

Brussels European Council (16 and 17 June 2005)

Presidency Conclusions

1. The meeting of the European Council was preceded by an exposé by the President of the European Parliament, Mr Josep Borrell, followed by an exchange of views.

2. The European Council welcomes the signing of the Accession Treaty in Luxembourg on 25 April 2005, which marks a further important step towards the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union. Those countries will now participate in the proceedings of the European Council, the Council and its preparatory bodies as active observers.

3. The European Council also refers to its conclusions of 17 and 18 June 2004 and of 16 and 17 December 2004 on enlargement and highlights the need to implement them fully.

4. The Council addressed the following issues:

I. Financial perspective

II. Economic, social and environmental issues (Lisbon Strategy; sustainable development)

III. Area of freedom, security and justice (the Hague Programme; terrorism)

IV. External relations

V. Other business

I. FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE

5. The European Council regretted that it was not possible to reach an overall agreement on the Financial Perspective at this stage. It underlined the need for clarity over the resources available to the Union in support of common policies over the future financing period, and undertook to continue to make every effort to achieve this objective. It noted that the preparatory work undertaken collectively has allowed work on this issue to advance significantly. It agreed that the focus and momentum given to the discussions through the negotiating box drawn up at the initiative of the Presidency need in particular to be maintained.

6. The European Council invites the incoming Presidency to take forward these discussions, drawing on the progress made to date, with a view to resolving all the elements necessary for achieving an overall agreement as soon as possible.

II. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Sustainable development

7. When it relaunched the Lisbon Strategy in March 2005, the European Council reaffirmed that the Strategy was to be seen in the wider context of the sustainable development requirement that present needs should be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

8. The European Council reiterates its attachment to sustainable development as a key principle governing all the Union's policies and activities. In this context, and on the basis of the Commission proposal, the European Council approves the "Declaration on the guiding principles for sustainable development" (see Annex I). It welcomes this new impetus and recalls that the key objectives and guiding principles set out in the declaration will serve as a basis for the renewed sustainable development strategy, comprising targets, indicators and an effective monitoring procedure, to be adopted before the end of 2005 if possible.

Relaunching the Lisbon Strategy: a partnership for growth and jobs

9. In March 2005, the European Council judged that it was vital to relaunch the Lisbon Strategy without delay and to refocus priorities on growth and employment. To achieve that objective, it also concluded that all appropriate national and Community resources – including the cohesion policy – must be mobilised to a greater degree in the Strategy's three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) and that synergies must be developed between those dimensions.

10. In this context, the Council approves the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs 2005-2008, which consist of the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines, which ensure the overall economic consistency of the three dimensions of the Strategy, and the Employment Guidelines. It welcomes this first result of the new approach defined at its meeting in March 2005, which makes it possible, on the basis of the proceedings of all the Council's configurations concerned with implementation, to coordinate macro-economic policies, micro-economic policies and employment policies around twenty-four integrated guidelines (see Annex II) in a dynamic and consistent fashion, in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Treaty.

11. To follow the new three-year governance cycle, the Integrated Guidelines must now be translated into ambitious national reform programmes, to be established by the Member States in accordance with the timetable put forward by the Commission, which respond to their needs and specific situations, and which reflect this integrated and consistent approach involving macro-economic policies, micro-economic policies, and employment. The Commission will also present a Lisbon Community programme covering all the action to be taken at Community level. Those programmes are an indispensable instrument for growth and jobs.

III. AREA OF FREEDOM, SECURITY AND JUSTICE

The Hague Programme

12. The European Council is pleased to note the adoption by the Council and Commission of the Action Plan implementing the Hague Programme on strengthening the area of freedom, security and justice. That Plan translates the objectives of the Hague Programme into specific measures. Given the growing importance of the external dimension of the area of freedom, security and justice, it will be supplemented at the end of the year by the strategy to be adopted by the Council on a proposal from the SG/HR and the Commission.

13. It is of prime importance that Member States should implement the various measures adopted to carry out the Action Plan effectively and within the deadlines. The European Council therefore notes that the Council is currently examining the measures taken by Member States to transpose and implement the Framework Decision on the European arrest warrant. It considers that that method of evaluation should in general be developed.

14. The European Council welcomes the emphasis given by the Action Plan to operational cooperation between the various actors involved in the Union's internal security. In that context, it

notes the more operational character of recent work by the Police Chiefs Task Force, Europol and Eurojust and welcomes the start of activities by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders. The European Council invites the Council to step up coordination both amongst these various actors and between them and the competent authorities of the Member States.

15. The European Council agrees to take stock of the implementation of the Hague Action Plan during the second half of 2006, in accordance with the decision it took in November 2004.

16. The European Council welcomes the Drugs Action Plan (2005-2008) in the framework of the Drug Strategy (2005-2012).

Fight against terrorism

17. The European Council took note of the Council's report on the implementation of the Action Plan to combat terrorism. It commends the progress made on the legislative front in the area of the exchange of judicial and police information and the fight against the financing of terrorism. It also notes the guidelines defined by the Council for drawing up a strategy on radicalisation and terrorist recruitment, including, among other things, the promotion at national level of dialogue between religions, the finalisation of the peer review of domestic anti-terrorism arrangements and the development of analytical capacity within the Council Secretariat. Finally, it welcomes the adoption by the Council of the document on the implementation of the Conceptual Framework on ESDP and terrorism.

18. The European Council stresses the importance which it attaches to progress in all areas of the Action Plan to combat terrorism, particularly as regards compliance with the deadlines for the entry into force of the measures considered to be a priority for the effectiveness of the fight against terrorism as agreed by the March 2004 European Council.

