

**SIXTH MEETING OF
THE EU-EGYPT ASSOCIATION COUNCIL
(Luxembourg, 27 April 2010)**

Statement of the European Union

1. The European Union warmly welcomes the **sixth meeting of the EU-Egypt Association Council**. The EU-Egypt partnership and its strengthening are based on common values, interests, and concerns. The EU and Egypt share the goal of building stability, peace, and prosperity in the Mediterranean and the Middle East regions.
2. Progress in the strengthening of EU-Egypt relations in the last year has been **significant and wide-ranging**. This meeting of the Association Council provides us with the opportunity to take stock of these advances, and at the same time to pinpoint areas on which we need to concentrate efforts in the coming months. We look forward to open and fruitful discussions of the kind that typify the many sectoral and more general meetings that have taken place between the EU and Egypt since the Association Council last met.
3. The first **visit of the EU HRVP Baroness Catherine Ashton to Egypt**, which took place as one of her first trips since taking up the duty and the first destination in her Middle East trip, demonstrated the importance that the EU attributes to its partnership with Egypt and to Egypt's key regional role.
4. The implementation of the **EU-Egypt Association Agreement**, in force since June 2004, and the **EU-Egypt ENP Action Plan**, in place since March 2007, has advanced, assisted by regular dialogue in the framework of meetings of eight sub-committees, a working group and an Association Committee meeting that took place throughout the year. The ENP Progress Report, to be published in early May 2010, will summarise progress and outstanding points.

5. A year ago, the EU endorsed Egypt's request to **enhance relations with the EU**. The EU and Egypt agreed to constitute an informal **ad-hoc group** to consider means of enhancement, to present policy options for strengthening bilateral relations, and to explore possibilities for incorporating the results of the reflections into the ENP Action Plan. It was agreed that the outcome of deliberations would be reviewed through the existing institutional structures under the Association Agreement. Egypt had earlier submitted a non-exhaustive number of proposals for enhancement in a range of fields, on which a first exchange of views took place at an Association Committee meeting in December 2008.
6. The ad-hoc group met for the first time in Cairo in July 2009 for preliminary discussions. In January 2010 Egypt submitted revised **proposals for enhancing political dialogue**. These included the holding of EU-Egypt summits, meetings between the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and his EU counterparts, and meetings between Egyptian Ministers and EU Commissioners on different themes. The ad-hoc group met for a second time in February 2010, and the EU responded favourably to nearly all the Egyptian proposals.
7. The EU welcomed at the end of March 2010 further Egyptian updated proposals for the **enhancement of relations in fields other than political dialogue**. These took into account ideas discussed in different sectoral sub-committee meetings and related to trade and economic relations, agriculture, energy, science and technological cooperation, higher education, and culture. The ad-hoc group met for a third time on 21 April for an informal discussion of these proposals, as well as of proposals put forward by the EU.
8. The EU looks forward to the enhancement of relations with Egypt, and welcomes the valuable preparatory work the ad-hoc group has so far carried out on the identification of ways to move forward. The EU reiterates that **enhanced relations are to be based on the full implementation of the Action Plan**. In this context, further progress in areas related to **human rights and democracy** will be fundamental. The Association Agreement and Action Plan remain the key framework that will guide the deepening and intensification of bi-lateral relations over the next two years.
9. The EU recalls the importance of a **comprehensive approach to the enhancement process**. This requires the involvement of all stakeholders in Egypt and the EU, including the civil society, in order to ensure ownership and optimal targeted content.

10. The EU looks forward to the holding of the first **ad-hoc EU-Egypt Summit** in Barcelona on 6 June 2010. This will provide an opportunity at the highest level for a review of bi-lateral relations and of regional and global issues. The holding of this EU-Egypt Summit bears witness to the keenness of both sides to strengthen relations and to deepen mutual understanding in relation to numerous matters of common interest.
11. Respect for **human rights and fundamental freedoms**, democracy, the rule of law, good governance and international law constitutes an essential element of our Association Agreement and of the ENP Action Plan.
12. The EU welcomes the United Nations **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** of human rights practices in Egypt that took place in February 2010, finding this a constructive exercise. The EU welcomes the support by Egypt of 119 out of 165 recommendations put forward and looks forward to their early implementation, which the EU will follow closely. In particular, the EU welcomes Egypt's commitment to continue to review national laws to ensure that they are in line with its international human rights law obligations. The EU strongly encourages Egyptian acceptance of the 25 recommendations on which it is to decide by June 2010. The EU looks forward to civil society being fully involved in the follow up to the UPR.
13. The EU welcomes the holding of the second and third meetings of the **sub-committee on political matters: human rights and democracy – international and regional issues** held respectively in July 2009 in Cairo and in March 2010 in Brussels. The EU notes with satisfaction that the sub-committee on political matters has been useful in providing a framework for frank and constructive dialogue on key issues. The EU notes that discussions in the meetings of the sub-committee have become more wide-ranging and open. They have taken place in a spirit of mutual respect and of understanding for the positions of both parties, allowing in particular for a productive exchanges of views and information on the state of implementation of the joint Action Plan in fields relating to governance, democracy and human rights, as well as on pressing regional and international issues such as the Middle East Peace Process.
14. The EU considers that the Shura Council elections scheduled for the first half of 2010, the Parliamentary Elections scheduled for late 2010 and the Presidential Elections scheduled for 2011 offer the Egyptian authorities the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to the

holding of **free and fair elections** in accordance with international standards, including in relation to the right for candidates and parties to stand. Free and fair elections are a key factor in progress towards a more democratic society and a political process that encourages Egyptian citizens to participate in political life. In order to strengthen transparency, the EU supports provisions to be made for independent observation of the elections,. The EU reiterates its offer of **assistance** to Egypt to improve the electoral framework including voter registration and capacity building, as provided for in the joint Action Plan, and expresses its readiness to consider making available observers, if requested.

