI

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Trade and Development

Sweden:

Ms Carin JÄMTIN

Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with responsibility for Development Assistance

United Kingdom:

Mr Jack STRAW

Mr Gareth THOMAS

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for International Development

Commission:

Ms Benita FERRERO-WALDNER

Mr Peter MANDELSON

Mr Louis MICHEL

Member

Member

Member

General Secretariat of the Council:

Mr Javier SOLANA

Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP

.....

The Governments of the Acceding States were represented as follows:

Bulgaria:

Mr Ivailo KALFIN

Mr Lyubomir KYUCHUKOV

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

Romania:

Mr Mihai-Răzvan UNGUREANU

Mr Lucian LEUSTEAN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

State Secretary for European Affairs

ITEMS DEBATED**WTO/DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

The Council was briefed by Commissioner Mandelson on the situation and on prospects for further progress in the current round of trade negotiations under the World Trade Organisation's Doha Development Agenda. It took note of the Commission's assessment and of remarks made by delegations as the deadline of 30 April approaches. The EU will intensify bilateral contacts with its partners in the coming weeks.

A special session of the Council will be convened, if necessary, in the margins of negotiations in Geneva around the end of April, at a date to be determined by the Presidency in the light of developments, to contribute to and take a position on any progress in the negotiations and to adopt the necessary decisions in this connection.

UKRAINE

The Council discussed the situation in Ukraine following the parliamentary elections on 26 March, and notably the current negotiations on the formation of a new government.

It was noted that the elections, which were considered free and fair, consolidated the democratic breakthrough in Ukraine and should provide a strong basis for renewed efforts to move forward in key reforms aimed at strengthening the rule of law, transforming society and strengthening the market economy.

BELARUS - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Recalling its previous conclusions on Belarus, notably those of 7 November 2005 and 30 January 2006, and the Declaration adopted by the European Council on 23-24 March 2006 as well as the Presidency declaration on behalf of the European Union of 22 March 2006, the Council once again deplors the fact that the Presidential elections of 19 March were not held in a free and fair manner, and condemns the violence used by the Belarusian authorities against demonstrators and the ensuing arrests of demonstrators and members of the opposition.
2. The Council condemns the treatment of all the political detainees and demands their immediate release. It calls on the Belarusian authorities to respect freedom of expression and assembly in compliance with commitments undertaken by Belarus in the framework of the OSCE and international human rights law.
3. The Council equally condemns the actions taken by the Belarusian authorities against citizens of EU member states, in particular arrests, beatings and humiliating treatment in detention.
4. The Council urges the Belarusian authorities not to penalise or discriminate against those exercising their right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, including the leaders of the opposition parties.
5. In view of the recent events, the Council has decided to adopt restrictive measures against President Lukashenko, the Belarusian leadership and officials responsible for the violations of international electoral standards, in particular those of the OSCE, and international human rights law, as well as for the crackdown on civil society and democratic opposition. The individuals listed in annex will be subjected to a visa ban and possible further targeted measures. Such measures will not be directed against the Belarusian population.

6. The Council will keep the measures to be adopted and the list of persons targeted open and under constant review. The measures should be reviewed in light of the speedy release and rehabilitation of all political detainees, and in the light of reforms made to the Electoral Code to bring it in line with OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections as recommended by the OSCE/ODIHR, the conduct of future elections, and concrete actions by the authorities to respect democratic values, the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression and of the media, and the freedom of assembly and political association.
7. The EU will continue to act in close coordination with international partners, and urges all countries to adopt similar measures.
8. These steps are adopted in addition to those taken by the Council on 24 September 2004 against four Belarusian officials identified as key actors in the disappearances of four Belarusian personalities; and those taken on 13 December 2004 against two officials responsible for the October 2004 fraudulent elections and referendum as well as severe human rights violations in the repression of peaceful demonstrators.
9. In the course of the election campaign, the European Union has witnessed the emergence of pluralistic forces and the consolidation of a genuine Belarusian opposition as well as a politically active civil society. In very difficult circumstances and at great personal risk, opposition candidates and their supporters have offered the Belarusian population a democratic alternative. The Council reiterates its commitment to engage with Belarusian society by further strengthening its support for civil society and democratisation; it will also intensify and facilitate people-to-people contacts and enhance access to independent sources of information.
10. The EU remains open to developing bilateral relations with Belarus, including in the context of a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and the European Neighbourhood Policy, provided the Belarusian authorities prove a sincere willingness to respect human rights, the rule of law and democratic values and initiate democratic reforms.