19. The European Council wishes the following points to be addressed as a priority during the second half of 2005:

- legislative proceedings to strengthen police and judicial cooperation, in particular, and as far as possible, concerning the exchange of information between police authorities, the evidence warrant, the retention of data on telecommunications traffic, and the exchange of information and cooperation on terrorist offences;

- further efforts to achieve better sharing of strategic and operational information between Member States, and between the latter and the competent agencies and services of the Union, in accordance with the Hague Programme;

- the drafting of the strategy and action plan on radicalisation and terrorist recruitment, in the light of the guidelines defined by the Council;

- follow-up to the recommendations stemming from the peer review of domestic anti-terrorism arrangements;

- continued implementation of the strategy on the financing of terrorism, in particular by adopting a code of conduct to prevent the abuse of charitable organisations and by strengthening the procedures concerning the freezing of assets;

- the strengthening of civil protection capabilities, particularly the medical resources available to deal with a bioterrorist attack, and the development of a rapid reaction capability based on the civil protection modules of the Member States;

- the strengthening of political dialogue on terrorism with third countries, and of international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, in particular the adoption of the United Nations comprehensive convention on international terrorism;

- the finalisation of programmes of assistance for certain priority third countries to strengthen their anti-terrorist mechanisms, and the implementation, in that respect, of the network of experts responsible for responding to requests for technical assistance from third countries;

- customs cooperation measures to improve the security of the supply chain.

20. The European Council will assess the progress made at its meeting in December 2005 and revise the Action Plan to combat terrorism.

IV. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Preparation for the September 2005 United Nations Summit

21. The European Council considers that the United Nations Summit will provide an opportunity to reaffirm our support for the UN as an international relations instrument founded in law. It reaffirms its strong support for effective multilateralism and for the process of reform of the United Nations. It emphasises that the report which the Secretary-General presented on 21 March 2005 and the contribution from the President of the General Assembly on 3 June 2005 provide an excellent working basis for the declaration to be adopted in September in New York.

22. The European Council wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for the exhaustive and coherent nature of his report. It shares the Secretary-General's views on his integrated concept of collective security and supports the idea that development, security and human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. It welcomes the strategies proposed in the areas of development, security, human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

23. The European Council considers it essential to achieve a balanced and ambitious outcome enabling the UN to be reformed so that it can respond more practically and effectively to the multi-dimensional threats and challenges identified in the Secretary-General's report.

24. Against that background, the European Council emphasises the European Union's commitment to pursuing a substantial dialogue with all UN member countries with a view to preparing for the Summit.

25. The European Union supports the development of cooperation with the United Nations and the regional organisations, in particular on the occasion of the high-level dialogue between the United Nations and the regional organisations which will take place on 25 and 26 July 2005.

26. Development plays a crucial role in the preparation of the Summit. In this respect, recalling the prime responsibility of developing countries for their own development, the European Council welcomes the agreement reached by the Council concerning Official Development Assistance (ODA). In the context of the commitment to attain the internationally agreed ODA target of an ODA/GNI ratio of 0,7%, the European Council notes with satisfaction that its Member States are on track to achieve the 0,39% target of GNI in 2006 for ODA volumes contained in the Barcelona commitments. While reaffirming its determination to fulfil these commitments, the Council decided on a new collective European Union target of an ODA/GNI ratio of 0,56% by 2010. That would result in an additional EUR 20 billion a year in ODA.

27. In this context, the European Council can reiterate, in accordance with the outcome of the Council on 24 May 2005, that Member States which have not yet achieved an ODA/GNI ratio of 0,51% undertake to attain that level, within their respective budget allocation processes, by 2010, while those that are already above that level undertake to continue their efforts. Member States which joined the EU after 2002, and have not yet achieved an ODA/GNI ratio of 0,17%, will endeavour to increase their ODA to attain that level, within their respective budget allocation processes, by 2010, while those that are already above that level undertake to continue their efforts; Member States undertake to achieve the target of an ODA/GNI ratio of 0,7% by 2015, while those which have achieved that target commit themselves to remaining above that target; Member States which joined the EU after 2002 will endeavour to increase their ODA/GNI ratio to 0,33% by 2015.

28. The European Council invites the Council to pursue its consideration of the most promising options for innovative sources of funding for development, so as to increase the resources available in a sustainable and predictable manner.

29. The European Union remains determined to find, in cooperation with the international financial institutions, an agreement on the scope and arrangements for further multilateral debt relief in order to guarantee, following a case-by-case approach, that the burden of debt is bearable in the long term.

In this context, it welcomes the G8's agreement to grant 100% multilateral debt relief to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries.

30. The European Union recalls the need, in parallel with funding-related efforts, to improve the quality and effectiveness of Official Development Assistance, and the need to reinforce capacities and ensure the viability of increased Official Development Assistance for partner countries. It welcomes the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and recalls the commitment by the Member States and the Commission to ensure that it is implemented and followed up without delay, that verifiable key targets are established, and that the specific commitments which the European Union adopted at the High-level Forum in Paris are implemented.

31. The European Council underlines the importance of taking into account the social dimension of globalisation in various policies and in international cooperation.

32. The European Council confirms that the European Union will continue to take account of development cooperation objectives in all policies that it implements which are likely to affect

developing countries. The EU will make a particular effort to promote and increase the consistency of development policies in the context of the Global Partnership for Development under Millennium Development Goal (MDG) No 8.

33. The EU considers the development of Africa a priority and will step up its efforts to assist African countries to reach the Millennium Development Goals. In this context, the European Council reaffirms the European Union's intention of increasing its financial assistance for sub-Saharan Africa by collectively allocating at least 50% of the agreed increase in ODA resources to the African continent, respecting the priorities of the various Member States. Aid for countries which are emerging from conflict and for fragile States will also be improved.

34. The European Council regards the creation of the Peace Building Commission, conflict prevention, the fight against terrorism, the adoption of principles governing the use of force, disarmament, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and the strengthening of the United Nations' peacekeeping capabilities as its priorities in the preparation of the Summit.

35. The European Council welcomes the agreement reached at the United Nations General Assembly on 13 April 2005 on the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and calls on all members of the United Nations to sign that Convention during the Summit in September.

36. With regard more specifically to disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the European Council deplores the fact that despite the EU's efforts, the NPT Review Conference was not able to achieve a document by consensus, dealing with the basic questions. The European Council reiterates the importance which it attaches to the consolidation of the NPT and hopes that the issue will be addressed at the September Summit. It confirms its common position, adopted for the Review Conference, as the basis for pursuing its objectives in the forthcoming examination of the NPT.

