



Brussels, 16 May 2014

BACKGROUND¹
FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council (Development)
19 May in Brussels

The Council will start at 9.30, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton.

*The Council will exchange views on the preparation of a new **post-2015 framework**. Ministers will take stock of the ongoing work at UN level and discuss the EU's role in the process.*

*The Council will also be briefed by the Commission on the implementation of the **Agenda for Change, the EU's development policy**, as well as on the recently presented tool box for working towards a **rights-based approach** to EU development cooperation.*

*In addition, the Council will hold an exchange of views on the role of the **private sector in development** cooperation, in the wake of a new Commission communication, presented on 13 May.*

*During lunch, ministers will discuss the situation in the **Central African Republic** and in **South Sudan**.*

*The Council will also confirm that EU is to resume development cooperation with **Madagascar**.*

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¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office

P R E S S

Post-2015 agenda

The Council is set to discuss the post-2015 agenda, a new overarching framework for the international community's development efforts for the period after 2015 when the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expire.

Following the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012 and other events, work is on-going in the international community to develop a new post-2015 framework, in particular on sustainable development goals and sustainable development financing. Ministers are set to take stock of progress and discuss the way forward.

In June 2013, the Council agreed the EU position on these matters, in conclusions on the overarching post-2015 agenda. In these conclusions, the Council underlined that poverty eradication and the promotion of sustainable development are mutually reinforcing and should be integrated into a single overarching post-2015 framework. This should be reflected in a single set of global goals. It should work towards sustainable development to eradicate poverty, including ending extreme poverty in a single generation, and to ensure sustainable prosperity and well-being of all people within planetary boundaries. The framework should also address democratic governance, human rights, and peace and security. See [Council conclusions](#).

Agenda for change

The Council will receive an update on the implementation of the Agenda for change, the EU's development policy, by Commissioner Piebalgs as well as an update on the programming of the Development Cooperation Instrument and the European Development Fund for the period from 2014 to 2020.

The Council set out the Agenda for change in conclusions adopted in May 2012 ([9369/12](#)): It aims to increase the impact of EU development aid, which should rest upon two main pillars: human rights, democracy and good governance on the one hand and inclusive sustainable growth for human development on the other hand. EU bilateral cooperation ought to be concentrated in a maximum of three sectors per partner country. Resources are to be targeted at countries most in need.

The Agenda for change has brought about a shift in focus towards the poorest countries; cooperation with other partners has therefore been adjusted according to the criteria of needs, commitment, performance, capacity and potential EU impact.

Role of the private sector in development

The Council will discuss the Commission's communication "A stronger role of the private sector in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth in developing countries", adopted on 13 May ([9802/14](#)).

The Commission proposes a strategic framework for strengthening the role of the private sector in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth. 12 actions are suggested for cooperating with the private sector in developing countries so as to harness the potential contribution of the private sector for inclusive and sustainable growth. These include creating a conducive business environment, support for smaller enterprises, increasing access to finance as well as engaging the private sector in energy, agriculture and infrastructure projects. In addition, it is proposed to promote responsible business practices through international corporate social responsibility guidelines.

The private sector provides some 90 percent of jobs in developing countries, which makes it a key partner in the fight against poverty. It is also needed as an investor in sustainable agriculture if the world is to meet the challenge of feeding 9 billion people by 2050.

Rights-based approach to development

The Council will adopt conclusions on a rights-based approach to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights. The Commission will present its newly adopted "tool box" for integrating human rights principles into EU development cooperation, both at headquarters and in the field ([9489/14](#)).

A rights-based approach aims at promoting all human rights, be they civil or political, also through development cooperation and perceives them as a means to and a goal of effective development cooperation. The fulfilment of human rights is to become an integral part of the identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all development policies and projects.

The Council is also set to underline that private sector investment and business activities in partner countries should respect human rights and adhere to the principles of corporate social and environmental responsibility.

An assessment of the implementation of the tool box and the integration of the rights-based approach into EU development cooperation will be conducted in 2016.

Regional issues

During lunch, ministers will discuss the situation in the **Central African Republic** and in **South Sudan**.