15. The persisting **state of emergency** remains an issue of particular concern to the EU. This has been in place for 29 years and was last extended in May 2008 for two more years until 2010 or until new anti-terror legislation is passed. Therefore the EU strongly encourages Egypt to lift the state of emergency, and would welcome a timely decision to that effect.
16. The EU calls for any future **anti-terrorism law** to abide by international standards in relation to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
17. Taking positive note of the commitments taken by Egypt in this context, the EU strongly encourages it to take further and effective measures towards the prevention, prohibition and suppression of **torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment**. The EU welcomes Egypt's commitment to implement the UPR recommendation to bring its definition of torture in line with international standards and encourages Egypt to adopt the optional protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture (CAT). The EU also strongly encourages Egypt to extend an invitation to the UN Rapporteur on Torture to visit the country. His visit would follow those to be made in 2010 by the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking and the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, which the EU welcomes.
18. The EU reaffirms its rejection of the **death penalty** under all circumstances. The EU considers that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. In this context the EU expresses its deep concern at the continued application of the death penalty in Egypt, and calls on the establishment of a moratorium.

19. The EU greatly values the existence of an **active civil society** in Egypt as a significant feature in the development of the nation's economic, social and political infrastructure, and in the strengthening of national prosperity and regional stability. The EU strongly encourages Egypt to continue to take steps aimed at supporting a free and flourishing civil society, and to ensure freedom of association and expression, which are essential pillars of democracy and human rights. The EU welcomes NGO participation in preparations for the UPR and looks forward to NGO involvement in the implementation of UPR recommendations. The EU in particular encourages the Egyptian authorities to ensure that legislation, notably the NGO law, promotes an active civil society and conforms with international human rights standards concerning freedom of association. The EU would welcome an active civil society involvement in the preparation of any new legislation governing NGOs and an active role for NGOs in forthcoming elections.

20. **Fundamental social rights and core labour standards** are key elements for decent work. The EU encourages Egypt to make further efforts in order to guarantee the independence of trade unions and to ensure the effective implementation of ILO Conventions on the right to organise and collective bargaining as well as on the freedom of association.

21. The EU welcomes moves to enhance **freedom of expression and press freedom** in Egypt, expansion in numbers of independent media outlets, and the ending of the handing down of prison sentences to journalists. The EU appreciates the dynamic and open debates in the Egyptian media in view of forthcoming elections. It is important that legislation does not restrict media freedom. The EU is however concerned by recent reports about violations of the freedom of expression and the right of assembly. The EU welcomes the acceptance by Egypt of the recommendation made in the context of UPR to effectively guarantee the exercise of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly and the right to participate in public life on politics, in line with the obligations set forth in the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The EU looks forward to the full implementation of this recommendation. The EU also takes positive note that Egypt has agreed to examine before June 2010 the implementation of the UPR recommendation to immediately release persons detained or imprisoned for exercising their freedom of expression on the Internet. The EU looks forward to an early acceptance of this recommendation.

22. The EU encourages Egypt to continue to pursue efforts aimed at fighting **discrimination** on all grounds, at promoting tolerance in matters related to culture, religion and beliefs and minorities, and at countering impunity. The EU was shocked and saddened by the killing on Coptic Christmas Eve of six worshippers and a policeman, and welcomes and encourages work by the Egyptian authorities to halt such violence, in particular by addressing its root causes. In this context the EU looks forward, for instance, to the early adoption of a unified code on places of worship.
23. The EU welcomes continued progress by Egypt to consolidate the **rights of the Child**. It looks forward to the promulgation of an implementing regulation for the Child Law of 2008, which includes important provisions, such as to allow children born out of wedlock to obtain birth certificates, restrict corporal punishment, raise the age of marriage to 18 years of age and forbid the detention of minors in adult detention centres. The EU welcomes Egyptian work to stamp out child labour, by, for example, moves to keep children at school in rural areas. To ensure that all Egyptian children's rights are protected and promoted, the EU encourages Egypt to expand all its efforts to rural areas, where key challenges remain.
24. The EU considers the **equal participation of women** in all spheres of society to be a key factor for the political, economic and social development of a country. It welcomes Egypt's positive steps to improve the status of women and girls and to promote women's rights, including steps taken with electoral reform. It encourages the enactment of further legislation to combat violence against women in the public and private spheres as well as to end all forms of discrimination of women in all spheres of daily life. Following the second Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society held in Morocco in 2009, the EU welcomes the Egyptian willingness to take forward the implementation of the Istanbul conclusions. The EU encourages Egypt to withdraw its remaining reservations to CEDAW and to ratify the optional protocol to CEDAW. The EU strongly welcomes the Government's success in reducing the instance of female genital mutilation (FGM) and supports and encourages a continuation of efforts.
25. The EU continues to closely follow developments regarding the ongoing **constitutional reform process**, which involves the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the State.