37. The European Council welcomes the prominent place given to human rights, the rule of law and democracy in the reform proposals. In this connection, the European Council reaffirms the importance which it attributes to the concept of responsibility to protect, which must be implemented by the Security Council. It supports the reinforcement of the role and resources of the High Commissioner and the establishment of a Human Rights Council meeting throughout the year and reflecting the universality of human rights and their central position in the UN system. It shares the concern to place human rights on the same footing as development, peace and security matters. It also supports the call for the strengthening of the High Commissioner's Office, inter alia through its interaction with the Security Council. Those initiatives should increase the extent to which account is taken of human rights in the United Nations' activities.

38. In the area of institutional reforms, the European Council recognises the need to reform the main UN bodies, among them the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Security Council, with a view to enhancing the representativeness, transparency and efficiency of the system. It also supports reform efforts in the areas of the budget and administrative management, to enable the UN better to fulfil its mandate.

39. Sustainable development, including environmental questions and concerns, must be integrated to a greater extent in national and international development programmes and strategies. The European Council supports the Secretary-General's urgent appeal for a more integrated international environmental governance structure, based on existing institutions. In this perspective, and given the environmental challenges associated with development, the EU proposes that the high-level meeting in September 2005 initiate a process, as part of UN reform, which will lead to negotiations on the establishment of a UN agency for the environment, based on UNEP, with a revised and strengthened mandate, supported by stable, adequate and predictable financial contributions and operating on an equal footing with other UN specialised agencies. This agency, based in Nairobi, would make it possible to develop the environmental dimension of sustainable development in an integrated and consistent manner, and would cooperate closely with multilateral agencies, each using its comparative advantages to best effect.

40. The European Council underlines that it is necessary for the WTO Ministerial Conference planned for December 2005 in Hong Kong to establish the broad lines of an agreement for the conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda. Ambitious and balanced results must be achieved in view of the economic challenges which Europe has to face and in order to provide developing countries with an opportunity to fully integrate into the global economy.

Western Balkans

41. The European Council reaffirms its commitment to full implementation of the Thessaloniki agenda, which emphasises that the future of the Western Balkans lies in the European Union. It reiterates that each country's progress towards European integration, taking account of the evolution of the *acquis*, depends on its efforts to comply with the Copenhagen criteria and the conditionality of the stabilisation and association process. Moreover, in this process, regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations will remain essential elements of EU policy.

42. The European Council encourages the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to intensify its efforts with a view to the opinion that the Commission is to submit on its application for accession to the EU. It commends the substantial efforts made by Serbia and Montenegro, encourages it to

intensify these, and reaffirms that the European Union wishes to enter into negotiations as soon as possible with a view to concluding a stabilisation and association agreement. It reiterates its determination to act likewise with Bosnia and Herzegovina as soon as the conditions for so doing are fulfilled. The European Council also recalls the importance of holding free and democratic elections in Albania in accordance with international standards, including in the regions where minorities live, in the context of that country's rapprochement with the EU.

43. On the eve of the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, the European Council underlines that full and unrestricted cooperation by countries in the region with the ICTY remains an essential requirement for continuing their progress towards the EU. It expects that this cooperation will continue and be strengthened until all those charged with crimes who continue to elude international justice have been brought before the Tribunal.

44. The European Council has adopted a declaration on Kosovo which is set out in Annex III.

European Neighbourhood Policy

45. The European Council welcomes the conclusion of a first wave of action plans, within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy, with Israel, Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Ukraine, and welcomes the decision to establish similar action plans in 2005 with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, which were included in the European Neighbourhood Policy in June 2004, as well as with Egypt and Lebanon, and to draw up a national report on Algeria. The European Council invites the Commission and the High Representative to report regularly on progress made.

46. The European Council welcomes the reform efforts of the Ukrainian government towards a full fledged democracy and social market economy and its commitment to European norms and values. It looks forward to continuing the intensified dialogue and contacts between the EU and Ukraine and supports a speedy implementation of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan.

47. The European Council takes note, in addition to the adoption of the EU-Moldova Action Plan, of the appointment of an EUSR for Moldova, soon to become a direct neighbour of the European Union. It expresses its preparedness to take active part in finding a solution to the Transnistrian conflict and appreciates an increased dialogue with Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE on this issue.

48. The European Council reiterates the EU's commitment to strengthening its relations with Belarus, inter alia by drawing up an action plan, once the authorities of that country have clearly demonstrated their intention to respect democratic values, the rule of law, and human rights. The EU is concerned by the intensification of the repression of democratic forces and civil society in Belarus. The EU will take steps to make the people of Belarus aware of the advantages of the European neighbourhood policy, and will support the strengthening of civil society and the democratisation process in that country.

Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean region and the Middle East

49. The European Council approved the report by the Presidency, the Secretary-General/High Representative and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic Partnership between the EU and the Mediterranean region and the Middle East. The European Council stresses the importance of the Strategic Partnership for the EU's relations with countries in the Middle East region. It will continue to monitor implementation of the objectives of the Strategic Partnership in accordance with the principles of action of joint ownership and partnership. The European Council agrees on the need to pay particular attention to the implementation of the Strategic Partnership in the countries situated to the east of Jordan. The common political will to promote relations and cooperation in all areas, extending beyond commercial and economic issues, was reaffirmed in particular at the 15th GCC-EU Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting on 5 April 2005 in Manama.

Barcelona Process

50. The European Council welcomes the holding, in Luxembourg, of the Seventh Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, which enabled a comprehensive review of the Partnership since its initiation in 1995 to be carried out and the bases for the future of the Process to be defined, and also enabled joint conclusions to be adopted for the first time, amongst other matters on the need to promote political and social reforms in the partner countries. It also noted with satisfaction the progress made in the political and security dialogue and in implementation of the social, cultural and human partnership of the Barcelona Process, in particular through the inauguration, in Alexandria, of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, and the establishment in Luxembourg of the Euro-Mediterranean Non-Governmental Platform. Lastly, the European Council welcomes the holding of the first plenary session of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly in Cairo, which reflects the attachment to democratic values and the principle of joint ownership intrinsic to the Barcelona Process. It welcomes the organisation in Barcelona at the end of November 2005 of an extraordinary high-level meeting to mark the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration.