ANNEX:

31 individuals to be targeted by the restrictive measures (visa ban):

1. Lukashenko Aleksandr Grigorievich (30.08.1954. Kopys, Vitebsk oblast) President
2. Nievyhlas Hienadz Mikalayeovich; Nevyglas Gennady Nikolaevich (11.02.1954. Parahonsk, Pinsk district) Head of President's Administration
3. Petkevich Nataliya Vladimirovna (1972. Minsk) Deputy Head of President's administration
4. Rubinov Anatoly Nikolaevich (1940.) Deputy Head in charge of media and ideology, PA
5. Praliaskowski Alieh Vitoldavich; Proleskovskiy Oleg Vitoldovich (01.10.1963. Zagorsk - Russia, now Sergijev Posad) Aide and Head of the Main Ideological department, PA
6. Radkov Aleksandr Mikhailovich (01.07.1951. Votnya) Minister of Education
7. Rusakevich Vladimir Vasilevich (13.09.1947. Vygonoshchi) Minister of Information
8. Halavanaw Viktor Ryhoravich; Golovanov Viktor Grigorevich (1952. Borisov) Minister of Justice
9. Zimowski Aliaksandr Lieanidavich; Zimovsky Alexander Leonidovich (10.01.1961. Possibly Ukraine) Member of the Upper House of the Parliament; Head of the national state teleradio company
10. Kanapliow Uladzimir Mikalayeovich; Konoplyev Vladimir Nikolaevich (03.01.1954. Akulintsy) Chairman of the Lower House of the Parliament
11. Charhiniets Mikalay Ivanavich; Cherginets Nikolai Ivanovich (17.10.1937. Minsk) Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Upper House
12. Kastsian Siarhiey Ivanavich; Kostyan Sergey Ivanovich (15.01.1941. Usokhi, Mogilev oblast) Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lower House
13. Orda Mikhail Siarhieyevich, Orda Mikhail Sergeyevich (28.09.1966. Dyatlovo, Grodno oblast) Member of the Upper House, leader of BRSM
14. Lozovik Nikolay Ivanovich (1951.Nevinyany, Minsk oblast), Deputy of the Central Election Commission of Belarus
15. Miklashevich Pyotr Petrovich (1954. Kosuta, Minsk oblast) Prosecutor General
16. Slizhevsky Oleg Leonidovich, Head of the Division of Social organisations, parties and NGOs, Ministry of Justice
17. Khariton Alexandr, Consultant of the Division of Social organisations, parties and NGOs of the Ministry of Justice
18. Smyrnov Yevgeny (1949. Ryazan oblast, Russia), First Deputy of the Chairman of the Economic Court
19. Reutskaya Nadezhda, Judge of the Moscow district of Minsk
20. Trubnikov Nikolay, Judge of the Partizanskiy district of Minsk
21. Kupriyanov Nikolai, Prosecutor of Minsk
22. Sukhorenko Stepan Nikolaevich (27.01.1957. Zdudichi, Mogilev oblast) Chairman of KGB
23. Dementei Vasily Ivanovich, First deputy, KGB
24. Kozik Lieanid Piatrovich; Kozik Leonid Petrovich (13.07.1948. Borisov) Head of the Federation of Trade Unions
25. Koleda Alexandr, Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Brest oblast
26. Usov, N.D., Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Gomel oblast
27. Luchina Leonid, Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Grodno oblast
28. Kravchenko Tayana Aleksandrovna, Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Minsk City
29. Kurlovich Vladimir, Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Minsk oblast
30. Metelitsa Nikolai, Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Mogilev oblast
31. Pischulenok, M.V., Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Vitebsk oblast."

MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council discussed the situation of the Middle East Peace Process following the swearing in of the new Palestinian government and the result of general elections in Israel.

The Council noted with grave concern that the new Palestinian government has not committed itself to the three principles laid out by the Council and the Quartet in their statements of 30 January: non-violence, recognition of Israel's right to exist and acceptance of existing agreements. It urged the new Palestinian government to meet and implement these three principles and to commit to President Abbas' platform of peace. This would further the Palestinian people's aspirations to peace and statehood.

Consistent with the Quartet statement of 30 March, the EU is reviewing its assistance to the Palestinians against the new government's commitment to the aforementioned principles. The Council recalled that the absence of such commitment will inevitably have an effect on direct assistance to that government. The EU will continue to provide necessary assistance to meet the basic needs of the Palestinian population. In this context, it also underlined the importance of improved access and movement and called on both parties to implement the 15 November 2005 Movement and Access Agreement.

The Council notes with concern the recent violent incidents in the Palestinian Territories and calls on all parties to refrain from violence and exercise self-restraint. The Council urged the Palestinian Authority to ensure security in the areas it controls, and ensure the safety of international personnel.

The Council reiterated its aim to preserve and pursue the democratic functioning and development of the institutions of the Palestinian Authority. In this context, it emphasized the central role of President Abbas as the highest representative of the Palestinian Authority and the PLO and reiterated its support for him.

The Council noted the result of the Israeli general elections. The Council underlined the importance of a strong commitment by the new Israeli government to work towards a negotiated solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on existing agreements, the relevant UNSC Resolutions and the principles laid down in the Road Map. The Council called on Israel to desist from any action, such as settlement activities and the construction of the separation barrier on Palestinian land, that is contrary to international law and threatens the viability of an agreed two-state solution. The Council urged Israel to take steps to improve the humanitarian and economic situation of the Palestinians including by resuming transfers of the Palestinian tax and customs revenues withheld.