26. The EU appreciates Egypt's long-standing commitment and important contributions to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. The **Union for the Mediterranean** represents a new phase in this relationship. Egypt has played a key role during its term in the co-presidency, which will culminate in the UfM Summit which is to be held in Barcelona on 7 June. The EU welcomes progress that has been registered in the Union for the Mediterranean over the last few months, especially the recent adoption of the Statutes of the **UfM Secretariat**, which is to be located in Barcelona, as well as the appointment of the first Secretary-General of the Secretariat, Ambassador Ahmad Masa'deh of Jordan. The three Deputy Secretaries General from EU Member states have been appointed and the EU looks forward to a swift functioning of a technical, efficient, lean and project-oriented Secretariat which would, both in political and financial terms, reflect the principle of shared responsibility and joint co-ownership of the UfM.
27. Regarding the **Middle East Peace Process**, the EU acknowledges the important role Egypt plays in promoting the stability of the region and fully supports its initiatives and efforts in that respect. In this context the EU commends and supports continued Egyptian efforts to secure **Palestinian reconciliation** behind President Mahmoud Abbas which is crucial for peace, stability and the reconstruction of Gaza.
28. The EU is seriously concerned about the lack of progress in the Middle East peace process. The EU calls for the **urgent resumption of negotiations** that will lead, within an agreed time-frame, to a two-state solution with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. A comprehensive peace, which is a fundamental interest of the parties in the region and the EU, must be achieved on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the Madrid principles including land for peace, the Roadmap, the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative.
29. The EU reconfirms its support for the United States' efforts to resume **negotiations on all final status issues**, including borders, Jerusalem, refugees, security and water, respecting previous agreements and understandings. The EU will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties. The EU reiterates its readiness to contribute substantially to post-conflict arrangements, aimed at ensuring the sustainability of peace agreements, and will continue the work undertaken on EU contributions on state-building, regional issues, refugees, security and Jerusalem. . The

EU fully supports the implementation of the Palestinian Authority's Government Plan "Palestine, Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State" as an important contribution to Palestinian state-building and will work for enhanced international support for this plan. The EU underlines the need for a reinvigorated Quartet engagement and notes the crucial importance of a continued Arab contribution, building on the Arab Peace Initiative.

30. The EU is deeply concerned about the situation in **East Jerusalem** and calls on all parties to refrain from provocative actions. The EU has never recognised the annexation of East Jerusalem. If there is to be a genuine peace, a way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. The EU calls for the reopening of Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem in accordance with the Roadmap. It also calls on the Israeli government to cease all discriminatory treatment of Palestinians in East Jerusalem.
31. Gravely concerned about the situation in **Gaza**, the EU urges the full implementation of UNSCR 1860 and the full respect of international humanitarian law. In this context, the continued policy of closure is unacceptable and politically counterproductive. It has devastated the private sector economy and damaged the natural environment, notably water and other natural resources. The EU again reiterates its calls for an immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza. In this context, the EU calls for the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access. While extremists stand to gain from the current situation, the civilian population, half of which are under the age of 18, suffers. Fully recognising Israel's legitimate security needs, the EU continues to call for a complete stop to all violence and arms smuggling into Gaza. The Council calls on those holding the abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit to release him without delay. The EU reiterates its readiness to reactivate its Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM Rafah), as soon as conditions allow, and to examine the possibility of extending its assistance to other crossing points as part of the overall EU engagement in the region.
32. The EU welcomed the formation, in **Lebanon**, of a national unity government under Prime Minister Saad Hariri in November 2009 and will support it in its endeavour to implement an ambitious agenda of much needed political, economic and social reforms. The EU welcomes the resumption in March 2010 of the national dialogue under the authority of President Sleiman. It encourages all the parties to carry on this dialogue in a spirit of

consensus and compromise in order to make progress on the question of the national defence strategy.

