



Brussels, 22 January 2010

BACKGROUND¹
FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL
Monday, 25 January 2010, in Brussels

*The Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), chaired by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, will begin at 11.00 on Monday, 25 January 2010. It will continue the discussion on the EU's response to the earthquake in **Haiti** begun at the extraordinary meeting of development ministers on Monday, 18 January. During the meeting, ministers will also discuss **Somalia, Afghanistan and Yemen** and over lunch they will discuss **Iran and Bosnia and Herzegovina**.*

The High Representative will hold a press conference at the end of the Council at approximately 15.00.

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Meetings on the sidelines of the Council

Tuesday, 26 January,

- 08.45: Ministerial political dialogue with Serbia, press conference at 10.00
- 11.00: Ministerial with the OSCE Presidency
- 12.30: Ministerial political dialogue with Cape Verde

NB: These meetings will be chaired by the Spanish Presidency at the request of the High Representative.

Press conferences and public events can be followed by video streaming:

<http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>

Video coverage of the event will be available for preview and download in broadcast quality (MPEG4) on <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office

EU response to earthquake in Haiti

The Council will continue the discussion begun at last week's extraordinary FAC convened by the High Representative on the EU's emergency response to the earthquake in Haiti.

The Union immediately mobilized search and rescue teams and earmarked EUR 122 million from the Commission and the Member States combined for urgent humanitarian assistance and a further preliminary financial contribution of EUR 100 million from the EU instruments for the urgent restoration of government capacity in Haiti.

The Council will also focus on the contributions of civilian and military assets from Member States in response to the United Nations' appeal for assistance.

Somalia

The High Representative will lead a discussion on the situation in Somalia and the Union's contribution to enhancing security there. The Council is expected to discuss preparations for a possible Common Security and Defence Policy operation to contribute to the training of the Transitional Federal Government's (TFG) National Security Forces in Uganda. It would be part of the Union's broad engagement for promoting peace and development in Somalia, alongside the EU NAVFOR Atalanta counter-piracy operation.

Afghanistan

The High Representative will lead a discussion on the situation in Afghanistan ahead of the London Conference on Afghanistan on 28 January. Catherine Ashton will emphasise the EU's commitment to help the Afghan government take greater responsibility and ownership. The Union is enhancing its engagement under an Action Plan adopted last October. The EU Police Mission in Afghanistan will continue to contribute to the long-term sustainability of police reform in Afghanistan.

Yemen

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions welcoming the forthcoming high-level meeting of international partners with Yemen in London at the end of January. It is expected to adopt conclusions underlining the EU's commitment, in the light of the deteriorating security situation in Yemen and in pursuit of its October conclusions, to joining with international partners, including Yemen's neighbours, in assisting the government through a comprehensive approach.

Iran

Ministers will review the situation in the light of the outcome of the New York meeting of Political Directors from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Germany and the EU in New York on 16 January and of the latest statements by Iran.

The Union continues to be committed to the international community's dual-track approach of seeking a negotiated solution with Iran whilst standing ready to take further measures if Iran fails to reassure the international community of its peaceful intentions.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) - Operation EUFOR ALTHEA

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the future role and tasks of Operation EUFOR Althea following the operation's decisive progress in fulfilling its mandate and carrying out the military and stabilization tasks provided for in the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement.

It is likely to express its readiness to begin providing non-executive capacity-building and training support within the framework of the mission. The Council is also expected to emphasise the Union's commitment to supporting BiH efforts to maintain a safe and secure environment and its readiness to maintain an executive military role to support these efforts beyond 2010, under a UN mandate, if the situation requires.