51. The full integration of Libya into the Barcelona Process is the overall objective of the EU's policy of engagement with that country. Participation in this Process, and subsequent progression towards the conclusion of an Association Agreement, remain dependent on Libya's readiness to accept the Declaration and the Barcelona acquis in full and unconditionally. Consultations on this matter and on other outstanding issues are continuing.

Iraq

52. The European Council reaffirms the EU's willingness to pursue the implementation of the full assistance programme agreed by the Council on 5 November 2004 and on 21 February 2005, to achieve the objective of a safe, stable, unified, prosperous and democratic Iraq that upholds human rights, fully exercises its sovereignty and cooperates constructively with its neighbours and with the international community. It recalls the readiness of the Commission and of the Member States, at Iraq's request, to support the constitutional process in accordance with Resolution 1546 and in full cooperation with the UN. It encourages the Iraqi authorities to pursue the full involvement of all sections of Iraqi society in the constitutional process and in promoting genuine national dialogue.

53. The European Council reiterates its commitment to supporting the Iraqi authorities and people, in accordance with the Commission communication entitled "The European Union and Iraq – A Framework for Engagement", approved by the European Council in June 2004, in particular by providing support for the strengthening of the criminal justice system and the rule of law through the EUJUST LEX mission, by contributing to the political, economic and social reconstruction of Iraq and by continuing efforts to deepen relations between the EU and Iraq with the aim of establishing a regular political dialogue. In this context it welcomes the Ministerial Troika's visit to Baghdad on 9 June 2005 and confirms its willingness to develop contacts between the EU and Iraq. The European Council welcomes the adoption by the Council on 13 June 2005 of the operation plan for the Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq (EUJUST LEX), enabling this EU training mission for Iraq to be officially launched. It welcomed the Commission's announcement of its intention to open a delegation in Baghdad in the near future.

54. It expresses the wish that the Iraq International Conference, jointly organised by the European Union and the United States in the framework of the political process defined by Resolution 1546, to be held on 22 June 2005 in Brussels, will provide an opportunity to demonstrate the international community's support for the priorities identified by the Iraqi authorities for the transition period, with a view to a new coordination framework for aid efforts as soon as possible. In this connection, the European Council emphasises the importance of the Iraqi Government playing a leading role and the United Nations acting to provide advice and support.

Iran

55. The European Council welcomes the resumption of negotiations for a trade and cooperation agreement and for a political agreement with Iran made possible by the conclusion and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement in November 2004. It stresses the importance it attaches to fair treatment of all Member States in the commercial sector.

It confirms that the European Union is ready to continue looking into ways of further developing political and economic cooperation with Iran, following action taken by that country to address other areas of concern to the EU regarding the fight against terrorism, human rights and Iran's approach to the Middle East peace process. The European Council recalls its commitment to a credible and effective dialogue on human rights and hopes that the next meeting will take place rapidly on the basis of the new arrangements agreed by both parties.

56. The European Council would point out that the total suspension of all enrichment-related and all reprocessing activities had to be maintained if the overall process was to continue. It expresses its support for the continuation of efforts to reach an agreement on long-term arrangements, giving the international community objective guarantees of the exclusively peaceful purpose of the Iranian nuclear programme. The European Council welcomes the international support this process enjoyed.

Middle East Peace Process

57. The European Council adopted a declaration on the Middle East Peace Process, which is set out in Annex IV, and a declaration on Lebanon (Annex V).

Transatlantic Relations

58. The European Council welcomes the positive development of Transatlantic Relations during the first half of 2005. It notes with satisfaction the visit by US President George W. Bush to the European institutions in Brussels on 22 February 2005, and in particular the meeting of the Heads of State or of Government with the President. The annual summit between the Union and the United States on 20 June 2005 in Washington will be a further opportunity to note progress made in relations with this irreplaceable strategic partner of the Union, and in particular to deepen Transatlantic economic ties. It welcomes the launching of a strategic dialogue between the Union and the United States on East Asia. The European Council looks forward to the forthcoming EU-Canada Summit on 19 June 2005 in Niagara-on-the-Lake when it will be possible to take note of the consolidation of the EU-Canada

relationship since the Partnership Agenda was adopted at the last Summit in March 2004. It also welcomes the recent opening of negotiations with Canada on an agreement to increase trade and investment.

Russia

59. The European Council expresses satisfaction at the outcome of the 15th EU-Russia Summit, which was held on 10 May 2005, and more particularly at the adoption of the road maps for the creation of four common spaces, which it was decided to set up at the St Petersburg Summit in May 2003 (common economic space, common space of freedom, security and justice, space of cooperation in the field of external security, and a space of research and education, including cultural aspects). These road maps, which make a balanced set, define common objectives for EU-Russia relations, as well as the actions necessary to attain these objectives, and determine the medium-term programme for cooperation between the EU and Russia. Their implementation will strengthen the strategic partnership between the EU and Russia, as well as regional cooperation, in particular in the framework of the Northern Dimension.

60. The European Union is pleased to note that the first consultations on human rights between the European Union and Russia, launched in March 2005, were held successfully.

61. The European Council welcomes the signing of the border agreement between Russia and Estonia and hopes that a similar agreement can soon be signed with Latvia.

62. The European Council also welcomes Russia's commitment to complete the evacuation of the remaining Russian military bases in Georgia in the course of 2008. It expects the full implementation of all commitments entered into in Istanbul in 1999.

Relations with Asia

63. The European Council reaffirms the importance it attaches to the development of relations with Asia in the light of the increasing role that the region is called upon to play in the resolution of fundamental issues arising in the international community. In this context, it welcomes the outcome of the EU-ASEAN and ASEM ministerials which took place during the first half of the year.

