



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on Pakistan

*2914th GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 8 December 2008*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council adopted the following conclusions on the situation in Pakistan:

- 1.) The EU welcomes the recent significant political changes in Pakistan, resulting in the consolidation of democratic civilian rule. The Council acknowledges the complex and urgent challenges Pakistan is facing, especially regarding the overall security situation and economic crisis. The European Union stands ready to strengthen bilateral relations with Pakistan and to look for possible ways of increasing its financial assistance to the country.
- 2.) The Council underlines the importance of improving relations between Pakistan and its neighbours, notably India and Afghanistan, and welcomes the constructive comments made by the President of Pakistan in this respect. The EU continues to fully endorse bilateral and international initiatives aimed at strengthening regional cooperation.
- 3.) The Council stresses the Government of Pakistan's commitment to the fight against terrorism and extremism. The EU urges Pakistan to step up its efforts to counter this menace and fulfil its stated commitments. The EU will continue to offer its support in this regard. The EU recognises the sacrifices made by the Pakistani people in its struggle against terrorism and extremism. Given the increase of terrorist attacks throughout the region, the EU underlines the necessity to enhance regional cooperation, considering this an essential element in the field of counter-terrorism.

P R E S S

4.) The Council recalls its conclusions on Pakistan of 29 April 2008. To accelerate progress in areas of mutual interest and in light of recent political changes, the Council commits to intensify its political dialogue and deepen its relations with Pakistan in 2009, in full respect of international law and UNSC Resolutions. In this context, the Council announces the following steps.

5.) Following the February 2008 general elections in the presence of an EU Election Observation Mission (EOM), the Council underlines its continued support for democratisation, good governance and the rule of law in Pakistan. The Council considers that the recommendations of the EOM provide a basis for further political reform. The European Union stands ready to support the Government of Pakistan in the implementation of these recommendations to assist reform to strengthen Pakistan's democratic institutions.

6.) The EU will look into suitable ways to further develop and intensify the political dialogue with Pakistan through the forthcoming visit to Islamabad of an EU Foreign Ministers troika. The EU will jointly explore with the Government of Pakistan how to intensify dialogue in the areas of trade and development, intercultural exchange, non-proliferation, human rights, migration, counter-terrorism and radicalisation and education. Some of these areas should also be addressed at the Joint Commission. The EU will also seek to take forward this intensive political dialogue at an ad hoc summit if possible during the Czech Presidency.

7.) The EU welcomes the agreement on an IMF programme for Pakistan and believes this is the best solution to avoid a balance of payments crisis and encourages Pakistan to pursue economic reforms as agreed with the IMF.

8.) The Council underlines the importance of economic and commercial development for further long-term progress in Pakistan and of significantly enhancing the EU trade relationship with Pakistan. In this context, the Council takes note of the Pakistani request to the EU to initiate the process for an EU-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement. The EU is examining all options aimed at enhancing its trade relations with Pakistan. The EU will continue to support efforts aimed at promoting trade liberalisation in South Asia and will encourage Pakistan to work with its partners in SAARC towards full implementation of SAFTA and lifting rules that limit intraregional trade, in particular with India and Afghanistan.

9.) The Council welcomes the Friends of Democratic Pakistan as a key forum for international support and assistance to contribute to Pakistan's prosperity, development, security, stability and governance. The EU will fully cooperate as a partner in this forum."