33. The European Union remains determined to reinforce Lebanon's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, unity and stability, and it recalls its commitment to the full implementation of **UNSC Resolutions** 1559, 1680, 1701 and 1757. Deployed side by side with the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL, to which EU Member States remain the main contributors, continues to successfully implement its mandate, contributing to preserve peace in southern Lebanon.
34. The EU and its Member States continue to support the **Special Tribunal for Lebanon** and urge all members of the international community to lend their support and to fully cooperate with the Special Tribunal.
35. The EU welcomes the process of **normalisation in Lebanon's relations with Syria**, which it should continue. The visit by PM Saad Hariri to Damascus in December 2009 marked a further important step in this process. The EU encourages both parties to make further progress with regard to all other commitments referred to in the six-point communiqué agreed upon in August 2008 by Presidents Assad and Sleiman.
36. The EU looks forward to the conclusion of an Association Agreement with Syria.
37. The EU encourages all efforts aimed at fostering unity among the Arab states and in this context welcomes the renewed engagement between Egypt and Syria, including the recent meeting on the margins of the Arab League Summit in Libya.
38. The EU welcomes the holding of national elections in **Iraq** on 7 March 2010 and congratulates the people of Iraq, who went out in significant numbers to cast their vote. They have, thus, successfully expressed their democratic will. These elections are another important step towards a consolidation of the democratic process. The EU continues to support and assist the efforts of the Government of Iraq in building an independent, sovereign, secure, stable, unified, democratic and prosperous Iraq. Constructive engagement of Iraq's neighbours and partners in the region remains essential to sustain peace and stability in Iraq and in the region as a whole. It is important to ensure that Iraq's national unity and territorial integrity are respected by all. The EU wishes to underline the importance of national reconciliation and its wholehearted support for the efforts by the UN/UNAMI in this area. The EU condemns the recent attacks against Embassies in Baghdad, including the

Egyptian Embassy, and deeply regrets the loss of life.

39. The EU has been leading efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the **Iranian nuclear issue** within the context of the dual-track approach. The EU has expressed its grave concern that Iran has so far done nothing to rebuild confidence of the international community in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. The EU urges Iran to comply fully and without further delay with its obligations under the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and the IAEA. Full implementation of these resolutions and obligations is needed to open the door to a long-term diplomatic solution to which the EU remains fully committed.
40. The EU welcomes the largely peaceful conduct of the recent elections as an important step in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and commends the people of the Sudan for having participated actively. The EU deployed one of its largest observer missions in recognition of this important event in the democratic transformation process in **Sudan**.
41. While noting the complexity of the elections, the EU expresses concern about the deficiencies in relation to international standards identified so far during the electoral process by the EU Electoral Observation Mission. The EU calls upon the Sudanese authorities to address these shortfalls in time to prepare for future voting processes in light of the EOM's recommendations in its final report.
42. The EU calls upon all authorities, parties and other stakeholders to respect the Sudanese Electoral Law and the legal procedures for electoral complaints and to honor the Code of Conduct and the Declaration on Common Commitments.
43. The EU calls upon all parties to fully respect the CPA, to spare no efforts to establish a broad political basis in view of the final implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, to urgently address the remaining issues and to abstain from any unilateral initiatives which might destabilize this process.
44. The EU reaffirms its continuous commitment to supporting the full implementation of the CPA, including the holding of the referendum in Abyei, the popular consultations in Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile and the referendum on self-determination of South Sudan in January 2011.

45. The EU encourages all Sudanese stakeholders to advance preparations for popular consultations and the referenda as well as for the necessary arrangements for the time thereafter. It underlines the importance of the International Community pursuing a coherent approach in this crucial transition phase. In this respect, the EU will closely cooperate with key international and regional partners, including the UN, AU and IGAD and supports the AU High Level Implementation Panel led by former President Thabo Mbeki.
46. The EU recalls its continued political and financial engagement in Sudan, including through development assistance, for the benefit of the Sudanese population. The EU is committed to maintaining a high level of humanitarian aid in response to the needs on the ground and urges all parties to allow unimpeded access.
47. Regarding the situation in **Darfur**, the EU recognizes the progress achieved in the Doha peace process under the leadership of AU/UN Chief Mediator, Djibril Bassolé. It encourages all parties, including civil society, to make decisive progress post elections towards an inclusive and comprehensive peace agreement which addresses the root causes of conflict.
48. The EU recalls that impunity for the most serious crimes under international law can never be accepted. The Council reiterates its support for the International Criminal Court (ICC) and calls upon the GoS to cooperate fully with the ICC in accordance with its obligations under international law.
49. The EU is worried about the humanitarian crisis and the violations of human rights in **Somalia**. The EU welcomes the agreement signed on 15 March by the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) and Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a (ASWJ). This is an important step of broadening the reconciliation process in Somalia in support of the Djibouti Agreement. The EU expresses its continued full support to the TFG. As part of its stepped up engagement in Somalia, the EU launched a military mission to contribute to training of Somali security forces. The mission is conducted in close coordination with our partners, including the TFG, Uganda, the African Union (AMISOM), the United Nations and the United States of America.
50. The EU reaffirms the need to deal with the challenges of Somalia through a comprehensive approach and through international coordination with all key members of the International Contact Group on Somalia, including Egypt, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The EU looks forward to the next ICG meeting that will be

hosted by the LAS in Cairo in April.