64. The European Council reiterates its resolve to expand its partnership with Japan both in response to major international issues and on a strictly bilateral level. It is determined to strengthen the strategic dialogue on East Asia's security environment, the need for which was emphasised at the 14th EU-Japan Summit in Luxembourg on 2 May 2005. The European Council welcomes the considerable progress made with the implementation of the action plan, adopted in 2001, which reflects the deepening relations between the enlarged Union and Japan. The need for closer cooperation on environmental, energy and science and technology issues was recalled. The European Council is pleased to note the success of the EU-Japan Year of People to People Exchanges.

65. The European Council welcomes the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the EU and China. It reiterates its determination to develop the strategic partnership with China by intensifying the dialogue in all areas, whether of an economic or political nature, and by working towards a rapid solution to its trade dispute. It asks the Council and the Commission to speed up the proceedings on a new framework agreement. It underlines the importance it attaches to the human rights dialogue, the 19th round of which took place on 24 and 25 February in Luxembourg.

66. The European Council also recalls its conclusions of 16 and 17 December 2004. It welcomes the progress made on the revision of the code of conduct and the "toolbox", and invites the Council to continue its work on that basis.

67. Finally, the European Council welcomes the launch of a strategic dialogue on Asia with the United States and Japan.

68. The European Council encourages further work on formulating the action plan with India, which is due to be approved at the sixth summit to be held in the second half of 2005 in New Delhi.

Relations with the ACP

69. The European Council welcomes the conclusion of the negotiations on the revision of the Cotonou Agreement, and the agreement reached on this subject with the ACP States on 23 February 2005. This revised agreement, while maintaining the Cotonou acquis, represents an improvement of the partnership between the ACP States, the Community and its Member States, in all its component parts.

Relations with Africa

70. The European Council welcomes the increase in dialogue and cooperation between the EU and all the African countries, made possible by the affirmation of the African Union (AU) as the political framework able to put forward African responses to the challenges of development. The purpose of this dialogue is an EU-Africa strategic partnership focussing on four main lines: four peace and security, governance, regional integration and trade, and development. The European Council welcomes the boosting of peace-keeping and security maintenance capabilities in Africa and the fact that the relevant structures have been made operational, particularly in the framework of the African Union and the sub-regional organisations which the EU has pledged to support.

71. The European Council is anxious to point out in particular that the European Union, and its Member States, will pursue their aid efforts, notably in Sudan, in the Great Lakes region, in West Africa and in Somalia. It expresses its full support for the continental initiatives such as NEPAD or regional initiatives such as the process following on from the International Conference on the Great Lakes, and welcomes the growing activity by African organisations such as ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD.

72. The EU will pursue its commitment to restoring peace and development throughout Sudan, in particular through its support for AMIS. For example, at the AMIS donor conference on 26 May 2005 in Addis Ababa the EU tabled a comprehensive and substantial offer involving support for planning, logistics and operation, equipment, strategic and tactical airlift, development of AU's observation capabilities and training of police experts and in other civilian areas, in keeping with the requests made by the African Union and in coordination with the other international community players, in particular the United Nations, NATO, the United States and Canada. The EU also calls on all parties to cooperate with the International Criminal Court so as to put an end to impunity and obstacles to justice and the reconciliation of the peoples of Darfur. The European Council continues to be deeply concerned at the serious infringements of human rights and of international humanitarian law committed against the civil population in Darfur, and at the hindrance of the efforts of humanitarian organisations, and reminds the Sudanese Government of its responsibility to guarantee the safety of its citizens and of those working on their behalf. It urges all the parties in Darfur, when the announced resumption of peace negotiations takes place, to negotiate a complete and definitive peace agreement in good faith, and to cooperate fully with the United Nations. It also calls on all the Sudanese parties fully and completely to implement the Global Peace Agreement and to launch an inclusive democratisation process.

73. The European Union contributed to security sector reform, transition and stabilisation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by launching the EU police mission in April 2005 in Kinshasa (EUPOL Kinshasa), and by launching on 8 June 2005 its mission to provide advice and assistance for security sector reform (EUSEC RD Congo). The EU and its Member States confirm that they are prepared to consider more operational support for the integration of the Congolese army, particularly on the basis of information provided by EUSEC RD Congo. Such missions are tangible

examples of implementation of the action plan providing ESDP support for peace and security in Africa. Through this commitment, the EU renews its support for transition and repeats its call to the Congolese authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure a smooth electoral process, good governance and transparency and, in particular, the regular payment of soldiers' wages. It urges the political opposition and civil society to play a constructive and calming role in the implementation of transition.

74. In view of the close link between peace and security, on the one hand, and the development of the African countries, on the other, the European Council reaffirms the EU's determination to continue supporting the development of the African continent in compliance with the principles of equality and African ownership. In this context, holding the second EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon as soon as possible is an important objective. The European Council also commends the priority treatment given to Africa in the G8 proceedings and has taken note of the contribution by the "Commission for Africa".

75. In this context the European Council recalls the importance it attaches to relations between the European Union and Africa. It invites the Council to draw up a long-term global strategy towards Africa in the light of the UN Summit with a view to the European Council in December 2005.

Relations with Latin America

76. The European Council recalls the European Union's commitment to reinforce its partnership with Latin America. It notes with satisfaction the outcome of the 12th ministerial meeting between the Union and the Rio Group, and of the ministerial meetings with the various sub-regional organisations of Central and South America, which took place on 26 and 27 May 2005 in Luxembourg.

77. The European Council welcomes the resolution expressed at the recent meeting with Mercosur to conclude bi-regional negotiations to establish an inter-regional association agreement. The European Council also welcomes the launch in January 2005 of joint evaluation exercises on regional economic integration by the Andean Community and Central America, applying the decisions adopted at the EU-LAC Summit which took place in Guadalajara in May 2004.

ESDP

78. The European Council approves the Presidency report on the ESDP, which comprises the mandate for the incoming Presidency.

79. As regards military capabilities, conceptual work on battlegroups (as part of rapid response elements) has continued with success. At the battlegroup coordination conference on 11 May it was established that Member States' commitments will enable the desired goal for the initial operating capability period 2005 and 2006 to be achieved. The European Council underlines the progress made with a view to securing the necessary contributions for the full operating capability period in 2007/2008.

