



Council of the  
European Union

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### **OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Horn of Africa/Red Sea  
- Council conclusions (25 June 2018)

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Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on the Horn of Africa/Red Sea as adopted at the 3628th meeting of the Council on 25 June 2018.

**Council Conclusions on the Horn of Africa/Red Sea****[Red Sea]**

1. The two shores of the Red Sea have become pivotal, in geopolitical and strategic terms, when it comes to global trade, regional economic growth and the overall stability of the region. The recent developments in the broader region have highlighted the interconnections and interdependencies across the Red Sea, and have made it both urgent and opportune to revive ties and build a community of shared interests, commerce, investment and security. The European Union (EU) is ready to engage with all the relevant actors and participate in such an endeavour.
2. The stability of the Horn of Africa and the freedom of navigation from the Indian Ocean through the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, both crucial to Europe, are being put in jeopardy by developments in the Red Sea region. The search for influence and strategic assets, together with the growing militarisation of the Red Sea coast, are increasing risks within the region, with potential global consequences. The conflict in Yemen is further feeding regional tensions and threatening the safety of its neighbours, while creating dramatic humanitarian consequences which could result in further population displacement, both within the country and in the broader region. Combined with the ongoing crisis in the Gulf, this has a potential direct effect on the security situation and long-term stability on and around the Red Sea.

3. The peace, security and development of this wider region would benefit from more cooperation, not competition. The absence of an organised and inclusive regional forum for dialogue and cooperation around the Red Sea impedes progress on a wide range of issues, including economic integration and regional peace and security. The importance of the Red Sea shipping route, the spill-over effect of the Gulf crisis and the conflict in Yemen, and a continued fragility across the Horn of Africa demonstrate the need for such a forum. Given Europe's longstanding commitment to and investment in prosperity and stability in the region, we encourage the creation of such a forum as a matter of urgency.
  
4. The EU will intensify its engagement with all the countries in the Red Sea region and other relevant regional and international actors, to encourage dialogue and work to mitigate negative influences on regional stability. The areas for engagement could include *inter alia* conflict prevention, maritime security, environmental protection, inter-regional trade, infrastructure and port development, the promotion of the blue economy, food security, human mobility across the Red Sea, and tackling the root causes of irregular migration. The fight against terrorism, smuggling of goods and trafficking in human beings, and the increased global impact of organised crime and violent extremism deserve special attention. Cooperation on maritime security will build on the EU Maritime Security Strategy and its Action Plan, the lessons learned from the EU integrated approach to conflict and crisis in the Horn of Africa, as well as the work of Operation Atalanta, EUCAP Somalia and the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia which have contributed significantly to combating piracy.

## [Horn of Africa]

5. The Horn of Africa's geopolitical and economic importance has grown, leading to new opportunities for the countries in the region and their partners. In the past decade, the EU has taken substantial steps - through political dialogue and active engagement, Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and targeted development cooperation assistance - to comprehensively support and encourage peace, stability, sustainable and inclusive growth and prosperity throughout the Horn of Africa. The EU will continue to work towards reinforcing inter- and intra-regional cooperation with partners across the region, using all available instruments.
6. The EU is deeply concerned about the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa, in particular with regard to food security, livelihood opportunities and access to water, in a region subject to recurrent natural disasters, climate change, large-scale conflicts and forced displacement. As the largest provider of humanitarian assistance, the EU will continue to provide support to the millions of vulnerable people affected in view of strengthening their resilience. The EU calls on the Governments in charge to step-up the provision of life-saving assistance and protection, including responding to sexual and gender-based violence concerns, in particular for the 4 million refugees, 10 million internally displaced persons, their host communities, women, children, as well as persons with disabilities.
7. The building of a regional capacity to promote security, peace and prosperity is at the core of the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy. The EU has been a longstanding supporter of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and of its vision to be the premier vehicle for achieving peace, prosperity and regional integration. The EU will continue to cooperate with the leaders of IGAD as they reinvigorate its structures and membership and shape its priorities and mandate to make it an effective tool capable of ensuring a collective response to the new global challenges confronting the region.

