Council of the EU

PRESS
EN

PRESS RELEASE
136/19
25/02/2019

Sharm El-Sheikh summit declaration

Investing in Stability

1. We the Leaders of League of Arab States (LAS) and European Union (EU) member states held the first Summit on 24-25 February 2019 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, under the co-chairmanship of H.E Abdelfattah Al Sissi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and H.E Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, to discuss and address common and current challenges across the two regions comprising 12% of the world's population and to embark on a new era of cooperation and coordination; confident that strengthened interaction between the member states of LAS and EU has great potential to enhance the stability, prosperity, and well-being of the two regions and the world at large, working in tandem within the multilateral, rules-based global order.

2. We acknowledged our rich history of cultural exchanges and strong partnership, and reaffirmed that stronger regional cooperation is key to finding solutions to the current common challenges which both the EU countries and the Arab States are confronted with. We expressed our determination to move forward with deepening the existing strategic partnership among our countries at the Summit level as well as other existing mechanisms of cooperation. We also expressed our commitment to share experiences and further deepen the Euro-Arab partnership in order to realise our shared aspirations, to promote peace, stability and prosperity, guarantee security, foster economic, social and technological development and to create mutual opportunities through a collaborative and cooperative approach, placing the people of our regions, and in particular women and young people, at the centre of our endeavours. We recognise the important role of civil society in this regard.

3. We renewed our commitment to effective multilateralism and to an international system based on international law in order to tackle global challenges, including through increased cooperation between the LAS, EU, the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU). We reiterated our full commitment to the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This commitment will guide us in our efforts to achieve shared objectives, including in tackling common challenges such as the phenomenon of migration, where we will be inspired by the Valletta principles; the protection of and support to refugees in accordance with the international law; the upholding of all aspects of international human rights law, condemnation of all forms of incitement to hatred, xenophobia and intolerance; the strengthening of the fight against irregular migration and scaling up our joint efforts in preventing and fighting migrants' smuggling, eradicating trafficking in human beings and combating those who exploit vulnerable people; and to global efforts to tackle climate change, notably the Paris Agreement.

4. We agreed to further strengthen our cooperation towards security, conflict resolution and socio-economic development throughout the region.

5. We reaffirmed the importance to strengthen economic cooperation between the two sides, establishing a strong partnership based on investment and sustainable development. We are committed to developing a positive cooperation agenda especially in the fields of trade, energy, including energy security, science, research, technology, tourism, fisheries, agriculture and other mutually beneficial areas; all with the aim to create wealth, increase growth rates and reduce unemployment to better respond to our peoples' needs.

6. We reiterated that reaching political solutions to the regional crises, in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, is key to achieving the peace and prosperity that the peoples of the region need and deserve.

7. We reaffirmed our common positions on the Middle East Peace Process, including on the status of Jerusalem, and on the illegality under international law of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. We reiterated our commitment to reaching a two-state solution on the basis of all relevant UN resolutions, as the only realistic way to end the occupation that began in 1967, including of East Jerusalem, and to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between Israelis and Palestinians through direct negotiations between the parties that addresses all final status issues. We recalled the importance of upholding the historic status quo for the holy sites in Jerusalem, including with regard to the Custodianship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. We reaffirmed the indispensable role of UNRWA and the need to support it politically and financially in order to allow it to continue fulfilling its UN mandate. We expressed our concern about the humanitarian, political, security and economic situation in the Gaza Strip, and called for all parties to take immediate steps to produce a fundamental change to the better in full respect of international law, including human rights and humanitarian law, especially with respect to the protection of civilians.

8. We had constructive, serious and thorough discussions on recent developments in Syria, Libya and Yemen, and on ways to make progress towards reconciliation and sustainable and peaceful political solutions, in line with relevant UN resolutions. We affirmed the need to preserve the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of these countries. We reaffirmed our commitment to the UN-led processes and our full support to the UN Special Envoys for Syria and Yemen and to the UN Special Representative for Libya.

9. On Syria, we believe that any sustainable solution requires a genuine political transition in line with the 2012 Geneva communique and the relevant UNSC resolutions, in particular resolution 2254. We condemned all acts of terrorism and

human rights violations committed against the Syrian people by any perpetrators and underlined the need for all those responsible to be held accountable. Our respective policy towards Syria shall be conducted in step with tangible progress towards the achievement of a peaceful political settlement to the Syrian conflict.

10. On Libya, we expressed our support for UN efforts and the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement of 2015. We called on all Libyans to engage in good faith in UN-led efforts aimed at bringing Libya's democratic transition to a successful end and to refrain from any action that might escalate tensions, further jeopardise security and undermine the stabilisation process. In this regard we support the UN Special Representative's action plan.

11. On Yemen, we welcomed the Stockholm agreement in particular the ceasefire on Hodeidah, and the adoption of the UNSC Resolutions 2216, 2451 and 2452. We recalled our concern for the dire humanitarian situation where millions are gravely affected, and called for the safe, rapid and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid and personnel, and of commercial supplies, to those in need, and called upon all concerned parties to work constructively towards a lasting and inclusive political settlement for the benefit of the people of Yemen.

12. We exchanged concerns on threats to international and regional peace and security, including terrorism, radicalisation, destabilising actions, proliferation, illegal arms trafficking and organised crime. These are serious challenges that require concerted efforts, in accordance with international law, including international human rights law. We acknowledged that peace and security, human rights and economic and social development are mutually reinforcing. We agreed in particular to further enhance cooperation and coordination aimed at addressing the root causes of terrorism, and stressed our continued efforts to combat the movement of foreign terrorist fighters across our borders, and affirmed that successfully combating these challenges requires a comprehensive approach including, inter alia, cutting-off all methods of support to those terrorists including financial, political, logistical and military support;

13. We discussed the importance of preserving the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture, based on the Treaty on the Non- Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the objective of a Middle East region free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

14. We further reaffirmed our resolve to combat cultural and religious intolerance, extremism, negative stereotyping, stigmatisation and discrimination leading to incitement to violence against persons based on religion or belief and condemn any advocacy of religious hatred against individuals that constitutes incitement, hostility or violence, including on the internet and social media.

15. We directed our respective institutions in coordination with our relevant national authorities to identify modalities and mechanisms to operationalise mutual cooperation in all the aforementioned areas, taking into account existing mechanisms for cooperation and partnership including those within the Association Agreements.

16. We expressed our deep gratitude to the Arab Republic of Egypt for its gracious hosting of this historic Summit.

17. We agreed to hold LAS-EU Summits regularly, alternating between Arab and European states, the next one taking place in Brussels in 2022.

Press office - General Secretariat of the Council
Rue de la Loi 175 - B-1048 BRUSSELS - Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319
press.office@consilium.europa.eu - www.consilium.europa.eu/press