80. The European Council welcomes the measures taken to enable the decision-making and planning process to be speeded up for EU rapid response operations.

81. The development of European civilian capabilities to achieve the Civilian Headline Goal 2008 has been actively pursued in accordance with the deadlines set by the December 2004 European Council. It has thus been possible to prepare the strategic planning assumptions and illustrative scenarios concerning stabilisation and reconstruction, conflict prevention, targeted strengthening of institutions and civilian support for humanitarian operations. Work on the rapid deployment of civilian crisis management capabilities has also continued.

82. The European Council notes that the development of ESDP instruments is part of a consistent approach. The civilian/military cell, the establishment of which was adopted at the European Council in December 2003, has begun its proceedings. The cell will have the capacity to generate an operations centre, available in June 2006 at the latest.

83. The European Defence Agency (EDA) is now fully engaged in implementing its first annual work programme. Flagship projects have been submitted in the areas of military capabilities, armaments, industry and the market, and research and technology, the four pillars of the EDA's work.

84. The European Council notes with satisfaction that the concept of EU training in the field of the ESDP has begun to be implemented with success. The operating procedures for the European Security and Defence College have been defined. The conditions necessary to establish the college have thus been met.

85. The European Council reaffirms its interest in strengthening partnerships and cooperation with third States and international bodies. The EU and NATO have pursued their cooperation within a strategic partnership on crisis management. The European Union welcomes the fact that the implementation of operation ALTHEA, led by the EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has taken place efficiently, in the context of the Berlin Plus arrangements with NATO.

86. Cooperation with the United Nations on crisis management has continued to show progress, reflected particularly in an intensive EU-UN Exercise Study and in close collaboration between EUPOL Kinshasa and MONUC.

87. The European Council also notes with satisfaction the progress made in strengthening the operations-related partnership on EU-led crisis management with Ukraine and Canada, in the framework of the common space of external security with Russia, in the context of Euromed with the Mediterranean partners, and with the African Union.

88. The European Union is pleased to note the implementation of the Action Plan for ESDP support to Peace and Security in Africa. The aim of the Action Plan is to help African organisations and States gain autonomous conflict prevention and management capacities, with special attention being paid to the African Union.

89. The European Council approved the Presidency report on EU activities in the framework of conflict prevention and stressed the need to continue work in this area.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Fight against HIV/AIDS and other transmissible diseases

90. The European Council notes with deep concern the increase in the incidence of HIV/AIDS in the Member States, in neighbouring countries and worldwide, and underlines the need for a coordinated and integrated Community approach in order to combat this scourge.

91. The European Council recalls the importance of active cooperation between Member States and the Commission in order to improve the public's general knowledge and to raise its awareness as regards preventing HIV infection, promote safer and more responsible sexual behaviour and practices, ensure universal access to treatment, improve access for intravenous drug users to prevention, dependency treatment and harm reduction services, and maintain a climate of non-discrimination in society. The Member States and the Commission are invited to continue the exchange of best practices and experiences at Community level, and to promote investment in appropriate research and development activities.

92. The European Council calls on the Member States to work continuously on maintaining and developing a sustainable, affordable and accessible health-care system as a basis for prevention, treatment and care activities, and in this context pay special attention to access to affordable anti-retroviral treatment, as well as other medical treatment, for all in need.

93. The European Council commends the Council's approval of the European Programme for Action to Confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis through External Action. This programme is the basis for renewed and concerted action by the EU in all partner countries and at world level through common actions designed in particular to promote an integrated approach in the fight against the three diseases, to enhance the capabilities of the partner countries, increase the resources and means available, and support research into and development of new instruments for preventing and treating the three diseases.

94. The European Council asks the Commission and the Member States to enhance their cooperation and coordination in the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and in the full implementation of the Cairo/ICPD +10 agenda ensuring that Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights are an essential component of HIV and AIDS prevention and that AIDS prevention and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) activities are integrated where appropriate.

95. The European Council also recalls the need to maintain at the WTO easy access to medicines for developing countries which do not have production capacity. It stresses the importance of a substantial European contribution to the reconstitution of the Global Aids Health Fund for 2006 and 2007, at the conference to be held in London in September 2005.

96. The European Council calls on the Member States and the Commission to promote and continue dialogue and cooperation with countries at national, regional and world level, and with international organisations such as UNAIDS, in the framework of health policy and development policy, in order to achieve further progress in the fight against the propagation of HIV/AIDS.

"Green diplomacy" initiative

97. The European Council also took note of the report on the results obtained by the "Green diplomacy" initiative which it launched in June 2003. In this connection, it welcomes the ongoing efforts to achieve better integration of environmental and sustainable development matters in external relations.

ANNEX I

DECLARATION ON GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is a key objective set out in the Treaty, for all European Community policies. It aims at the continuous improvement of the quality of life on earth of both current and future generations. It is about safeguarding the earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity. It is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights including freedom and equal opportunities for all. It brings about solidarity within and between generations. It seeks to promote a dynamic economy with full employment and a high level of education, health protection, social and territorial cohesion and environmental protection in a peaceful and secure world, respecting cultural diversity.

To achieve these aims in Europe and globally, the European Union and its Member States are committed to pursue and respect, on their own and with partners, the following objectives and principles:

Key objectives

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Safeguard the earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity, respect the limits of the planet's natural resources and ensure a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. Prevent and reduce environmental pollution and promote sustainable production and consumption to break the link between economic growth and environmental degradation.

SOCIAL EQUITY AND COHESION

Promote a democratic, socially inclusive, cohesive, healthy, safe and just society with respect for fundamental rights and cultural diversity that creates equal opportunities and combats discrimination in all its forms.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Promote a prosperous, innovative, knowledge-rich, competitive and eco-efficient economy which provides high living standards and full and high-quality employment throughout the European Union.

MEETING OUR INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Encourage the establishment and defend the stability of democratic institutions across the world, based on peace, security and freedom. Actively promote sustainable development worldwide and ensure that the European Union's internal and external policies are consistent with global sustainable development and its international commitments.