8. The EU encourages all international partners, in particular the United Nations, the African Union and the League of Arab States, to make every effort to reinforce the stability and prosperity of the whole region. The EU underlines the importance of ensuring close international and regional coordination, especially through the work of the EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa, in order to better achieve these goals.
  
9. The future of the region lies in a commitment to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, good governance, stability and security for all people, as well as inclusive and sustainable growth and economic integration at regional level. These are the principles guiding the EU's engagement with the Horn of Africa region. In this regard, the EU commends the recent concrete steps by the leadership of Ethiopia towards more inclusivity with greater political freedom and reforms, and stands ready to support continued efforts. The EU also welcomes important steps in Kenya, and encourages both countries to continue moving forward in the fulfilment of these principles, including on electoral reform, as they resolutely resolve their domestic challenges. Both nations have the foundations for a dynamic future which can set the pace for an entire region. The EU invites all countries of the region, in their pursuit of constitutional, electoral and stabilisation processes, to draw lessons from those experiences and to resolve their internal disputes. The EU underlines the importance of finding a sustainable and inclusive peace settlement that delivers safety, security and an end to suffering for the people of South Sudan, and in that context will continue engaging with South Sudanese authorities and IGAD, including through the High Level Revitalisation Forum.

10. Somalia, long seen as the epicentre of instability in the Horn of Africa, is moving towards meaningful change. This has been made possible thanks to the recent efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States, including holding a National Security Council meeting in June for the first time since February 2018 as well as the critical role of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) in providing security space. The EU has made a significant contribution to Somalia's emergence from prolonged conflict and is committed to continuing its strong engagement. Further Somali ownership is essential in ensuring that these positive developments continue, both at federal and regional level. On 16-17 July 2018, the international community plans to meet for the Somalia Partnership Forum (SPF) in Brussels. This follows commitments made at the London Somalia Conference in May 2017 and the SPF in Mogadishu in December 2017. The SPF will be an opportunity to highlight progress in Somalia, set future priorities and make commitments to delivering political reforms, including the revision of the constitution and a 'one person, one vote' election in 2020/2021 and national reconciliation process, as well as economic recovery, security sector reform and the humanitarian response. The EU welcomes the outcome of the Senior Officials' Roundtable at the April 2018 World Bank's Spring Meetings moving towards a normalisation with international financial institutions accessing the international financial markets and, ultimately, debt relief. The EU strongly supports a phased and conditions-based transition plan for the transfer of security responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali security forces, with clear target dates and sustainable funding for AMISOM. The EU calls on all partners of Somalia in Africa, in particular the troop-contributing countries of AMISOM, the wider region of the Middle East and beyond, to support Somalia - in a comprehensive, transparent and coordinated manner - in its efforts to rebuild the country and strengthen its security for the benefit of all people in Somalia.

11. In this new geopolitical context, the resolution of the longstanding differences between Ethiopia and Eritrea is essential for overall stability and development throughout the Horn of Africa. The EU welcomes the recent announcement by the ruling coalition in Ethiopia that it will fully implement the Algiers Agreement and the decision of the boundary commission, as well as Eritrea's decision to send a delegation to Addis Ababa, and calls on all interested parties to contribute constructively to progress. As a witness to the Algiers Peace Agreement, the EU stands ready to assist Ethiopia and Eritrea on their path towards reconciliation.
  
12. The Nile is of political, economic and historical importance to the region. Its waters are a source of common prosperity for the 11 countries sharing the river basin. Without cooperation and coordination, however, competition over the use of the river may contribute to rising tensions in the region. Considering the high population growth in the region and the effects of climate change, the EU welcomes the ongoing efforts of the countries to engage in dialogue on the best ways to cooperate and to reach common understanding on issues of mutual interest. The EU also welcomes the ongoing trilateral talks between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The EU stands ready to engage in support of further cooperation on the Nile, at the request of all the parties.