The Council welcomed the recent statement of Acting Prime Minister Olmert to seek negotiations with the Palestinians and the positive response to it by President Abbas. In this context, the Council looked forward to an early engagement between the new Israeli government and the Palestinians in order to advance a just, viable and lasting solution which would bring peace to both the Israeli and the Palestinian people."

IRAN - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council welcomes the UN Security Council Presidential Statement of 29 March, which reinforced the role of the IAEA and called upon Iran to take the steps required by the IAEA Board of Governors, which are essential to build confidence in the exclusively peaceful purpose of its nuclear programme. It also welcomes the conclusions of the Ministerial meeting in Berlin on 30 March. The Council underlines that the international community is united and determined to uphold the authority of IAEA Board resolutions and to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Council remains committed to a diplomatic solution. It calls on Iran to comply with the UN Security Council Presidential Statement and implement all IAEA Board resolutions in full and to suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to allow a return to negotiations.

The Council underlines its continued concerns about the human rights situation in Iran, in particular regarding the situation of Bahá'ís and other religious minorities as well as of human rights defenders, including Mr. Akbar Ganji and Mr. Abdolfattah Soltani."

EU-JAPAN SUMMIT

The Council took note of the state of preparations for the EU-Japan summit to be held in Tokyo in April 2006.

DEVELOPMENT POLICY***– ACP-EU PARTNERSHIP - 10th European development fund (2008-2013)***

The Council held an exchange of views on the 10th European development fund (EDF), that constitutes the financial framework for the period 2008-2013 regarding the Community's financial assistance to the ACP (African, Caribbean, Pacific) group of states, the member states' overseas countries and territories and administrative expenditure on implementation.

The Council tasked the permanent representatives committee to continue work with a view to preparing the Council's position for the ACP-EU joint Council of ministers on 1-2 June in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, where ACP and EU ministers will agree on the financial framework ensuring continued support for the ACP states. The Council will come back to the subject at its next meeting on 15-16 May.

The Council also took note of information provided by the Commission on the programming of the 10th EDF and on regional seminars that have taken place in recent months.

The framework of the 10th EDF as agreed by the European Council in December 2005, with an allocation of EUR 22,7 billion, is an intergovernmental fund with a contribution key different from the one applicable to the EU budget.

Furthermore, the Commission provided ministers with updated information on the implementation of the EU strategy for Africa.

– EU AID EFFECTIVENESS PACKAGE - Council conclusions

The Council and the representatives of the governments of the member states meeting within the Council adopted conclusions on :

- a) Financing for development and aid effectiveness: delivering more, better and faster
(8243/1/06 REV 1) (see Annex I);

b) Policy coherence for development: work programme 2006-2007:

"THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,

RECALLING the Conclusions of 24 May 2005 ¹ affirming the EU commitment to promoting Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), based upon ensuring that the EU takes account of the objectives of development cooperation in all policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries, and that these policies support development objectives;

REAFFIRMING the importance of non-development policies for assisting developing countries in achieving the MDGs and the EU intention to maximise the positive contributions that these non-aid policies can make to developing countries and to minimise their negative effects;

RECALLING the Joint Development Policy Statement (JDPS) by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission: "The European Consensus on Development" ², signed on 20 December 2005, which also called for the adoption of a rolling work programme as a new tool to facilitate the implementation of EU commitments to promote PCD;

RECALLING the European Security Strategy, which calls for a more active, coherent and capable European Union thereby describing security as a precondition for development; and RECALLING the JDPS, which states that without peace and security development and poverty eradication are not possible, and without development and poverty eradication no sustainable peace will occur;

RECALLING that the Work Programme 2006-2007 should propose priorities for action, define roles and responsibilities of the Council, the Member States and the Commission and set out sequencing and timetables, with the aim of ensuring that non-aid policies can assist developing countries in achieving the MDGs;

¹ Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on accelerating progress towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals: EU contribution to the review of the MDGs at the UN 2005 High Level Event, doc. 9266/05.

² OJ C46, 24.2.2006, p. 1.

FULLY RESPECTING the single institutional framework and the role and competencies of the relevant Council bodies;

INVITE the Member States, in cooperation with the Commission, to prepare a rolling work programme by June 2006 with a view to its subsequent adoption by the Council and WELCOME the efforts made by the Commission in its Staff Working Paper "Policy Coherence for Development: Work Programme 2006-2007" as a basis for this;

REAFFIRM their commitment to ensuring effective follow-up of all commitments on PCD, in particular as regards the 12 areas identified in the aforementioned Conclusions of 24 May 2005 (Trade, Environment, Climate Change, Security, Agriculture, Fisheries, Social Dimension of Globalisation, Employment and Decent Work, Migration, Research and Innovation, Information Society, Transport and Energy). Sequencing and calendar of work on PCD and priorities for action in the above mentioned areas will reflect the EU and international agenda and be incorporated in the rolling work programme;

UNDERSCORE the great importance they attach to the joint responsibility of the Commission, the Council and the Member States in this regard, and therefore INVITE the Commission and the Member States to provide for adequate mechanisms and instruments within their respective spheres of competence to ensure PCD as appropriate;

ADOPT the following priorities for action on PCD:

- review and improve the Council's decision-making processes to ensure effective integration of development concerns in EU decisions in full compliance with existing competences and procedures, after preparation by Coreper;
- integrate reference to PCD commitments into the examination and discussion of Commission proposals in each policy area where relevant;

- bearing in mind that PCD is also the result of appropriate working methods, request the competent Council working parties, and in particular the Development Cooperation WP, under the authority of Coreper, to
 - inform each other systematically, at the earliest possible stage, in particular at the beginning of each Presidency, about current and future activities in order to highlight dossiers with relevance for PCD to be followed more closely and to formulate priorities for action;
 - hold discussions and review progress on PCD implementation on a regular basis, for which the Council has a monitoring role; and
 - prepare follow-up debates in Council where relevant to ensure PCD;

WELCOME the Commission's intention to adopt the following priorities for action:

- monitor progress made on each of the 12 PCD commitments, including through the preparation of the biennial EU PCD report in close cooperation with Member States and on the basis of their contributions;
- evaluate its impact assessment system and reinforce existing instruments, notably its Impact Assessment Tool or other related instruments to ensure that forthcoming policies and legislative proposals are adequately screened for their impact on developing countries, and where necessary consider new ones, in support of a strengthened PCD;
- promote PCD in the context of programming at country, regional and thematic levels, particularly by incorporating it in the revised framework for the country, regional and thematic Strategy Papers;

INVITE Member States to adopt the following priorities for action:

- engage their government departments as needed in follow-up in the 12 thematic areas, respecting among others the principle of early involvement, and encouraging cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial coordination or reinforce existing mechanisms;
- exchange good practice on PCD;

and

RECOGNISE the need for sufficient capacity to be made available at the level of the Commission, the Council and the Member States to fully engage in follow-up to the aforementioned Conclusions of 24 May 2005 and the present Conclusions, as well as in the implementation of the future rolling work programme."

– ***DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION INSTRUMENT***

Ministers took note of progress on the EU development cooperation and economic cooperation instrument, and particularly on the approach to be taken so that legislation can be agreed on this subject as soon as possible.

The Commission proposed this instrument as part of a package of external financing instruments with a view to replacing various current instruments used to finance development in mostly non-ACP countries as well as projects in industrialised countries. ACP countries will also benefit from thematic programmes to be financed under the instrument, such as environment, food security, migration and energy projects.

It will be decided in co-decision with the European Parliament.

– ***MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT***

Development ministers heard a report on the meeting of the UN commission on population and development that took place in New York from 3 to 7 April.

They also heard a report from the Belgian minister on a conference held in Brussels on this subject on 15 March.

They were briefed on the Commission's plans to present a communication to the Council on this subject further into this year.

The ACP-EU Council will debate the question of migration and development when it meets in Papua New Guinea in June.

– ***HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE***

The Council held a discussion on humanitarian aid issues in order to assess the EU's humanitarian assistance system and provide guidance for future work.

The debate was structured on the basis of a questionnaire (8063/1/06) prepared by the presidency focusing on how to reinforce the ongoing work to reform the international humanitarian response system. It constitutes a follow-up to the debate held by development ministers last November.

Natural disasters in 2005 highlighted the need to continually review and reinforce national and international systems for delivering and coordinating humanitarian assistance.

– ***OTHER DEVELOPMENT ISSUES***

A number of conclusions on other development issues were adopted without debate and are reflected in the "General Affairs" press release (7938/06 *Presse 94*).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Council had a discussion with a view to helping the Presidency prepare a renewed EU sustainable development strategy to be adopted at the June European Council.

In June 2005, the European Council adopted a declaration on guiding principles for sustainable development based on the four principles of environmental protection, social equity and cohesion, economic prosperity and meeting international responsibilities. In December 2005, it looked forward to adopting in June 2006 an ambitious and comprehensive strategy, comprising targets, indicators and an effective monitoring procedure, integrating the internal and external dimensions and based on a positive long-term vision, bringing together the Community's sustainable development priorities and objectives.

OTHER BUSINESS– ***Southeast Europe - Free trade agreement***

The Romanian delegation informed the Council of the decision taken by prime ministers of Southeast European countries in Bucharest on 6 April to launch negotiations on a regional free trade agreement on the basis of the CEFTA (Central Europe Free Trade Agreement).

The Presidency commended the initiative.

– ***United Nations world summit follow-up***

The Council had a brief exchange of views on the implementation of the outcome of the UN world summit and adopted conclusions on the subject (7157/06).

The Council held a discussion on the development aspects of the UN reform process and agreed on the need to continue working to make international humanitarian assistance more coherent and more effective. The Council took also note of information on the preparation of an informal meeting on this issue to be held in Vienna on 9 June.

EVENTS IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL

The EU and the International Criminal Court signed an agreement on cooperation and assistance (7871/06).

The following meetings were held in the margins of the Council:

- 2nd EU-Croatia stabilisation and association council (*see press release 8309/06*);
- 8th EU-Moldova cooperation council (*see press release 8271/06*);
- First EU-Lebanon association council (*see press release 8310/06*).