Policy guiding principles

PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Place human beings at the centre of the European Union's policies, by promoting fundamental rights, by combating all forms of discrimination and contributing to the reduction of poverty and the elimination of social exclusion worldwide.

SOLIDARITY WITHIN AND BETWEEN GENERATIONS

Address the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs in the European Union and elsewhere.

OPEN AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Guarantee citizens' rights of access to information and ensure access to justice. Develop adequate consultation and participatory channels for all interested parties and associations.

INVOLVEMENT OF CITIZENS

Enhance the participation of citizens in decision-making. Promote education and public awareness of sustainable development. Inform citizens about their impact on the environment and their options for making more sustainable choices.

INVOLVEMENT OF BUSINESSES AND SOCIAL PARTNERS

Enhance the social dialogue, corporate social responsibility and private-public partnerships to foster cooperation and common responsibilities to achieve sustainable production and consumption.

POLICY COHERENCE AND GOVERNANCE

Promote coherence between all European Union policies and coherence between local, regional, national and global actions in order to enhance their contribution to sustainable development.

POLICY INTEGRATION

Promote integration of economic, social and environmental considerations so that they are coherent and mutually reinforce each other by making full use of instruments for better regulation, such as balanced impact assessment and stakeholder consultations.

USE BEST AVAILABLE KNOWLEDGE

Ensure that policies are developed, assessed and implemented on the basis of the best available knowledge and that they are economically sound and cost-effective.

PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

Where there is scientific uncertainty, implement evaluation procedures and take appropriate preventive action in order to avoid damage to human health or to the environment.

MAKE POLLUTERS PAY

Ensure that prices reflect the real costs to society of production and consumption activities and that polluters pay for the damage they cause to human health and the environment.

ANNEX II

INTEGRATED GUIDELINES FOR GROWTH AND JOBS 2005-2008

1. Guarantee the economic stability for sustainable growth
2. Safeguard economic and budgetary sustainability, a prerequisite for more jobs
3. Promote an efficient allocation of resources, which is geared to growth and jobs
4. Ensure that the development of salaries contributes to macroeconomic stability and growth
5. Strengthen the consistency of macroeconomic, structural and employment policies

6. Contribute to the dynamism and smooth operation of EMU
7. Increase and improve investments in research and development, in particular in the private sector, with a view to establishing a European area of knowledge
8. Facilitate all forms of innovation
9. Facilitate the spread and effective use of ICTs and build a fully inclusive information society
10. Strengthen the competitive advantages of its industrial base
11. Encourage the sustainable use of resources and strengthen the synergies between environmental protection and growth
12. Extend and deepen the internal market
13. Ensure open and competitive markets inside and outside Europe, reap the rewards of globalisation
14. Create a more competitive business environment and encourage private initiative by improving regulations
15. Promote a more entrepreneurial culture and create a supportive environment for SMEs
16. Expand, improve and connect European infrastructures and complete priority cross-border projects
17. Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion
18. Promote a lifecycle approach to work
19. Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantaged people and the inactive
20. Improve matching of labour market needs
21. Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of social partners
22. Ensure employment-friendly labour costs developments and wage-setting mechanisms
23. Expand and improve investment in human capital
24. Adapt education and training systems in response to new skill requirements

ANNEX III

DECLARATION ON KOSOVO

1. The European Council recalled the European Union's contribution to the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 on Kosovo. The European Union has made a substantial political commitment, particularly in support of UNMIK activities, and has taken on major responsibilities for the reconstruction and economic development of Kosovo. The Thessaloniki Declaration of June 2003 confirmed that the future of the Western Balkans, including Kosovo, was in the European Union.

2. The European Council considered that the situation in Kosovo was entering a critical phase, with the United Nations preparing for a comprehensive review of the implementation of standards, which could lead to the opening of negotiations on the future status of Kosovo.

3. On standards, the European Council welcomed the United Nations Secretary-General's recent report on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and welcomed the appointment of Ambassador Kai Eide as Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General, charged with carrying out a comprehensive review of the situation in Kosovo this summer.

4. The European Council stressed that the outcome of this comprehensive review was not a foregone conclusion: the implementation of standards, particularly those which have been identified as a priority, and the decentralisation process are of particular importance. The European Council therefore recommended all those responsible for implementing standards, particularly the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) in Kosovo, to redouble their efforts to achieve concrete results urgently, particularly as regards the return of refugees and displaced persons and the protection of all the communities in Kosovo. It called on all political leaders, in Pristina as in Belgrade, not to obstruct this process.

5. The European Council recalled that the opening of the procedure to determine the future status of Kosovo in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 would depend on the positive outcome of the comprehensive review. It noted that compliance with standards was a fundamental and continuing obligation which was an integral part of that process. Rapprochement with the EU will also depend on such compliance and on the full implementation of standards; the EU will therefore continue to follow this process closely.

6. The European Council formally asks the parties to show goodwill, so as to achieve a mutually acceptable solution. It indicated the importance which it attached to constructive and sustained dialogue being established at all levels between Belgrade and Pristina, and between the different communities in Kosovo. It asked the authorities in Belgrade actively to encourage the Serbs of Kosovo to take their place in Kosovar institutions, to exercise their democratic rights there.

7. On the status of Kosovo, the European Council reaffirmed that any solution must be fully compatible with European values and norms, comply with international legal instruments and obligations and the United Nations Charter, and contribute to realising the European prospects of Kosovo and the region. At the same time, any agreement on status must ensure that Kosovo does not return to the pre-March 1999 situation.

8. The European Council declared that the determination of the future status of Kosovo must be based on multi-ethnicity, and on full respect for human rights, including the right for all refugees and displaced persons to return home safely. The status must offer effective constitutional guarantees to ensure that minorities are protected, including mechanisms to ensure their participation in central government and in the new local administrative structures to be put in place. It should also include specific safeguards to protect the cultural heritage and religious sites and to promote effective mechanisms to combat organised crime, corruption and terrorism.

