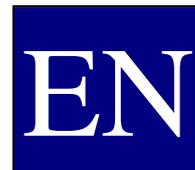




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on a European Union Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel

*3076th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 21 March 2011*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council welcomes the presentation of a European Union Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel proposed by the High Representative and the Commission as requested by the Foreign Affairs Council of 25 October 2010.
2. The Council recognises the multi-faceted and interlinked challenges faced by the countries in the Sahel region, both individually and regionally. It recalls that security and development cannot be separated; improving the security situation is integral to economic growth and the reduction of poverty in the region.
3. In that context, the Council supports the integrated approach as well as the strategic objectives proposed in the political strategy which will provide not only the framework for EU engagement but also a useful means of improving the coherence, coordination and effectiveness of the EU's engagement with the region. The Council also supports the primary focus of the Strategy in its initial phase on Mali, Mauritania and Niger around four particular strands of action: development, good governance and internal conflict resolution; political and diplomatic; security and rule of law; countering violent extremism.
4. Building on existing national, bilateral and multilateral engagement, the EU will work in close cooperation with the authorities of the countries of the region, civil society and regional and international bodies, including the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS to fight the root causes of poverty, support economic development, good governance and improved access to key infrastructures and basic services for the local populations. The EU will also support the consolidation of state institutions, justice, police and customs to strengthen security and the rule of law in the region with a view to reducing the threat from terrorism, kidnapping and cross-border criminal activity such as the trafficking of drugs and human beings.

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5. Working in close cooperation with partners, including the AU and ECOWAS, the EU will continue to assist the countries of the region in their efforts to enhance the political stability, security, governance and social cohesion by setting the conditions for local and national sustainable development and assisting the mitigation of internal tensions, as well as the challenges posed by violent extremism, terrorism and organised crime.
 6. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission to make proposals on the basis of the strategy presented for urgent consideration by the relevant Council preparatory bodies of steps and actions in order to develop and implement the strategy. The Council also invites the High Representative to take forward consultations with partners in the region, as well as with the AU and ECOWAS."
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