



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from:	General Secretariat of the Council
to:	delegations
Subject:	Council Conclusions on Mali/Sahel

At its meeting on 23 July 2012, the Council adopted the Conclusions set out in the Annex to this note.

Council Conclusions on Mali/Sahel

1. The European Union (EU) is alarmed at the deteriorating situation in Mali and its adverse impact on regional and international peace and stability.
2. The EU is concerned at the emergence in northern Mali of a base controlled by violent national and international terrorist groups and extremists acting in concert with international criminal networks, including drug traffickers. It strongly condemns the atrocities committed against the population in the northern regions of Mali and calls on armed groups to put an end to them immediately. It is concerned by reports of an increase in human rights violations and forced civilian displacement. The EU condemns the heinous acts of profanation, damage and destruction of world heritage sites in Mali. It firmly condemns abductions. Any individuals or groups who have committed crimes must be brought to justice.
3. The EU is concerned at the continuing deterioration in the humanitarian situation. The insecurity in the north of Mali, which is affecting neighbouring countries already suffering from the food crisis, is continuing to cause further population displacement and limiting the level of assistance. The EU reminds armed groups of their obligation to guarantee the safety of all humanitarian actors and afford free and unhindered access to the regions in the north of the country. The EU will continue to supply humanitarian aid for those most affected by the conflict, in conjunction, in particular, with the EU Partnership for Resilience in Sahel (AGIR).

4. The EU is concerned at the slow progress of political transition in Bamako. It is regrettable that the task of setting up an inclusive government of political and civil society groups is so difficult, that the CNRDRE¹ has not been dissolved in practice, and that the army and security forces are unable to fulfil their basic duties of defending territorial integrity and protecting democratic institutions and people. Rapid progress is needed to ensure an effective return to constitutional rule in Mali and stability in the north of the country. The EU condemns the attacks on journalists in Mali. It condemns attempts at intimidation and restates the importance it attaches to a free and pluralist press. It is ready to adopt targeted sanctions against those who continue to threaten the democratic transition process, peace, security and stability in Mali.
5. The EU supports the conclusions of the Ouagadougou summit of 7 July 2012 between Malian stakeholders, the Regional Contact Group and the African Union (AU), in particular the call to the Interim President to form a Government of National Unity by 31 July 2012 and the drawing up of a road map. It urges the President to work closely with ECOWAS in order to determine the arrangements it could make to protect the political transition process and the institutions of state and to help Mali reconstitute armed forces able to safeguard legality and the rule of law throughout the whole of Malian territory.
6. The EU fully supports United Nations Security Council Resolution 2056 and its follow-up together with the ECOWAS initiatives, which place a new Government of National Unity, including political figures and civil society in Mali, at the heart of any solution.
7. The EU remains fully mobilised and continues to work in close coordination with the UN, the AU, ECOWAS and the other regional and international partners concerned. It calls on Mali's neighbours to play an active and complementary part in the mediation activity of ECOWAS and the AU with the object of ensuring a lasting regional solution.

¹ CNRDRE: le Comité national pour le redressement de la démocratie et la restauration de l'Etat (National Committee for the Recovery of Democracy and the Restoration of the State).

8. The EU and its Member States pledge to continue in all areas to implement the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel (the Sahel Strategy) in Niger and Mauritania, countries which must be protected from involvement. To this end, the Council welcomes the launch on 1 August 2012 of the CSDP "EUCAP SAHEL Niger" mission, which will assist in training and advising internal security forces in Niger and reinforcing regional coordination with Mali and Mauritania in the security field.
9. In order to continue implementation of the Sahel Strategy in Mali, the Council invites the HR/VP and the Commission to make concrete proposals with a view to:
- a gradual return to development cooperation, including support for the electoral process, duly adapted to the changed environment when the crisis is over, together with encouragement for the implementation, by a Government of National Unity, of a consensual road map as soon as the conditions are in place;
 - providing support for the possible deployment of a well-prepared ECOWAS stabilisation force in Mali, under the mandate of the United Nations Security Council and in concertation with a Government of National Unity and the AU;
 - contributing, with the agreement of the Government of National Unity and in coordination with it and with other partners, in particular the United Nations, the AU and ECOWAS, to the restructuring of Mali's security and defence forces, under civilian control in line with the Sahel Strategy. For this purpose the Council requests that options be prepared, including within the CSDP, for the next meeting of the Council;
 - supporting ECOWAS's mediation activity together with the AU, the UN, countries in the area and other international players;

- in cooperation with the Member States, reviewing all action relating to governance, security, development and conflict settlement envisaged in the Sahel Strategy for the north of Mali with a view to its rapid implementation, in order to provide effective back-up for the negotiating process in the north and the mediation efforts, as well as taking into account the needs of the populations concerned.
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