COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Council conclusions on Mali

3217th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 17 January 2013

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. The EU condemns the acts being carried out by terrorist groups against the Malian Armed Forces, which are jeopardising the country's territorial integrity and the safety of its population. Under those circumstances, and in line with the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions (in particular, Resolutions 2071 and 2085), the EU supports the efforts being made by the region and by the international community. It welcomes the swift response by France, supported by other EU Member States, to the request for military assistance to combat the terrorist groups issued by the President of Mali.

2. The EU supports the rapid deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2085, and reiterates its commitment to providing swift financial assistance to that Mission, in particular through the mobilisation of the African Peace Facility. The Council invites the High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) to hasten preparations for the provision of financial and logistical support, in close cooperation with the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS, so that operational proposals can be submitted to the Council as a matter of urgency. The Council calls for the organisation of a donors' conference as soon as possible to provide logistical and financial support for AFISMA's deployment, as required by UNSC Resolution 2085. It invites the HR/VP to define the modalities for the EU's participation in that conference.

3. The Council hereby decides to establish the European Union Training Mission (EUTM Mali), which will be responsible for providing the Malian Armed Forces with military training and advice within the framework of Resolutions 2071 and 2085 and in response to the direct request by the Malian authorities to the EU. It also hereby decides to appoint General François Lecointre as the Mission Commander. It invites the Mission Commander to speed up the plans and preparations so that the EUTM can be launched by mid-February at the latest; to that end, it invites him to send the first technical team to Bamako within the next few days.

4. Political progress is essential in order to ensure Mali's long-term stability. To that end, the EU urges the Malian authorities to adopt and implement a roadmap for the restoration of democracy and constitutional order in Mali as soon as possible. It encourages a national inclusive dialogue open to the northern populations and to all groups which reject terrorism and recognise the country's territorial integrity. In that context, the Council reiterates its willingness to gradually resume its development cooperation and invites the European Commission to prepare the relevant decisions so that the development funds can be rapidly disbursed as soon as the conditions are met. It also invites the HR/VP to explore the possibilities of rapid assistance through the stability instrument.

5. The EU reiterates the importance it attaches to close coordination with Malian efforts and the other regional and international partners, in particular within the framework of the Support and Follow-Up Group established by the AU. The Council also welcomes the High Representative's plans to hold a meeting of that Group in the near future. It also welcomes the plans to hold the ECOWAS meeting in Abidjan on 19 January and the AU Summit on 25-26 January.

6. The EU is prepared to step up its support immediately for the efforts being made by humanitarian organisations to assist people in need in Mali and its neighbouring countries. It underlines the importance of effective coordination between humanitarian actors under the auspices of the United Nations, and reiterates its appeal to all the parties concerned to allow unhindered humanitarian access to people in need and to ensure the safety of aid workers.

7. The EU calls on all the parties to guarantee the protection of civilian populations and to comply with international humanitarian law and human rights. All the parties and individuals involved in Mali will be held responsible for their actions.

8. The EU underlines the importance of maintaining stability in the Sahel and ensuring that there are no negative repercussions for neighbouring countries. It therefore reiterates its commitment to supporting Mali's neighbouring states within the framework of its Strategy for the Sahel in order to strengthen their security and development. The Council calls on the High Representative to present a Council decision immediately so that an EU Special Representative for the Sahel can be rapidly appointed."