9. The European Council also declared that the determination of the status of Kosovo must reinforce the security and stability of the region. Thus any solution which was unilateral or resulted from the use of force, as well as any changes to the current territory of Kosovo, would be unacceptable. Thus there will be no partition of Kosovo, nor any union of Kosovo with another country or with part of another country following the resolution of the status of Kosovo. The territorial integrity of neighbouring countries must be fully respected. Likewise, the status must guarantee that Kosovo can continue to develop in a way which is both economically and politically sustainable, and not constitute a military or security threat to its neighbours.

10. The European Council stressed that Kosovo will, in the medium term, continue to need a civilian and military international presence to ensure security and in particular protection for minorities, to help with the continuing implementation of standards and to exercise appropriate supervision of compliance with the provisions contained in the status agreement. In this respect, the European Council stressed the EU's willingness to play a full part, in close cooperation with the relevant partners and international organisations.

11. The European Council stressed that the European Union would continue to contribute to the international community's efforts in Kosovo. It is determined to reinforce its actions further, particularly in the consolidation of the rule of law and a viable economic environment, in keeping with its special responsibility for the future of the region, particularly by actively pursuing the Thessaloniki agenda, and to be fully involved in the definition of the status of Kosovo, which must enable Belgrade and Pristina to make progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

DECLARATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

1. The European Council stresses the global strategic importance of peace, stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean. This is the context in which the European commitment to the resolution of the Middle East conflict must be seen. The European Union is firmly resolved to continue its action with a view to achieving this goal.

2. The European Council welcomes the positive developments in recent months. Thus, the peaceful transition of power in the Palestinian Authority with respect for the institutions, the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit, and the materialisation of the withdrawal from Gaza and from certain parts of the northern West Bank have all created an opportunity for tangible progress towards the resolution of the conflict. It is crucial that the parties to the conflict, along with the international community, make every effort to make the most of this context and avoid a new escalation of violence.

3. The European Council recalls in this regard the importance of full implementation by the parties of the obligations incumbent upon them under the first phase of the Roadmap. It notes that the latter provides for measures to be taken in parallel by the two sides.

4. The European Council stresses the importance for the Palestinian Authority of fulfilling all its obligations with regard to security, including those accepted at Sharm el-Sheikh, where all parties undertook to cease all acts of violence. The Palestinian Authority must in particular demonstrate its complete determination to combat terrorism and continue with the reorganisation of all security services. The European Council calls on the Palestinian Authority to continue with the ongoing reform process, to intensify consolidation of the institutions and to set as soon as possible a date for the organisation of free and fair legislative elections.

5. The European Council calls on all parties to take all necessary steps to enable those elections to be held in all the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem.

6. The European Council also stresses the need for a halt to Israeli settlement activities in the Palestinian Territories. This implies a complete cessation of construction of dwellings and new infrastructures such as bypass roads. The European Council also calls for the abolition of financial and tax incentives and direct and indirect subsidies, and the withdrawal of exemptions benefiting the settlements and their inhabitants. The European Council urges Israel to dismantle illicit settlement outposts. Settlement policy is an obstacle to peace and threatens to make any solution based on the coexistence of two States physically impossible.

7. The European Council, while recognising the right of Israel to protect its citizens from attacks, remains concerned by the continuing construction of the separation barrier in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, which is contrary to the relevant provisions of international law.

8. The European Council commends the political courage shown by the leaders of the two sides with regard to the withdrawal from Gaza and certain parts of the northern West Bank. The Council calls on countries in the region to facilitate the Palestinian Authority's efforts to establish control in its territory and to step up their political and economic support. It stresses the importance of a successful disengagement, including for the advancement of the peace process. The European Council confirms the European Union's support for the Quartet's Special Envoy for disengagement, Mr James Wolfensohn, and its determination to work in close cooperation with him to ensure the success of the project. To ensure the social and economic viability of Gaza, the European Council stresses the need for access to the outside, particularly through the borders with Egypt and through a port and an airport, and to establish a meaningful link with the West Bank.

9. In this context, the European Council reasserts that the Israeli withdrawal must be carried out in the framework outlined in the conclusions of the European Council of March 2004, and in particular form an integral part of the process specified by the roadmap.

10. The European Council undertakes to intensify its assistance to the Palestinian Authority to pursue institutional consolidation.

11. The European Council reiterates the importance it attaches to compliance with international law by the parties. In particular, no party should undertake unilateral measures or prejudge questions relating to final status. The European Union will not recognise any change to the 1967 borders other than those negotiated between the parties. A just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the conflict must be based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and 1515, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference and the principle of land-for-peace.

12. The European Union encourages the parties to move forward resolutely in implementing the Roadmap on the basis of these principles. It undertakes to assist Israelis and Palestinians in advancing the peace process and achieving the goal of coexistence of the two States through the creation of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living side-by-side with Israel and its other neighbours in peace and security. The European Union cannot commit itself to any other path.

13. The European Council reaffirms that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace must meet the legitimate aspirations of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples and include Lebanon and Syria. It calls for a relaunch of efforts to make progress on all the tracks of the peace process.

14. The European Union will continue to oppose all those who have recourse to violence and to support all those who reject violence and strive for peace and security in order to construct a better future for the region.

ANNEX V

DECLARATION ON LEBANON

1. The European Council notes the withdrawal of Syrian military forces from Lebanon and the impending return of the United Nations verification team to the country. It reaffirms the importance it attaches to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon and reiterates its call for Security Council Resolution 1559 to be implemented in full. In this connection it renews its full support for Mr Terje Roed-Larsen's mission.

2. The European Council welcomes the smooth conduct, so far, of Lebanon's parliamentary elections, which correspond to the Lebanese people's desire for independence. It awaits with interest the overall report which will be drawn up by the European Union's Election Observation Mission after the elections.

3. The European Council strongly condemns the recent politically motivated attacks and assassinations, expresses its dismay at their destabilising effect, and calls for their perpetrators to be brought to justice at the earliest opportunity.

4. The European Council reaffirms its support for the independent international investigation Commission into the assassination of Rafic Hariri which was set up in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1595. It renews its appeal to the Lebanese authorities to continue to provide their unqualified support to the international investigation Commission and hopes that the latter will be able to bring its work rapidly to a successful conclusion.