51. The EU recalls the need to further promote and sustain this strategic partnership with the African continent in the framework of the **Joint Africa-EU Strategy** and calls its African partners to ensure strong African participation in the implementation process and to accelerate efforts to achieve tangible and added-value results, considering in particular the preparations of the III EU-Africa Summit. The EU commends the commitment shown by Egypt vis-à-vis the strategy and looks forward to further strengthening its cooperation with Egypt in its role as co-chair of the Africa-EU Democratic Governance and Human Rights partnership.
52. The EU underlines its commitment to a unified, stable, democratic and prosperous **Yemen** and recalls its support to the Government of Yemen in confronting the challenges it faces. The EU is committed to joining with international partners, including Yemen's neighbours, in assisting the government through a comprehensive approach encompassing security, counter-terrorism, political dialogue, humanitarian and economic assistance. The aim is to ensure coherence and effectiveness of domestic and international efforts. Acknowledging Yemeni ownership and responsibility of its reform efforts, the EU attaches great importance to the Government of Yemen continuing with its programme of domestic political and economic reforms and the process of national dialogue.
53. The proliferation of **weapons of mass destruction** and their means of delivery both to state and non-state actors represents one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. The EU supports multilateral cooperation as the best way to counter proliferation. The EU has always promoted universality of nuclear, chemical and biological non proliferation, arms control and disarmament agreements, such as NPT, CTBT, CWC and BWC. The EU welcomes the important objectives agreed upon at the recent Washington Nuclear Security Summit.
54. The EU aims at achieving a substantial outcome at the **2010 NPT Review Conference**. The EU shares the objective to strengthen the Treaty and advocate its universality. We continue to promote a balanced approach between its three pillars - non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We underline the importance of full compliance by all States Parties with all the provisions of the NPT and with all relevant UNSC and IAEA Resolutions.

55. The EU is very much aware of the need to make progress in the implementation of the **1995 NPT Resolution on the Middle East**. The EU remains ready to contribute towards achieving the Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, including their means of delivery. The EU acknowledges the importance of reaching agreement on concrete practical steps as part of a process, involving all States of the region, aimed at facilitating the implementation of the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East. The EU has confirmed its intention to organise a follow-up event to the seminar "Middle East Security, WMD Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" which took place in Paris in June 2008. The preparation of the follow-up event, which could be part of a gradual process to implement the Resolution, will take place in close consultation with all relevant actors of the region, including Egypt.
56. The European Union condemns **terrorism** in all its forms and manifestations. The Union expresses its solidarity with all those who have suffered at the hands of terrorists, in Egypt and elsewhere in the world. The action of the EU in the fight against terrorism is based on the absolute primacy of the rule of law and any measures to prevent and counter terrorism must comply with international law, in particular international human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law.
57. The EU supports the United Nations as the only truly global forum for countering terrorism and is fully committed to the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy and to an early adoption of the UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. In particular the EU agrees that effective counterterrorism measures and the protection of human rights are not conflicting, but complementary and mutually reinforcing goals. The EU is a staunch supporter of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) and is working with all Member States of the UN as well as all relevant stakeholders to ensure implementation of the Strategy across the UN system.
58. The European Union welcomes Egypt's wish to deepen the political dialogue with the EU on counter-terrorism, as expressed in the successful counter-terrorism troika meeting held in 2009. The EU is ready to continue dialogue with Egypt, both in the framework of its bilateral relations and in the wider framework of the Union for the Mediterranean.

59. The European Union attaches great importance to countering radicalisation that can lead to terrorist recruitment and welcomes cooperation with Egypt. With a view to preventing the financing of terrorism the EU emphasises the need to implement the comprehensive international standards established by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
60. With respect to **migration**, the EU looks forward to deepening its dialogue with Egypt at bilateral level, through the instruments established by the Association Agreement, as well as through the existing Euro-Mediterranean and the Euro-African frameworks. The EU shares the view that initiatives aimed at managing migration must be developed in a balanced manner, by taking into account the needs of both the countries of origin and the destination countries, and by promoting measures aimed at preventing irregular migration and by strengthening cooperation in the readmission of irregular migrants, at facilitating the use of the regular channels of migration and the links between migration and development. The EU is ready to enhance its cooperation with Egypt in all these endeavours.
61. Within this context, the EU also underlines the importance it attaches to the respect of migrants' rights, to the provision of assistance to migrants belonging to vulnerable categories, such as, in particular, the victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors, and to the protection of asylum seekers and refugees. Concerning the latter, the EU calls on Egypt to ensure that the UNHCR is able to carry out its tasks, including granting full access to migrants in order to establish their status as asylum seekers and to provide other services. The EU recalls the importance to fully comply and uphold international obligations relating to the protection of refugees as set out in International Conventions, in particular the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. The EU encourages Egypt to lift its reservations with respect to several articles of this Convention, in order to ensure in particular access to education and healthcare to asylum seekers and refugees. The EU is concerned about the killing of migrants on the Egyptian-Israeli border, and calls for restraint and for the thorough investigation of cases where migrants have been killed. The EU will continue to support Egypt in its efforts to enhance its capacity to protect asylum-seekers and refugees.

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62. The EU commends Egypt for the achievement of significant **economic reforms** and stable economic growth underpinned by Foreign Direct Investment, the export of goods, tourism and growing consumer confidence. Structural reforms implemented in the past were

conducive to growth. The EU notes that economic growth in Egypt remained positive during the global crisis in 2009 thanks to government stimulus packages that were timely and well communicated and implemented. In view of the current global financial and economic crisis, it is vital for Egypt to consolidate the fiscal position, first and foremost by stimulating economic growth. The EU welcomes Egypt's efforts to achieve a sustainable socio-economic development and looks forward to the fourth meeting of the Economic Dialogue later this year.

