COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Council conclusions on Egypt

FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 21 August 2013

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. The European Union has a long and close relationship with the Egyptian people and stands by them in their ongoing search for democracy, respect for human rights, dignity, social justice and security. The EU recalls the events of 25 January 2011, and the aspirations of millions of Egyptians and sacrifices of many for these ideals. The EU regards Egypt as an important neighbour and partner.

2. It is therefore with great concern that the EU is following current events in Egypt, in particular since last Wednesday. The EU condemns in the clearest possible terms all acts of violence. The EU believes the recent operations of the Egyptian security forces have been disproportionate and have resulted in an unacceptable large number of deaths and injuries. In this context, it notes the announcement on 18 August 2013 to launch an independent investigation into all the killings, and calls on the government to exercise restraint.

3. The EU strongly condemns acts of terrorism such as the murder of policemen in the Sinai, destruction of many churches and the targeting of the Coptic community, attacks on government installations and museums. In this regard, the EU recalls that it defends freedom of religion or belief in any circumstances, and condemns any attack against any place of worship, and against any person because of their religion or beliefs.

4. The EU calls on all Egyptians to halt the cycle of violence and refrain from actions that would incite further violence, including provocations, incitement and hate speech. Perpetrators must be brought to justice. While the EU respects the government's responsibility for maintaining security for all citizens it calls on the Egyptian authorities to end the state of emergency, to restore due process as a matter of urgency, to release all political prisoners and respect international obligations regarding the treatment of detainees.

P R E S S

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5. The EU urges all political parties to engage in a real and inclusive dialogue in order to restore a democratic process responding to the legitimate requests and aspirations of the Egyptian people. The EU looks forward to the rapid convening of an inclusive national dialogue open to all political forces and takes note of the reaffirmation by the Egyptian authorities of their commitment to implement the Roadmap as stated in the declaration of 20 August. Political discourse must not be violent and political groups not excluded or banned as long as they renounce violence and respect democratic principles. Political reconciliation and working together in a peaceful manner in order to return on the path to democracy is the only solution. It is for the Egyptian people to decide on the way forward; to agree on a constitution as the basis for a democratic Egypt in full respect of the division of powers with the necessary checks and balances leading to free and fair elections in which all parties can compete.

6. The prosperous future of Egypt can only be based on a democratic solution with fully functioning democratic institutions that protect all citizens of Egypt, including persons belonging to minorities and women, and their rights, including the right to peaceful protest, in which the rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular of assembly and expression, religion or belief, as well as the right of fair trial are fully respected. These rights should be guaranteed by the rule of law and protected by a fully empowered civilian government.

7. Mindful of the needs of the Egyptian people, the Council discussed the issue of assistance to Egypt. The Council tasked the High Representative, in cooperation with the Commission, to review the issue of EU assistance to Egypt under the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Association Agreement on the basis of Egypt's commitment to the principles that underpin them. The Council expressed its concern over the economic situation in the country and the negative impact on the most vulnerable groups of Egyptian society. Therefore assistance in the socio-economic sector and to civil society will continue. The EU will monitor the situation in Egypt closely and readjust its cooperation accordingly.

8. Member States also agreed to suspend export licenses to Egypt of any equipment which might be used for internal repression and to reassess export licences of equipment covered by Common Position 2008/944/CFSP and review their security assistance with Egypt.

9. The Council welcomes the High Representative's sustained engagement on this issue, including her recent visits to the region and her readiness for new efforts if circumstances allow. The EU reiterates its willingness to support a revived process of inclusive political dialogue and possible elections in Egypt, including to continue the good offices of the High Representative and the EUSR for the Southern Mediterranean working closely with international and regional partners

10. The EU reiterates its readiness to assist the people of Egypt in their quest for a stable, inclusive, democratic and prosperous Egypt."