Council conclusions on Sudan

3058th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 13 December 2010

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The Council welcomes the completion of voter registration in Sudan as an important milestone in preparation for the Referendum on self-determination for Southern Sudan and full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Council congratulates the people of Southern Sudan, the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and UNMIS on the peaceful and orderly conduct of the registration process and urges both parties to give the Commission their full support and ensure that it can fulfil its duties.

2. The Council welcomes the commitment of both parties to hold a peaceful and timely Referendum reflecting the will of the people of Southern Sudan, and to respect its outcome. It reiterates its call on both parties to ensure that everyone can express their views freely and without fear of intimidation, whether campaigning for unity or secession. The Council calls on all parties to refrain from inflammatory rhetoric. It is essential that southerners in the North and northerners in the South are given strong reassurances that they will not be harassed regardless of the outcome of the Referendum. EU experts have been monitoring the voter registration process and a full scale Election Observation Mission will be deployed shortly. The Council also welcomes the efforts of the UN Secretary General’s High Level Monitoring Panel.

3. The Council recognises that in recent weeks significant effort has gone into elaborating a framework for resolving outstanding issues relating to the future of Sudan and the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Council commends the efforts made by the parties and the AU High Level Implementation Panel chaired by President Mbeki in this regard and urges the parties to finalise the Framework Agreement and engage constructively to resolve key outstanding issues as soon as possible.
4. The Council is deeply concerned about the delay in resolving the issue of Abyei and calls on the parties to reach an early and equitable solution that maintains peace and stability in the area and reassures the communities that their rights will be respected.

5. Recalling its Conclusions of 22 November 2010, the Council reiterates the commitment of the EU, as a witness to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, to assist Sudan for the rest of the interim period and beyond in order to promote lasting peace, stability, and prosperity for all Sudanese people, regardless of the outcome of the Referendum.

6. In this context, the EU and its Member States are ready to step up engagement with the Government of Sudan and are prepared to establish a long-term dialogue on issues of common interest. Recognising the political and economic challenges ahead, regardless of the outcome of the Referendum, the EU also remains committed to providing assistance to the people in the North, according to needs.

7. The Council also underlines the importance it attaches to finding a lasting solution to Sudan’s debt burden. It commits to examine closely possible EU support for an international debt relief effort through the IMF, the World Bank, and the Paris Club, consistent with political progress in Sudan.

8. The EU is committed to assist vulnerable populations in war-affected areas in Sudan, including in Darfur, the East, the Transitional Areas (Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile), and the South. Out of the €150 million already allocated for this purpose, the EU announced at the international donors' and investors' conference in Kuwait on 1-2 December 2010 that it plans to allocate €24 million for Eastern Sudan. In the north-south border area, the EU is ready to support grass roots peace building initiatives, improved livelihoods for vulnerable nomadic population groups, and the strengthening of the cross border links to facilitate the free movement of people, goods, and services. This is in addition to the substantial support provided by EU Member States through their bilateral programmes.

9. The EU and its Member States are willing to increase their support to Southern Sudan, regardless of the outcome of the Referendum. The EU is ready to accelerate its efforts to support basic services and agricultural development. Stressing the importance of a strong commitment by the Government of Southern Sudan to address the huge challenges it faces, the EU is also prepared to engage with the Government of Southern Sudan and other partners in supporting effective institutional capacity building.

10. The Council supports the ongoing UN-led preparations to be ready to respond to possible additional humanitarian needs and other challenges that might arise in relation to the Referendum. The EU and its Member States are providing timely and substantial humanitarian funding for that purpose. In this context, the EU urges the parties to guarantee unimpeded access by humanitarian actors to all populations in need.
11. With regard to Darfur, the Council appeals to the Government of Sudan and all the armed movements to commit to a cessation of hostilities, to engage fully in the Doha negotiations, and to demonstrate their willingness to make real compromises to secure a just, comprehensive and inclusive peace agreement with the support of the people of Darfur. The Council remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian and security situation on the ground, including the harassment and kidnapping of humanitarian aid workers and peacekeepers. The Council calls for the immediate release of the Hungarian citizen who is still being held hostage.

12. The Council also calls for immediate unhindered access to all populations in need, in particular in Eastern Jebel Mara. The EU is ready to engage with the Government of Sudan on the issue of the voluntary return of IDPs strictly in accordance with humanitarian principles.

13. The Council recalls the obligation of the Government of Sudan to cooperate with the International Criminal Court pursuant to UNSC Resolution 1593."