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

Please see General Affairs press release 7938/06.

ANNEXES**ANNEX I: Financing for development and aid effectiveness: delivering more, better and faster - Council conclusions**

"THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

1. RECALLING the UN Millennium Review Summit of September 2005 and welcoming the confirmation of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals as the galvanising framework for development;
2. RECALLING the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development of 2002¹ and the EU "Barcelona commitments" adopted in March, 2002², and the new EU commitments, adopted in May 2005³;
3. RECALLING the High Level Forum on Harmonization held in Paris, March 2005 and the adopted Paris Declaration⁴;
4. RECALLING the Council Conclusions of November 2004 and November 2005 on the effectiveness of EU external action⁵, and of December 2005 on Aid for Trade⁶;
5. RECALLING the adoption of the European Consensus for Development on 20 December 2005⁷;
6. HAVING REGARD to the three Commission Communications on financing for development and aid effectiveness⁸, namely "EU Aid: Delivering more, better and faster", "The challenges of scaling up EU aid 2006-2010", and "Increasing the Impact of EU Aid: A common framework for drafting country strategy papers and joint multi-annual programming";

¹ UN doc. No° A/CONF.198/11.

² 7176/02.

³ 9266/05.

⁴ www.oecd.org/dac.

⁵ 15142/04, 14821/05.

⁶ 15791/05.

⁷ OJ. C 46, 24.02.2006, p.1.

⁸ 7067/06, 7066/06 + ADD 1, and 7068/06.

7. NOTING that the EU will contribute about 80% to scaling up of ODA worldwide, providing collectively at least fifty percent of this increase to Africa,

Have adopted the following Conclusions:

A) ON MONITORING OF PROGRESS ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT AND AID EFFECTIVENESS

8. RECONFIRM the EU's continued commitment to operationalising the "Barcelona Commitments", the EU commitments of May 2005, and the Monterrey Consensus to make progress on both the quantity and the quality of Financing for Development and underline the close links between the promised scaling up of EU aid and aid effectiveness.

Scaling up of EU ODA

9. WELCOME the Commission Communication on the progress made by the EU Member States in implementing the Monterrey Consensus. NOTE with satisfaction that the EU is well on track in meeting its commitments made in Barcelona in March 2002 to increasing aid volumes by 2006¹, namely to individually reach 0,33% ODA/GNI and collectively reach 0,39% ODA/GNI.

¹ Barcelona commitments: *"In pursuance of the undertaking to examine the means and timeframe that will allow each of the Member States to reach the UN goal of 0,7% ODA/GNI, those Member States that have not yet reached the 0,7% target commit themselves – as a first significant step – individually to increasing their ODA volume in the next four years within their respective budget allocation processes, whilst the other Member States renew their efforts to remain at or above the target of 0,7% ODA, so that collectively an EU average of 0,39% is reached by 2006. In view of this goal, all the EU Member States will in any case strive to reach, within their respective budget allocation processes, at least 0,33% ODA/GNI by 2006."*

10. REAFFIRM their determination to reach the new EU targets, agreed on 24 May 2005¹, concerning the commitment to increasing ODA volume to individually achieve 0,51% ODA/GNI and collectively achieve 0,56% ODA/GNI by 2010. This would result in additional € 20 bn ODA annually and represents an intermediate step towards achieving the UN target of 0,7% by 2015. Collectively, at least 50% of increases in aid volumes will be dedicated to Africa. PARTICULARLY WELCOME in this respect the efforts and commitments made by the new Member States, namely to strive to increase their ODA to reach 0,17% ODA/GNI by 2010 and 0,33% ODA/GNI by 2015.
11. NOTE WITH SATISFACTION that several Member States have achieved or are planning to achieve and sustain higher ODA levels close to or above 0,7% ODA/GNI.
12. ENCOURAGE those Member States that are not on track to achieve the respective individual baselines set for 2006 and 2010 to make all efforts to reach those targets.
13. COMMEND the Member States that are sustaining substantially higher ODA levels than most non-EU OECD/DAC donors, remaining well above the DAC average of 0,33% ODA/GNI.
14. CALL ON other donors to commit more substantially to mobilising adequate financing for the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development objectives, notably in Africa, in the medium- and long-term.
15. NOTE that increasing aid budgets may require the adaptation of aid systems of some Member States and of the European Community alike.
16. TAKE NOTE in this context of the Commission's intention to propose new methods or adapted instruments aimed at harmonised, efficient implementation of strategies agreed at EU level, while building on comparative advantage and providing added value.

¹ Document 9266/05 of May 2005 including annexes I and II. May 2005 new commitments: "...the EU agrees to a new collective EU target of 0,56 % ODA/GNI by 2010, that would result in additional annual € 20bn ODA by that time.

