Council conclusions on Mali

322nd FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 18 February 2013

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The EU supports the efforts of the international community to achieve stability and security in Mali, most notably Operation Serval and the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), and reaffirms its commitment to the fight against the threat of terrorism.

2. The EU reiterates its full support for the implementation of the roadmap for transition in Mali. To that end it urges the Malian authorities, in consultation with ECOWAS, to take steps to maintain the arrangements necessary to sustain the transition until free and transparent elections are held this year, and to ensure that the civilian government has definitive control over the armed forces. It reiterates its willingness to support the electoral process. The EU also calls on the Malian authorities to follow up their pledge, as laid down in the roadmap, to set up a National Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission. This will enable Mali's key players to take ownership of the results of the process of negotiation, including with all non-terrorist and non-criminal armed movements which agree unconditionally to respect the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mali.

3. The EU welcomes the meeting of the Support and Follow-Up Group in Brussels on 5 February 2013 on the situation in Mali. It is important for the international community to support the transition in Mali, particularly through regular meetings of the Group and through the resumption of the political dialogue between Mali and the EU under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement.
4. The Council welcomes the gradual resumption of EU development aid, including through the development of a State-Building Contract. In this context, the implementation of the roadmap remains vital. The Council welcomes the immediate launch of concrete actions, particularly in the field of elections, reconciliation and dialogue, food security and basic services. The EU is preparing to rapidly implement measures aimed at supporting medium- and long-term stability, development, the strengthening of the rule of law and good governance, and enabling the provision of public services throughout Malian territory. The Council reiterates its commitment to a close cooperation between the EU and the Member States as regards development aid. The EU welcomes the upcoming international conference of donors for the development of Mali.

5. The EU recalls its humanitarian commitment to the populations affected by the crisis, both in Mali and in the neighbouring countries. It will continue to provide, and if necessary will increase, its humanitarian aid to populations in need. Strengthening the resilience of populations in crises remains one of its priorities. When the time comes, it will contribute to the free and voluntary return of displaced persons and refugees in the countries in the region.

6. The EU is alarmed at the allegations of breaches of international humanitarian and human-rights law and reminds the Malian authorities that they have an overriding responsibility for the protection of civilian populations. The Council welcomes the intention of the EU to provide support for the deployment of civilian human rights observers by the AU, ECOWAS and the United Nations and for the contribution of independent civil society organisations working in this sphere. All perpetrators of human rights violations must be held responsible for their actions.

7. The Council has decided to launch the EUTM Mali mission, thanks to an accelerated planning and preparation process. The EUTM mission will immediately begin providing advice for the Malian armed forces and will make preparations to set up their military training. Particular attention will be paid to human rights, international humanitarian law, the protection of civilians, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and to internal rules of conduct and the control of the armed forces by the civilian government. It welcomes the mobilisation of the EU’s "clearing house" mechanism in order to coordinate support for AFISMA and the equipment of the Malian armed forces. In accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2085, the Council stresses the urgent need for a European and international commitment to supporting the Malian armed forces, including through the rapid provision of suitable military equipment. In this respect, it welcomes the initial contributions made by the Member States and the international community. This commitment will complement the efforts of EUTM Mali.

Likewise, in the regional context of the fight against terrorism, the Council welcomes the decision to reinforce the Bamako liaison office for the EUCAP SAHEL Niger mission with justice and police experts.
8. The EU recalls its commitment to regional and international coordination, particularly with ECOWAS, and reiterates its determination to provide financial and logistical support for AFISMA, under the guidance of the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, Mr Buyoya. It calls for the implementation of all commitments undertaken at the Addis Ababa donors' conference on 29 January 2013.

9. The EU remains concerned by the potential risks to regional and international security posed by the crisis in Mali. It particularly reiterates its concern regarding international trafficking, illicit financial flows and their ties with extremist groups in the Sahel. In this respect, the Council points out the importance of the EU's Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel and calls on the High Representative and the Commission to make concrete proposals for the implementation of stabilisation measures within the framework of the overall approach.

10. The Council invites the High Representative to submit a proposal as soon as possible for the appointment of an EU Special Representative for the Sahel."