Conclusions of the European Council meeting (16 September 2010)

2010/2750(RSP) - 16/09/2010

The European Council adopted a series of conclusions on 16 September 2010 with the aim to give a new momentum to the Union's external relations, taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by the Lisbon Treaty.

It agreed on the need for Europe to promote its interests and values more assertively and in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual benefit. As a first step, it set general orientations with a view to a number of important events over the coming weeks and months. It also decided on a number of concrete measures to more generally enhance the effectiveness of the Union's external policy.

1) Orientations for upcoming events: the European Union will hold a number of important international meetings in the coming weeks. In these conclusions, the European Council lays out initial orientations with a view to these meetings. It will in future regularly discuss external relations in order to set strategic orientations in advance of key events, in particular with a view to defining key messages on the EU's objectives and on the means to achieve them:

- **Summits with China, Korea and India and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)**: followed later in the year by a summit with India: the European Council states that these are a good opportunity to engage with key partners in a very dynamic part of the world. Issues such as the respective roles in achieving a sustainable recovery from the economic crisis and in seeking global solutions to universal challenges will be on the agenda. Concrete steps should be taken in priority areas of cooperation between Europe and Asia, such as cooperation on climate change, including on the promotion of effective and verifiable reductions in emissions, as well as on renewables and energy efficiency; pressing security issues, such as proliferation, terrorism, cybersecurity and piracy; cooperation on regional issues such as Iran and North Korea as well as on global issues such as migration, energy and access to raw materials. As regards China, the European Union should actively pursue its strategic interests, including as regards the promotion of bilateral trade, market access for goods and services and investment conditions; the protection of intellectual property rights and the opening up of public procurement markets; stronger discipline in the field of export subsidies; and the dialogue on exchange rate policies.
- **The G20 Summit in Seoul**: this will allow a review of the global economic recovery and the commitments made by G20 members. In particular, it will allow the Union to stress the importance of maintaining strong momentum in the area of financial reform. In this respect, the recent agreement between the European Parliament and the Council on the financial supervision package and the completion of the reform of the regulatory framework by the end of 2011 strengthen the EU's hand. It should also serve to send a clear signal on the need to conclude the WTO DDA negotiations and implement the Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth.
- **Transatlantic relations**: the October 2010 European Council will agree on the key political messages the European Union representatives will bring to this major summit. The transatlantic partnership should concentrate on maximising the potential benefits of the economic relationship, on working more closely on major international issues and on confronting global economic and security challenges together in a concerted manner. In this connection, the High Representative is invited to develop ideas on how EU/NATO cooperation in crisis management could be further strengthened.
- **Cancun conference on climate change**: the European Council will take stock of preparations for the Cancun conference on climate change at its October meeting and agree on the EU position.
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European Neighbourhood Policy: a reflection on this policy will provide an opportunity to deepen relations with the Union's eastern neighbours through the Eastern Partnership as well as with its southern neighbours. The second summit of the Union for the Mediterranean will provide a timely opportunity to strengthen Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and support the resumption of direct negotiations between the parties in the Middle East Peace Process.

- **EU/Africa summit (November 2010) and the EU/South Africa Summit (September 2010)**: these summits should serve to further deepen relations;
- **UN High Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (New York, September 2010)**: the EU is firmly committed to supporting the achievement of the MDG globally by 2015, together with partners in the international community.
- **Ukraine and Russia summits**: the upcoming summits with Ukraine and Russia should be used to deepen cooperation on areas of mutual benefit, so as to bring more stability and predictability to those two important relationships, as well as to promote human rights. In particular, the summit with Ukraine should bring progress to the negotiations on the Association Agreement, including the deep and comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, and highlight the role of the EU in the economic and democratic reforms of this important neighbour. The summit with Russia will provide an opportunity to enhance cooperation with Russia and to discuss in particular its modernization agenda. Cooperation should be enhanced on economic issues such as energy, investment and innovation, on security issues, including frozen conflicts, the combat against terrorism and organized crime, and on environmental issues.
- **ACP**: building on the successful summit held this year with its Latin American and Caribbean partners, the EU is committed to continue to work closely together with the countries of the region in response to global challenges.

It should be noted that the Council touched upon priority actions as regards Pakistan (in light of the devastating floods which hit the country) and the Middle-East.

2) The Council also discussed internal arrangements to be taken to improve the European Union's external policy. These may be summarised as follows:

- **a more integrated approach in support of the EU's strategic interests**: the importance of issues like climate change, energy policy, trade, development or Justice and Home Affairs issues, including migration and visa policy in dealings with partners and at a multilateral level must be fully taken into account in preparations for summits and international events. In this regard the European Union should further enhance the coherence and complementarity between its internal and external policies;
- **develop synergies between the EU's external relations and Member States bilateral relations with third countries**: there should be more active and regular sharing of information and consultation on developments at the respective levels;
- **close and regular coordination** between all the different institutional actors involved in the definition and implementation of the European Union's external relations is necessary to ensure that EU representatives can defend coherent positions on the whole range of the strategic interests and objectives of the Union;
- **improve the way in which the European Union projects its views in international fora**;
- **develop medium-term planning** that sets out objectives to be reached over time, with each summit concentrating on two or three core issues. In this context, there should be a reflection on the frequency, format and output of those summits, which need to be better targeted towards reaching EU objectives;
- **support to the European External Action Service** will be a crucial tool in support of the efforts towards enhancing the European Union's external policy.