63. The EU notes the launching of the National Action Plan for youth employment (June 2009) and encourages Egypt to strengthen its efforts to ensure **tangible social progress** for all its citizens through, in particular, the reduction of poverty, the promotion of active labour market policies, a strategic approach to employment and the development of the domestic labour market and social dialogue as well as the modernisation of its social system. In this regard, the EU recalls the particular importance of continuing to enhance transparency in the public administration sector. The EU welcomes Egypt's active role in the follow-up of the framework of actions agreed at the Euro-Mediterranean Employment and Labour Ministerial Conference in Marrakech.
64. **EU-Egypt bilateral trade** has been steadily increasing from since the entry into force of the Association Agreement in 2004. The total trade volume with the EU was €18.7 billion in 2009. The EU represents nearly 34% of Egypt's total trade with the world and is Egypt's first trading partner. While Egyptian industrial exports to the EU market have for a long time enjoyed free access, tariff dismantling for EU industrial exports to Egypt has continued as foreseen in the Agreement. The EU remains however concerned by unilateral decisions taken by Egypt on export restrictions of certain products without taking into consideration the procedures laid down in the Association Agreement, which are adversely affecting trade between the parties.
65. The EU commends Egypt for its active role in the **Working Group of Trade Senior Officials** to draw a Euro-med Trade Roadmap beyond 2010 which was generally endorsed by Trade Ministers in December 2009 and which constitutes a work programme for the years to come. The Roadmap identifies concrete actions to be carried out by the Working Group that can enhance economic integration and boost Euro-Mediterranean trade and investments by the end of 2010.

66. The EU welcomes the ratification of the **agreement on** liberalisation of trade in agricultural, processed agricultural products and fish and fishery products, and is looking forward to its entry into force. This agreement will substantially liberalise bilateral trade by freeing access to most of these products, while retaining some protection for the most sensitive products.
67. The EU also stresses the importance of reinforcing close cooperation with Egypt in the field of **sanitary and phytosanitary measures**, technical barriers to trade and geographical indications with the aim to facilitate trade and welcomes progress achieved in this respect, as highlighted at the last meeting of the Subcommittee on Agriculture. Bilateral exports for the sectors have been regularly increasing.
68. The EU welcomes Egypt's hosting of a **Ministerial Conference of the Union for the Mediterranean, on food security, agriculture and rural development**, to be held on 15-16 June 2010 in Cairo, and looks forward to the possibilities to further develop activities related to food security, agriculture and rural development in the framework of the Union for Mediterranean.
69. The EU welcomes Egypt's participation in the Euro-Med negotiations for the liberalisation of **trade in services and establishment**. The EU wishes to conclude the negotiations on services and establishment, as well as on a new mechanism for the settlement of bilateral trade disputes, as soon as possible.
70. On **enterprise policy**, the EU acknowledges the progress made by Egypt under the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise. In particular, the EU commends the Egyptian efforts to implement the recommendations of the 2008 report on the Charter in three key areas: innovation, skills development and access to market. EU encourages Egypt to continue progress in the alignment of technical regulations, standards and quality infrastructure in order to start negotiations on the Agreement on conformity assessment (ACAA).
71. Following regional work on **rules of origin** to extend the Pan-European system of cumulation to the Mediterranean countries, such cumulation is now applicable in trade between Egypt and the EU since March 2006. Through the conclusion of more Free Trade Agreements among Mediterranean partners, economic operators are able to reap the full benefits of this cumulation system and, more generally, of the progressive establishment of a regional Free Trade Area. Egypt has significantly contributed to this endeavour by signing

agreements, including the pan-EuroMed protocol on rules of origin with other Agadir partners (Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia), with Turkey and with the EFTA States. The EU encourages Egypt to pursue the regional liberalisation efforts with other partners of the pan-EuroMed area. At the same, the EU welcomes the active role that Egypt is playing in the revision of the pan-euro-med rules of origin in the framework of the regional Convention on preferential pan-Euro-Mediterranean rules of origin.

72. As regards the **transport sector**, the EU takes note of the new, stricter safety rules and traffic regulations that the Egyptian Parliament has adopted, and welcomes the determination of Egypt to increase the safety of transport operations in particular in road, rail and maritime.
73. In the **aviation sector** the EU appreciates the efforts undertaken by Egypt to reform the sector and welcomes the current cooperation between the EU and Egypt in the field of air safety and underlines the importance of continued close cooperation. The EU would like to recall the urgent need to ensure the legal certainties of our air relations and, in that perspective, expresses its hope the EU and Egypt will be able to finalize the negotiations for a horizontal aviation agreement very soon and will be able to sign this agreement hopefully by July 2010. Such agreement will be the prerequisite for the reinforcement of the cooperation between the EU and Egypt in the field of air transport.
74. As regards the supply of **maritime transport** and related shipping services, the EU strongly advocates the need for promoting a stable and favourable investment climate for EU shipping companies operations in Egypt. In this perspective, EU invites Egypt to remove uncertainties resulting from recent decisions which could lead to damaging results and, as appropriate, consult with the EU economic operators in the country.
75. In the **energy sector**, the **Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Partnership on Energy** between the European Union and Egypt, signed on 2 December 2008, is a key political document for the sectoral cooperation with Egypt. The EU acknowledges Egypt's role for the EU's security of supplies and welcomes Egyptian participation in the May 2009 Southern Corridor Summit. The EU encourages Egypt to finalise its long-term energy strategy to 2030, which will, inter alia, create a basis for electricity and gas market reform. The EU welcomes Egypt's policy to focus on energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources. The EU encourages Egypt to continue implementing this policy vigorously. As regards Egypt's plans to construct a nuclear power plant, the EU recalls the importance of

