



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



9270/08 (Presse 124)

PRESS RELEASE

Extraordinary meeting

General Affairs and External Relations

Brussels, 13 May 2008

President **Andrej ŠTER**
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 5389 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

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Main results of the Council

The Council met for a special session to assess the **humanitarian situation in Burma/Myanmar** in the wake of the cyclone Nargis. Welcoming the solidarity shown by member states and the Commission in providing funds and assistance, it called on the Burmese authorities to offer free and unfettered access to international humanitarian experts and to take urgent action to facilitate the flow of aid. With commissioner Louis Michel about to travel to Burma, it expressed support for his efforts to ensure access for humanitarian aid workers to the affected areas, for without the cooperation of the Burmese authorities, an even greater tragedy is threatened.

The Council also expressed its condolences for the loss of life and devastation caused by the **earthquake in China**. Noting China's readiness to welcome foreign assistance, the EU stands ready to provide it as soon as conditions on the ground permit.

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OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

none

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
 - Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
 - Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

PARTICIPANTS

The Governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Charles MICHEL
Mr Olivier CHASTEL

Minister for Development Cooperation
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Bulgaria:

Mr Boyko KOTZEV

Permanent Representative

Czech Republic:

Ms Milena VICENOVÁ

Permanent Representative

Denmark:

Ms Ulla TØRNÆS

Minister for Development Assistance

Germany:

Ms Heidemarie WIECZOREK-ZEUL

Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and
Development

Mr Günter GLOSER

Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Estonia:

Mr Raul MÄLK

Permanent Representative

Ireland:

Mr Bobby McDONAGH

Permanent Representative

Greece:

Mr Léonidas C. ROKANAS

Deputy Permanent Representative

Spain:

Mr Diego LÓPEZ GARRIDO

State Secretary for the European Union

France:

Ms Rama YADE

Minister of State with responsibility for Foreign Affairs
and Human Rights

Italy:

Mr Rocco Antonio CANGELOSI

Permanent Representative

Cyprus:

Mr Nicholas EMILIOU

Permanent Representative

Latvia:

Mr Normunds POPENS

Permanent Representative

Lithuania:

Mr Rytis MARTIKONIS

Permanent Representative

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean-Louis SCHILTZ

Minister for Cooperation and Humanitarian Action,
Minister for Communications, Minister for Defence

Hungary:

Mr László VÁRKONYI

State Secretary (with special responsibility), Ministry of
Foreign Affairs

Malta:

Mr Tarcisio ZAMMIT

PSC Permanent Representative

Netherlands:

Mr Tom DE BRUIJN

Permanent Representative

Austria:

Mr Hans-Dietmar SCHWEISGUT

Permanent Representative

Poland:

Mr Jan TOMBINSKI

Permanent Representative

Portugal:

Mr João GOMES CRAVINHO

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Romania:

Mr Mihnea Ioan MOTOC

Permanent Representative

Slovenia:

Mr Andrej ŠTER

State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Slovakia:

Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ

Permanent Representative

Finland:

Mr Eikka KOSONEN

Permanent Representative

Sweden:

Mr Joakim STYMNE

State Secretary to the Minister for Development Aid

United Kingdom:

Mr Douglas ALEXANDER

Secretary of State for International Development

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Commission:

Mr Louis MICHEL

Member

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ITEMS DEBATED**Humanitarian situation in Burma/Myanmar - Council conclusions**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. "The Council has met to review the situation and the issues to be addressed at this stage. The Council expresses again its condolences to the people of Burma/Myanmar, especially the families of those many thousands who have died in the wake of cyclone Nargis. The Council considers that without the co-operation of the authorities in Burma/Myanmar, an even greater tragedy is threatened. In this respect, it fully shares the deep concern recently expressed by the UN Secretary General. The Council supports any initiative, including in the UN bodies, which would help to meet the humanitarian needs of the Burmese people.
2. The Council stresses its strong support for the efforts of the UN, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and NGOs to bring aid to the people of Burma/Myanmar. The Council underlines that the effective delivery of aid must be monitored by expert humanitarian staff.
3. The Council welcomes the contributions that the Commission, Member States and individual citizens have made to the relief efforts. The EU stands ready to provide additional assistance to meet the massive needs of the people, especially children. The Council recalls that EU Humanitarian Aid is entirely neutral, impartial and independent, in accordance with the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.
4. While welcoming recent albeit limited improvements on the ground, the Council calls on the authorities in Burma/Myanmar to offer free and unfettered access to international humanitarian experts, including the expeditious delivery of visa and travel permits. The Council also calls on the authorities to take urgent action to facilitate the flow of aid to people in desperate need who should benefit in full from the relief offered by the international community.
5. In this context, the Council welcomes the initiative of the Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Louis Michel to travel to Burma/Myanmar for purely humanitarian purposes. The Council expresses its support for the Commissioner's aim to seek progress from the competent Burmese authorities in order to ensure access of humanitarian aid workers to the country and to the affected areas.
6. The Council encourages the UN Secretary General to continue his efforts and joins him in calling on all organisations and states in the region, in particular ASEAN, China and India, to do all they can to persuade the authorities of Burma/Myanmar to co-operate with the international community and to offer practical and logistical support to the UN-led relief work."

Earthquake in China - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council expresses its deepest condolences to the people of China for the massive loss of life and devastation caused by the earthquake which struck the country.

We share the grief of all those who have lost loved ones and express our heartfelt sympathies to those who have been injured and suffered heavy material losses in this catastrophe.

The European Union, noting China's readiness to welcome foreign assistance, stands ready to provide it as soon as conditions on the ground permit it."

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

None
