Council conclusions on Mali

3218th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 31 January 2013

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. Recalling its conclusions of 17 January 2013, the European Union reiterates its strong and continued commitment to the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Mali. In this context, and in line with the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions (in particular, Resolutions 2071 and 2085), the EU supports the efforts being made by the region and by the international community. It welcomes the advance of the Malian armed forces, supported by France and the region, against the terrorist groups in the north of Mali, and reiterates its full support for this action. The EU also welcomes the Malian National Assembly's adoption of a roadmap for transition.

2. The EU stresses the importance of continuing international commitment in support of Mali, in particular the efforts deployed by African states. In this context, it welcomes the outcome of the donors' conference organised by the African Union (AU) on 29 January 2013 and encourages the swift implementation of its conclusions. The EU urges the AU and ECOWAS to speed up deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), which it is ready to provide with financial and logistical support. Given that support for AFISMA is one of the EU's priorities in Africa, the Council reiterates its readiness to contribute significant assistance to AFISMA through the African Peace Facility. In this regard, it asks the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to implement, without delay and on the basis of a request, the commitments made by the EU at the international donors' conference in Addis Ababa, in particular the announcement of an EUR 50 million contribution by the Commission. The EU calls on other donors to participate in the sustainable and predictable funding of the operation."
3. The adoption of the roadmap is a vital step towards fully re-establishing constitutional order, including civil control over the armed forces, and the authority of the state throughout Mali, and the EU calls for its urgent implementation. This step allows the gradual resumption of European development aid in order to respond swiftly to Mali's priority needs. The Council also invites the High Representative and the Commission to propose specific measures to support the implementation of the roadmap, including support for the electoral process. The EU emphasises the importance of re-establishing an inclusive national dialogue open to the populations of the north and to all groups rejecting terrorism and recognising Mali's integrity. Swift restoration of state authority, the rule of law and public services in the liberated areas in the centre and north of Mali is also crucial. To that end, in line with the European overall approach, the Council welcomes the joint efforts of the EEAS and the Commission to prepare concrete forms of assistance, using all the available instruments.

4. The Council welcomes the speeding up of preparations for the EUTM Mali mission to provide training and advice for the Malian armed forces, which will help contribute to strengthening civilian authority and respect for human rights. It recalls the objective agreed by the Council on 17 January 2013 to adopt the decision to launch this mission by mid-February at the latest in order to initiate the first advisory activities.

5. The EU is alarmed by allegations of human rights violations and calls on the Malian authorities to make immediate investigations into the matter. The EU stands ready to provide appropriate support to combat such abuse. It stresses the importance of complying with international law and in particular reminds the Malian authorities of their primary responsibility to protect civilian populations. All perpetrators of human rights violations must be held responsible for their actions. The EU welcomes the decision by the International Criminal Court to open an inquiry into violations and encourages the Malian authorities to cooperate. It also calls for the swift deployment of observers and the strengthening of cooperation by international organisations to ensure in particular that human rights are respected throughout Mali.

6. The EU welcomes the High Representative's intention to host the next meeting, on 5 February 2013 in Brussels, of the Support and Follow-Up Group on the situation in Mali, co-chaired by the AU, ECOWAS and the United Nations. That meeting will provide a suitable opportunity to strengthen the coordination of international commitment to Mali, support for implementation of the roadmap, and the follow-up to the AU's donors' conference.