ensuring the highest level of nuclear security and safety and consistency with the objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The EU encourages Egypt to complete all relevant national legislation in the nuclear domain and to become party to the relevant IAEA conventions, as well as to conclude and ratify the additional protocol to their IAEA Safeguards Agreement for the Agency's application of strengthened safeguards.

76. With reference to the Union for the Mediterranean and the Mediterranean Solar Plan, the EU encourages further Egyptian efforts to strengthen implementation of **solar and wind energy** in the Mediterranean. It takes note of Egyptian plans to host a Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting on 30-31 May 2010 (tbc) in Cairo with the focus on scale-up of climate friendly energy production and energy efficiency.
77. The EU continues to attach great importance to the cooperation on **environment** and to implementing bilateral environmental cooperation within the framework of the Association Agreement and the ENP Action Plan. The EU is looking forward to Egypt's new sustainable development strategy as well as its updated solid waste management strategy and integrated coastal zone management strategy. Cooperation at the regional level is progressing, notably in the framework of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, and a number of concrete projects have been launched in the context of the implementation of the Horizon 2020 Initiative, including the Horizon 2020 timetable for 2007-2013. The development and the implementation of the Mediterranean Water Strategy should build upon the results of this initiative as well as on the outcomes of the Mediterranean component of the EU Water Initiative.
78. The EU encourages Egypt to associate itself with the Copenhagen Accord on **climate change** and to provide information on the targets and actions that it will implement in this context. The EU is fully committed to continue negotiating with the parties with a view to concluding a robust and effective legally binding international agreement. The EU looks forward to deepening the dialogue on climate change mitigation and adaptation issues.
79. With regard to the **fisheries sector**, the EU acknowledges the important role of the General Authority for Fish Resources Development (GAFRD) as the entity responsible for sustainable fisheries management and for representing Egypt at international fora. The EU welcomes Egypt's active involvement in the various works of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and invites Egypt to play an active role in the

Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) regional projects such as Eastmed. The EU in turn encourages Egypt to enhance scientific and technical cooperation as well as other areas related to the fisheries sector including Vessel Monitoring System (VMS). Furthermore, the EU acknowledges Egypt's active involvement in the development of a more **coordinated and integrated approach to maritime affairs** in the Mediterranean, and reaffirms its commitment to develop a structured dialogue with Egypt on EU initiatives taken in the context of the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy. The EU invites Egypt to continue taking an active role in this regard.

80. With regard to **Research and Innovation** Egypt continues to successfully implement its national reform strategy (2007-2012). Thanks to the establishment of the Higher Council for Science and Technology, Egypt has identified in 2009 the national priorities for research in the different areas and presented them to the Commission in the occasion of the fourth S&T EU-Egypt Cooperation Meeting. Following the fourth Joint S&T Cooperation Committee Meeting (JSTCCM) of the EU-Egypt **Scientific and Technological cooperation** agreement (Cairo 24-25 January 2010), a road map for 2010-2011 is under preparation, including major achievements coming out of the collaboration between EU and Egypt and a prospect of future activities. Due to the efficient network of focal points for research, Egypt has been able to bring about a significant increase in the participation of researchers in the Research Framework Program. The number of Egyptian applicants in the first three calls of FP7 (2007-2009) is the highest among the Mediterranean countries counting about 490 Egyptian applicants of which 66 Egyptians applicants have been retained for contract for a total EU budget of about €3.9 million going to Egypt. These results should even more increase with the start in December 2009 (for three years) of the Sheraca project (**Shaping Egypt's** partnership with the **European Research Area**) aiming at enhancing the participation and involvement of Egyptian R&D stakeholders and key players in FP7. With regard to the bi-regional dialogue on S&T, Egypt was a major player in 2009 in the Inconet platform MIRA, particularly in the process of regional research prioritisation and organisation of important regional thematic workshops. Egypt is also successfully implementing and ending in 2010 the RDI (Research, Development and Innovation) programme of €1 million supported by the ENP. The Commission will engage in 2010 for an extension of the RDI programme (€20 million) with Egypt.