- i. Member States, which have not yet reached a level of 0,51 % ODA/GNI, undertake to reach, within their respective budget allocation processes, that level by 2010, while those that are already above that level undertake to sustain their efforts;
- ii. Member States, which have joined the EU after 2002, and that have not reached a level of 0,17 % ODA/GNI, will strive to increase their ODA to reach, within their respective budget allocation processes, that level by 2010, while those that are already above that level undertake to sustain their efforts;
- iii. Member States undertake to achieve the 0,7% ODA/ GNI target by 2015 whilst those which have achieved that target commit themselves to remain above that target; Member States which joined the EU after 2002 will strive to increase by 2015 their ODA/GNI to 0,33%."

More predictable, less volatile aid mechanisms

17. RECALL the EU commitments to more predictable, less volatile aid mechanisms and explore ways of adapting aid modalities.
18. SUPPORT further work by the Commission with Member States, relevant international organisations and other donors towards the creation of a long-term, flexible and harmonised tool to support the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and particularly towards harmonising aid modalities and conditionality rules. This harmonised tool should be aligned to recipient country systems.

Exogenous shocks

19. EMPHASISE the importance of a coordinated donor response to exogenous shocks, including through the FLEX¹, market-based instruments like the Global Index Insurance Facility, Exogenous Shocks Facility and other relevant instruments, determined on a case by case basis, and making full use of existing instruments.
20. SUPPORT the forthcoming work to review the FLEX mechanism to improve its speed of delivery and the anti-cyclical impact in view of a joint decision by the ACP-EC Council of Ministers. Moreover, NOTE the Commission's intention to explore options to transform the FLEX into a common tool open for funding by the European Community (10th EDF) and by voluntary contributions of Member States.

Innovative sources of financing

21. WELCOME innovative finance mechanisms introduced and supported on a voluntary basis by Member States, especially those initiatives, already under implementation (solidarity contribution on air tickets, IFF-Im) or envisaged (i.e. IFF, and transaction levy) by some Member States with a view to mobilising increased stable sources of finance. Such initiatives should be undertaken in accordance with the principles for aid effectiveness established in the Paris Declaration and be based on existing mechanisms for aid delivery to the extent possible.

¹ Art. 68 of the Cotonou Agreement.

Remittances

22. UNDERLINE the importance of remittances, as a complement of Financing for Development, and recognises that there is a need to address and to promote conditions for cheaper and safer transfers of remittances in both source and recipient countries, and to facilitate the impact on the development of recipient countries.¹

Debt

23. WELCOME the work on the implementation of the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, resting on the two pillars of deepening debt relief to HIPCs and safeguarding the long-term financial capacity of the IFIs. In this respect appropriate monitoring mechanisms and capacity building are needed to assist countries in reaching and maintaining sustainable debt levels, based upon the WB/IMF debt sustainability framework.
24. UNDERLINE the need to ensure that debt relief efforts remain in keeping with the spirit of the Monterrey Consensus², the EU commitments as well as with the OECD/ DAC criteria on accountable ODA amounts.

Untying of aid

25. UNDERLINE the adoption of two regulations in 2005 on access to Community external assistance that establishes an unprecedented level of untying of Community aid. CALL UPON the donors that have not yet untied their aid to make efforts in this direction.
26. WILL CONTINUE their efforts to promote the further untying of food aid and food aid transport, in line with the negotiation mandate adopted in view of the revision of the London Convention. In the context of the DDA, the Council invites the Commission to promote untied food aid. In that perspective, the Council recalls that all food aid should be absolutely on grant terms only, completely untied, based on systematic evaluation of needs and delivered in cash.
27. SUPPORT a further extension of the “OECD/ DAC recommendations of untying to Least Developed Countries” of 2001.

¹ *Scrutiny reservation (CZ).*

² From paragraph 51 of the “Monterrey Consensus” :”...*We encourage donor countries to take steps to ensure that resources provided for debt relief do not detract from ODA resources intended to be available for developing countries...*”

International Public Goods

28. LOOK FORWARD to the pending release of the final report from the Task Force and the contribution it can make to the discussion on International Public Goods.

International Finance Institutions

29. SUPPORT the strengthening of informal coordination mechanisms between European Union Members of the Board of Regional Development Banks, where collective EU shareholding is significant, with participation of the Commission. The coordination shall be inspired by the established good practices between the EU Executive Directors and the Commission on World Bank issues. This mechanism shall also ensure that EU coordination meetings take place systematically, prior to important decisions to be taken by the Boards of those Institutions.
30. COMMIT themselves to further improving [where necessary¹] existing EU coordination in the IFIs in this respect, with the participation of the Commission, notably through improved exchange of information, common statements, where appropriate, better follow-up on agreed common positions and early involvement in decision-making processes, inter alia in order to ensure coherent measures.

Trade-related Assistance

31. CALL ON the Commission and the Member States to implement their collective ODA volume commitments concerning “aid for trade”² as part of the general scaling up of EU aid.
32. REQUEST Commission and Member States to strengthen the integration of trade-related assistance into donor policies and programming and poverty reduction and development strategies. In this context the Council reaffirms the importance of supporting an enhanced Integrated Framework and credible assistance to trade adjustments as important elements.

¹ *Reservation (Commission) because this term weakens the commitment to improvement.*

² 15791/05.

