

Council conclusions on Yemen

1. The present situation in Yemen is of deep concern. All humanitarian actors have described the humanitarian situation as catastrophic for many Yemenis, as fighting continues in a number of areas, and humanitarian access for essential supplies of food and fuel remains extremely limited. Recalling its Conclusions on Yemen from 20 April 2015, the EU reiterates that the solution to this crisis must be a political one. It is increasingly urgent, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2216, to stop the fighting through a durable ceasefire, and put in place an inclusive political process that will enable the restoration of peace and legitimate state authority as well as the delivery of essential public services, while preserving the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen.
2. The EU therefore strongly supports the efforts of the UN Secretary General and the Special Envoy for Yemen to achieve a resumption of negotiations, fully in line with the framework provided by the GCC initiative, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and relevant UN Security Council resolutions. The EU welcomes the announcement by the UN Special Envoy that inclusive intra-Yemeni talks could resume shortly. It also welcomes the recent commitment of the Government of Yemen to participate in the consultations and the clear acceptance expressed by the Houthis and the General People's Congress of UN Security Council Resolution 2216 to the UN Secretary General and the UN Special Envoy. The EU urges all parties to use this opportunity to gain renewed momentum in building trust and establish a stable foundation for further negotiations towards a sustainable peace between all parties.
3. The EU calls on all the parties to engage in a flexible and constructive manner, without preconditions and in good faith in the preparation and conduct of UN-facilitated negotiations. Within a Yemeni-led process, they should settle their differences through dialogue, reject violence to achieve political goals, and refrain from provocation and unilateral actions that prevent the resumption of the political transition. In parallel, the implementation of practical confidence building measures will be essential to facilitate a return to the political track such as immediate steps towards a sustainable ceasefire, a mechanism for a monitored withdrawal of forces, facilitation of humanitarian and commercial access, and the release of political prisoners. The EU renews its call on all regional actors to engage constructively with Yemeni parties in order to enable a de-escalation of the crisis and avoid further regional instability.
4. The EU urges the Government of Yemen to assume its responsibility in the fight against extremist and terrorist groups, such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Da'esh in Yemen, which are taking advantage of the current instability. It is particularly important that all parties to the conflict take resolute action against such groups that pose a direct internal and external threat. The EU condemns all terrorist attacks in the strongest terms, in particular those against civilian and religious targets. It reaffirms its commitment to support the Government in this endeavour.
5. The EU is extremely concerned by the impact of ongoing hostilities, including bombardments, reported use of cluster munitions, fighting between competing factions on the ground and the disruption of essential services on the civilian population, in particular on children, women and other vulnerable groups. It is also very concerned by the damage inflicted to civilian infrastructure and cultural heritage. Yemen is experiencing an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, with 21 million people or 80% of the population in need of humanitarian assistance and 6 million in need of immediate life-saving assistance. The EU urges all parties to respect the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality, as well as to ensure the protection of civilians and of humanitarian aid workers. The EU is deeply concerned by the indiscriminate targeting of civilian infrastructure notably medical facilities, schools and water systems, ports and airports, and by the use of civilian buildings for military purposes. The EU regrets the deaths of humanitarian workers in Yemen since the beginning of this conflict. All parties to the conflict should urgently prioritise and facilitate sustained and systematic access, including safe passage for emergency, humanitarian and commercial goods - including fuel - through all of Yemen's ports. Onward distribution across the country must urgently and unconditionally be restored. The EU looks forward to the swift implementation of the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) for commercial shipping - including fuel - for Yemen, to which it will contribute financially. The EU and its Member States, having so far committed more than €200 million worth of humanitarian assistance to Yemen in 2015, stress once again the need for coordinated humanitarian action under UN leadership, and urge all countries to contribute to addressing humanitarian needs.
6. All parties should take all the necessary measures to ensure the respect of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law. Ensuring accountability for violations is an important part of the process to achieve a lasting

settlement of the current conflict. The EU stresses the need to fully implement the resolution on *"Technical assistance and capacity-building for Yemen in the field of human rights"*

adopted during the UN Human Rights Council 30th session, which inter alia requests the Office of the High Commissioner to assist the national Commission of inquiry in meeting international obligations in its work. The EU looks forward to the High Commissioner's oral update at the Council's 31st session and to a comprehensive written report during its 33rd session. It expects that the national Commission of inquiry will be able to work independently and reiterates its call for the independent investigation of all alleged violations of International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law.

7. The EU and its Member States highlight the need for a concerted, coordinated and strategic approach of the international community and the Government of Yemen to the country's reconstruction, and stand ready to play their part in efforts to the benefit of all Yemenis.

Press office - General Secretariat of the Council

Rue de la Loi 175 - B-1048 BRUSSELS - Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319

press.office@consilium.europa.eu - www.consilium.europa.eu/press