81. In the **education** sector, the EU strongly encourages the pursuit of education reforms including early childhood, basic education, secondary, technical and vocational education, as well as special needs, since education is a key factor for the sustainable development of a country. The EU welcomes Egypt's efforts to focus pre-university education on quality enhancement, system management, equal access, decentralisation and community participation. The EU reaffirms the importance of consideration of the principles of the Bologna process in the reform of higher education. Of these, initiatives leading to improved quality assurance, student and academic mobility and improved comparison of degrees are highly relevant. The EU also welcomes policies aimed at ensuring greater access to high quality education for all and enhancing the relevance of education and training programmes to the labour market. Human rights education should also become part of reform efforts in the education sector.
82. The **Tempus** programme acts as one of the main catalysts for the modernization and reform of higher education. In this context, the EU welcomes the active participation of Egyptian universities and higher education institutions in the second Call for Proposals under the Tempus IV. The **Erasmus Mundus** programme (Actions 1 and 2) promote academic cooperation and student and academic staff mobility between non-EU and EU countries. The EU side looks forward to further participation from Egyptian institutions in Erasmus Mundus II and encourages Egyptian participation in the **Jean Monnet** programme in order to improve understanding of the process of European integration amongst Egyptian universities, higher education institutions and the wider public. The EU looks forward to continued co-operation following the April 2010 Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education, Research and Innovation.
83. As regards policies for the **Information Society**, the EU acknowledges the progress made by Egypt for a adopting a competitive telecommunications environment through legal approximation of the regulations with the EU framework and welcomes its active participation to the work of the Euro-Mediterranean Regulatory Group (EMERG). It encourages Egypt to accomplish further progress towards liberalisation and opening of the related markets, in particular for the granting of licenses. The success of the twinning project with the National Regulatory Telecommunications Agency (NTRA), together with the Italian and German NRAs, would be an important step to strengthen the capacity of Egypt and to contribute to the growth of the Egyptian telecommunications market and increase the quality of the telecommunication services by tackling the issues of lack of transparent and publicly available regulation, discriminatory practices to issue licences, insufficient data

gathered by the regulator from the operators on the market situation and shares, fostering the regulation and practices to protect the consumers. Concerning the application of Information and Communications Technologies to various sectors of the economy, the EU acknowledges the Strategic Plan of Egypt for Information Technology in the field of eHealth, which includes remote diagnosis and the improvement in the access to ICT technology throughout the school network with the provision of hardware, teacher training, and community involvement in school management. It also encourages Egypt to make progress towards adopting in the near future a law on data protection, privacy and cyber crime and meanwhile in raising awareness of the risk of child pornography. Concerning R&D activities in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) the EU welcomes the increased participation of Egypt in the ICT part of the 7th Framework Programme and encourages Egypt to actively participate to the Event ICT 2010 which will take place in Brussels on 27-29 September 2010.

84. The EU welcomes Egypt's ongoing **health** sector reform including the rolling out of the "Family Health Model". It encourages Egypt to continue reform, which is supported by the EU. The EU encourages Egypt to sustain efforts to combat Influenza A H5N1 (avian influenza) and notes the Egyptian measures to combat Influenza A (H1N1). The EU acknowledges the Egyptian determination to continue implementing the International Health Regulations and the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The EU welcomes Egypt's participation, in 2009, in the EU enlarged health information committee and in the "EpiSouth" network on communicable diseases for the EU, Mediterranean and Balkan countries.
85. The EU welcomes cooperation with civil society organisations in developing informal education provision for young people and reaffirms the importance of youth and youth organisations in the development of an active civil society. To this end, it would welcome furthering **exchanges and cooperation in the field of youth** as a way to enhance people-to-people contacts, including the reinforced participation of Egypt in the Youth in Action and EuroMed Youth IV programmes.
86. On **culture**, the EU welcomes Egypt's active participation on a regional level in the EuroMed Heritage IV programme and in the ENP Special Action under the Culture Programme in 2009. The EU welcomes Egypt's willingness to pursue dialogue on culture and to this end will continue to cooperate closely with Egypt in relevant international fora

and organizations, in order to pursue common objectives and promote cultural diversity, notably through implementation of the UNESCO Convention. In this context the EU would like to stress the importance of strengthening the dialogue of cultures and religions within the country, with neighbouring countries and with the EU and its Member States.

87. The EU has finalised the **mid-term review** process for Egypt's country strategy paper 2007-2013 and approved financial allocations for **financial cooperation in the years 2011-2013**. The review concluded that the overall policy framework guiding EU-Egypt relations had not changed significantly since the strategy document was approved and that the strategy thus remained appropriate. The National Indicative Programme 2011- 2013 therefore provides for support to help improve the competitiveness of the Egyptian economy, to bolster human rights and good governance and to shore up the sustainability of the development process. These objectives are also coherent with the aims of the ENP Action Plan. The amount allocated for Egypt **for the period 2011-2013 is €449.29 million**. A total amount of €140 million was allocated to the Annual Action Programme 2009 with the biggest share €10 million allocated to Health Sector Policy Support Programme II.
 88. The **EIB** has a long-standing and excellent relationship with Egypt, which continues to enjoy one of the most comprehensive EIB financial support packages of all the Mediterranean Partner Countries. This includes long-term financing of infrastructure projects in sectors such as energy (including renewables), environment, transport and water, as well as broader support to the economic reform process and fostering sustainable development.
 89. The EU looks forward to a constructive meeting of the Association Council, which will mark an important moment for the further intensification of our bilateral relations in all areas.
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