33. CALL ON the Commission and the Member States to improve EU coordination efforts at headquarters and field level, namely by ensuring regular exchange of information and best practices; at field level the enhanced IF or, where applicable, trade needs assessments should include a strong coordination mechanism;
34. INVITE the Commission and Member States to reflect on possible tools of an EU collective contribution to the aid for trade agenda. Moreover, CALL ON the Commission and the Member States to support effective monitoring and evaluation of aid for trade at global, regional and country levels, and provide timely and full reporting on TRA commitments to the Doha Data Base.

Fragile states

35. REAFFIRM their commitment to focusing particularly also on fragile states or countries in post-conflict situations with a view to considering new approaches to making a more effective contribution to the MDGs in these countries.

B) ON DELIVERING ON AID EFFECTIVENESS

General

36. WELCOME the Commission's efforts in its communications to take stock of work on aid effectiveness and to bring attention to the implementation of the agreed aid effectiveness commitments with a view to reaching concrete results prior to the International Review Summit on Harmonisation planned for early 2008 in Ghana (HLF III). In this respect, the Council reaffirms its conviction of aid effectiveness being an essential and integral part of the fight against poverty in its multidimensional aspects in the context of sustainable development.
37. RECONFIRM their commitment to the UN High Level Summit in September 2005 as well as the commitments to the Paris Declaration and the four additional commitments by the EU¹ made at the Paris High-Level Forum in March 2005 and the recommendations in the Council Conclusions of November 2004 on advancing coordination, harmonisation and alignment, that were prepared as the EU contribution to the High-Level Forum.

¹ From the EU Statement at Paris HLF: "In the meantime the EU commits itself to work towards the following overall targets:
 - to provide all capacity-building assistance through coordinated programmes with an increasing use of multi-donor arrangements;
 - to channel 50% of government-to-government assistance through country systems, including by increasing the percentage of our assistance provided through budget support or Swap arrangements;
 - to avoid the establishment of any new PIUs;
 - to reduce the number of un-coordinated missions by 50%."

38. STRESS the importance of implementing without delay the recommendations from the UN Summit in September 2005, the commitments and principles as set out in the Paris Declaration (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, management for results, and mutual accountability), the four additional EU commitments and within this context, the recommendations as formulated in the report of the Ad Hoc Working Party on Harmonisation – Advancing Coordination, Harmonisation and Alignment; the contribution of the EU.¹
39. REAFFIRM their commitment to applying the common principles agreed in the Joint Development Policy Statement – The European Consensus on Development.
40. RECALL that the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Party on Harmonisation were made in close collaboration between the Commission and Member States reflecting the principles for furthering the aid effectiveness agenda: to focus on a country-based and country-led approach to harmonisation and alignment; to avoid duplication and to work in a complementary way; to focus not on exclusivity but on donor-wide initiatives; to aim for a wide coverage of aid modalities and procedures; to use agreed guidelines on coordination; and to focus on implementation.
41. EMPHASISE the need for a strong and continuous monitoring process with the active participation of both the Commission and the Member States, within existing EU² and OECD/DAC mechanisms, as an essential tool to keep track of the pace of reforms and their results.
42. EXPRESS the following views as regards operational deliverables based on the aforementioned points:

Roadmaps

43. WELCOME the Commission's report on the status of local processes on aid effectiveness. CONSIDER that the EU has a real added value in promoting processes at country level and in supporting and encouraging in-country initiatives.

¹ Document 14670/04 Report of the Ad Hoc Working Party on Harmonisation – Advancing Coordination, Harmonisation and Alignment, the contribution of the EU.

² Para 33 of May 2005 Council Conclusions: "The Council invites the Commission to monitor and regularly report on the implementation of these EU commitments on MDGs, including annual reports on the follow-up of the EU commitments on financing and on the effectiveness of aid, and a biennial report on Policy Coherence for Development."

44. WELCOME that it in a number of cases EU roadmaps have been developed including non-EU actors as part of a wider process; and emphasise that such a comprehensive process should as far as possible include other donors, especially where this is requested by partner countries.
45. NOTE that progress in establishing roadmaps has been steady but slow. HIGHLIGHT the diversity and specificity of each local process. In going forward it is essential to support roadmap processes where they have locally been deemed feasible and appropriate as a mean to ensure the attainment of the commitments made.

Joint Programming Framework

46. UNDERLINE that the partner country has primary responsibility for its own development and shall play a leading role. The Joint multi-annual programming will be aligned with country-led strategies, policy analysis and budget cycle. The EU will support partner countries to be the leading force in the preparation, coordination and monitoring of CSPs and of joint multi-annual programming of all donor support to the country. Preparation and coordination should be based on, and aligned with, the partner country's Poverty Reduction Strategy or similar strategy and budget cycle. Member States should, within their respective competences, ensure flexibility in their own procedures to meet the alignment principle.
47. WELCOME the Commission's proposal and AGREE to develop a two-step approach towards joint multi-annual programming, consisting in a joint analysis of the country situation and, gradually, a joint response strategy, duly taking into account the competences of the Community and of Member States.
48. UNDERLINE that this process should be flexible, gradual and open, building upon existing analyses, processes and arrangements and, to the maximum extent possible include donor-wide participation. Whenever the development of common strategies is already under way, such as Joint Assistance Strategies or similar processes, joint programming should complement, strengthen, and whenever possible be part of these existing processes, in order to avoid unnecessary parallel processes.

