Brussels, 6 May 2010

BACKGROUND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL
with a meeting of development ministers
Monday, 10 May 2010, in Brussels

This month’s Foreign Affairs Council will include a meeting of development ministers following the meeting of foreign ministers.

Foreign ministers will meet at 10.00 on Monday morning to discuss external relations issues including Somalia and piracy, nuclear non-proliferation, Iran and preparations for the EU-Russia summit. Over lunch, starting at 13.00, foreign ministers will continue their discussion from their April meeting on the EU’s relations with its strategic partners, focusing in particular on China and Japan.

Development ministers will meet at 17.30 on Monday afternoon to discuss matters including Haiti and the Millennium Development Goals. Over dinner, starting at 19.30, they will discuss gender equality and women’s empowerment in development. They will also be informed of the progress made in the establishment of the European External Action Service.

A press conference will be held at ± 15.00.

Meetings and events on the sidelines of the Council

Monday, 10 May 2010

– Signature of the EU-Republic of Korea Framework agreement (13.00)
– European Economic Area Council

1 This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office
Tuesday, 11 May 2010

– Stabilisation and Association Council with Albania

– Political Dialogue with South Africa

– Association Council with Tunisia

Press conferences and public events can be followed by video streaming: http://video.consilium.europa.eu/

Video coverage of the event will be available for preview and download in broadcast quality (MPEG4) on http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu
SESSION ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Somalia and piracy
The Council will hold a discussion on the situation in Somalia, focusing on piracy and the issue of the prosecution of suspected pirates captured by ships taking part in Operation EU NAVFOR Atalanta. The High Representative will shortly be visiting the region. The EU has concluded transfer agreements with several countries in the region, including Kenya and Seychelles. Proposals for agreements have been made to Mauritius, Uganda, South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania. The EU is committed to a regional approach, based on regional ownership and EU support for the countries in the region in their efforts to ensure the prosecution and detention of suspected pirates.

Background information
EUNAVFOR Somalia - Operation ATALANTA was launched in response to UN Security Council Resolutions 1814, 1816, 1838, 1846 adopted in 2008 and 1897 adopted in 2009.
 Its purpose is to contribute to:

- the protection of vessels of the World Food Programme (WFP) delivering food aid to displaced persons in Somalia;
- the protection of vulnerable vessels sailing in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia and the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia.

The operation is conducted under the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). It is currently commanded by Rear Admiral Peter Hudson (UK).
Operation ATALANTA's mandate is to:

- provide protection for vessels chartered by the WFP;
- provide protection for merchant vessels;
- employ the necessary measures, including the use of force, to deter, prevent and intervene in order to bring to an end acts of piracy and armed robbery which may be committed in the areas where they are present.

www.eunavfor.eu
www.consilium.europa.eu/cspd

Nuclear non-proliferation
The Council will have an exchange of views on a wide range of nuclear issues, including the Washington Nuclear Security Summit in April and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference that is currently under way in New York. It will underline the importance attached by the EU to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and in particular to the NPT, which remains its cornerstone. The High Representative, who participated in the opening session of the NPT Review Conference, will brief the Council on the conference and on meetings held on the sidelines.
Iran
The Council will hold a discussion on the Iranian nuclear programme and Iran's failure to meet its international obligations under UN Security Council and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolutions. Reaffirming the dual-track approach, the Council is expected to point to the need for a clear and firm response from the international community and underline its support for the efforts aimed at seeking the adoption of a UN Security Council Resolution. The High Representative will report on her discussions on this issue with various foreign ministers during her visit to the United States.

EU relations with strategic partners
Over lunch, ministers will continue their discussion on the EU's relations with its strategic partners. This is part of a series of lunch discussions on strategic relations and the one on Monday will focus in particular on China and Japan.

EU-Russia summit
The Council will discuss preparations for the EU-Russia summit to be held in Rostov-on-Don on 31 May and 1 June. Ministers will have the opportunity to raise particular points regarding relations with Russia. They are expected to focus in particular on priorities for the Partnership for Modernisation, proposed at the Stockholm Summit in November. The global economic crisis, climate change and energy issues, the question of Russia's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the future of European security and regional and international issues will also be addressed at the summit.

SESSION ON DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The Council will also hold a session devoted to development cooperation. Development ministers will discuss two main issues: follow-up to the Haiti earthquake, in particular the state of play following the donors' conference in New York and the prospects for joint programming of development assistance and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

During dinner, the High Representative will address the issue of gender equality and women’s empowerment in development, and inform development ministers of the progress in establishing the European External Action Service, with a special focus on the place of development in the EU's external action.

The Council will adopt conclusions on:

- the role of the EU in global health,
- assisting developing countries to address food security challenges,
- humanitarian food assistance, the EU's role in commodities and
- the development programme of the West African region in the framework of its economic partnership agreement.
Millennium development goals
The Council will hold a policy debate to prepare the EU position for the UN MDG Review High Level Plenary Meeting, which will take place in New York on 20-22 September.

The purpose of the discussion will be to identify key messages for conclusions to be adopted at the June Foreign Affairs Council. These conclusions will contain the EU’s position and political messages for the UN event in New York.

The Council debate will be based, inter alia, on the twelve-point EU action plan recently put forward by the Commission.

The MDGs constitute the first ever set of shared development goals at international level. World leaders agreed in 2000 to take decisive action to combat world poverty in its different dimensions by 2015, using time-bound and measurable targets. With only five years remaining before the agreed 2015 deadline, they will gather in New York on 20-22 September for the UN MDG Review High Level Plenary Meeting. Their aim is to ensure a comprehensive review of successes and gaps, and agree on concrete action to speed up progress.