The EU remains the principal partner and key donor for the **Central African Republic** (CAR). In terms of development assistance, around €225 million have been allocated through the different financial instruments between 2008 and 2013. Creating jobs through road maintenance projects, the management of public finances and the restoration of an operational policy that protects the population are among the ongoing priorities of EU cooperation. The security and institutional situation has slowed down the uptake of EU development aid.

In addition, the EU and its member states have given more than €100 million in relief assistance in 2013. For 2014, the Commission has pledged humanitarian aid worth €45 million.

The EU has also continuously contributed to re-establishing security in the Central African Republic, through financial contributions to the African-led operations Micopax and Misca as well as through the EU's military operation in the CAR.

For more details on the EU's comprehensive approach to the Central African Republic, see [fact sheet](#).

The European Union is a major development partner for South Sudan. It remains strongly committed to supporting efforts to end the violence in **South Sudan** and maintains its call for a negotiated solution.

Since South Sudan's independence, the EU has invested heavily in the country's state and nation building efforts. In 2011 and 2013, the EU approved projects worth €85 and €185 million respectively in the sectors of agriculture, education, health and rule of law. At present, the political and security environment is not conducive for regular development cooperation. Ongoing cooperation is being reviewed. So far, the EU and its member states have provided more than €176 million in humanitarian assistance to South Sudan in 2014. In addition, the EU has made considerable resources available in support of a comprehensive solution to the crisis in South Sudan.

For more information, see [fact sheet](#).

Other items

Without discussion, the Council is expected to adopt:

- Madagascar

The Council is set to confirm that the EU will fully resume development cooperation with Madagascar, following the country's return to constitutional order in the wake of the presidential and general elections held in 2013.

- EU official development aid targets

The Council will approve its annual report to the European Council on EU development aid targets. In 2013, the EU remained the biggest global donor of development aid. EU collective Official Development Assistance (ODA) increased to €56.5 billion from €55.3 billion in 2012, remaining at 0.43% of EU gross national income (GNI). The total ODA of the EU member states alone increased from €50.7 billion in 2012 to €53.6 billion in 2013 (from 0.39% to 0.41% of GNI). Member states that did not reach their ODA objectives will be invited to meet these commitments and to share information on their planned ODA spending.

- EU development and cooperation results framework

The Council will adopt conclusions on an EU development and cooperation results framework. It will give guidance to the Commission on how to shape an EU results framework that is to strengthen the accountability, transparency and visibility of EU development and cooperation assistance. Indicators relevant to the priorities of the Agenda for Change ought to be complemented by the qualitative analysis of results. A piloting phase will be started so that reporting on results achieved during 2014 can be presented in the first half of 2015.

- Small island developing states

The Council is expected to adopt the EU position for the third conference on small island developing states (SIDS), to take place from 1 to 4 September in Samoa. The EU collectively remains the leading donor to SIDS and is a vital trade partner. The conference should focus on major challenges facing SIDS, such as climate change, energy, food and nutrition insecurity and the preparation of the post-2015 agenda. The EU will support the development of tools such as a vulnerability index to measure the economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities of SIDS.

- Gender equality and women's empowerment in development

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the 2013 report on the implementation of the EU plan of action on gender equality and women's empowerment in development 2010-2015 ([17432/13](#)). The report, covering the period from July 2012 to June 2013, shows certain improvements, e.g. in the increasing use of sex-disaggregated indicators, the wider use of gender country profiles as well as in dialogue with civil society. At the same time, the pace of implementing the action plan is extremely slow and many projects lag behind on gender issues. The Council will call on the EU and member states to reinforce their efforts and deliver on their commitments. In the ongoing planning of EU development aid, gender issues should be mainstreamed across the entire programming cycle.

Other business and information items

At the start of the meeting, a range of issues will be brought to the attention of EU development ministers. No decisions are scheduled.

- Development cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries
- Policy coherence for development (PCD)
- Debriefing from the Busan high level forum on aid effectiveness held in Mexico on 15-16 April
- London summit for an end to female genital mutilation and child and early forced marriage
- IDAHO forum against homophobia held on 13-14 May in Malta
- Informal development ministers meeting on 14-15 July