49. RECOGNISE the need for the Commission and Member States to increase their participation in joint multi-annual programming based on partner countries' development strategies and preferably led by the partner country, as a key element to promote more effective aid. This should progressively apply to all European official development assistance as soon as Member States' situations permit. Joint multi-annual programming will pave the way for coordination of policies, harmonisation of procedures and opportunities and decisions relating to complementarity.
50. NOTE WITH SATISFACTION that the joint analysis will immediately be initiated in the ACP countries for the programming of the 10th EDF between the Commission and interested Member State and other interested donors. It will include an analysis of the political, economic, social and environmental situation of the country as well as a description and analysis of poverty, the partner country's priorities, lessons from cooperation in the past, complementarity between different donors' activities and the setting out of the harmonisation agenda. This approach will be gradual and be applied to countries of other regions as soon as possible.
51. INVITE the Commission and interested Member States to initiate a joint response strategy to the joint analysis, in countries selected on the basis of the following criteria a) the existence of a PRS or equivalent, b) the existence of a sufficient number of active EU donors, revising their programming, c) the existence of local coordination processes, d) specific considerations for fragile states, and e) a positive field assessment. Joint multi-annual programming must be guided by the principles of effective programming and the essential components of Country Strategies, as reflected in the annexed Common Framework for Country Strategy Papers (CFCSPs).
52. INVITE the Commission and the Member States to initiate these first steps towards joint programming, gradually and voluntarily, on the basis of the annexed Common Format for CSPs as a pragmatic tool.
53. ASK the Commission and Member States to review the CFCSPs in the light of experience in their use, by 2009.

Joint Financing Arrangements

54. RECALL the need to develop a flexible format for joint financing arrangements and invites the Commission to make a proposal along these lines before the end of 2006.

Complementarity

55. RECALL that partner country-led joint multi-annual programming will pave the way for improved coordination, harmonisation of procedures and opportunities and decisions relating to complementarity. NOTE in this context with interest the ongoing work of many Member States on developing and applying complementarity principles.
56. REAFFIRM their intention to further progress on donor complementarity, as it is a key objective of the Paris Declaration.
57. COMMIT themselves to discuss concrete steps towards the development of operational principles on how to better organise the division of labour both at country and cross-country level before the end of 2006, while duly taking the competences of the Community and Member States into account. INVITE the Commission and the Member States to jointly reflect on existing good practices, such as the guidelines developed and used by some Member States, and to address principles such as comparative advantages based on presence, resources, experiences and roles developed in the field as well as modalities such as lead donors or delegated cooperation. Pending the adoption of such a set of principles, INVITE the Commission and Member States to take into account, as soon as possible, the division of labour in their programming and for the Commission and participating Member States in implementing the CFCSPs.

Co-financing/rules

58. WELCOME work on co-financing and joint financing arrangements as concrete steps to more joint actions, and UNDERLINE the need to properly reflect ongoing work on co-financing in the Financial Regulations and instruments that are currently being revised.

59. RECOGNISE the urgent need to revise some of the existing EC rules, in order to put them in line with the requirements of the Paris Declaration - in particular regarding joint EU co-financing activities, as well as co-financing with other donors.
60. SUPPORT the Commission's intention to adapt its own rules favouring co-financing and to develop a methodological framework, in close co-operation with the Member States, by June 2006, to allow enhanced financial co-operation addressing all Member States adequately, and in particular the growing donor capacity of the new Member States. In this regard, HIGHLIGHT the specific opportunity raised by the forthcoming "scaling up of aid".

Decentralisation

61. WELCOME the recent achievements made by the Commission in its decentralisation process. INVITE the Commission and the Member States to further decentralise authority to the field.
62. UNDERLINE that decentralised aid management is an important assumption for any donor playing a lead role in aid coordination at field level.

Donor Atlas

63. WELCOME the Donor Atlas II of 2006, developed in close collaboration with the OECD/DAC secretariat, as a useful means of providing statistical material for the purpose of information sharing within and outside the EU facilitating discussion on-enhanced planning and coordination. The Donor Atlas should continue to be developed in close collaboration with the OECD/DAC secretariat.
64. CONFIRM the trends of creating orphans or forgotten countries and sectors as well as fragmentation of activities in darling countries/sectors. CALL UPON the Commission and Member States to address this issue with other donors within a coordinated approach.

C) EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS AND DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRES

European Development Days

65. WELCOME the organisation of the first “European Development Days” in 2006 - as an opportunity to reflect on their collective input and strengthen the European vision highlighted by the “European Consensus for development”, while keeping a visible profile and transparency towards their constituencies and public opinion.

Network of Development Research Centres

66. WELCOME the Commission’s proposal to promote a European network of research centres on development issues and look forward to further elaboration of this initiative."

(for complete text, see 8043/1/06).
