



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on Egypt

*FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 10 February 2014*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Three years have passed since Egyptians from all walks of life rose against a repressive regime calling for freedom, human dignity, social justice and a better economy. The EU regards Egypt as an important neighbour and partner and has been standing by the Egyptian people throughout the transition period and remains committed in its support to them.
2. The EU reaffirms the importance of its relationship with Egypt and the continued support it gives to the Egyptian people in their desire to establish a democratic and prosperous society that enshrines dignity, the rule of law and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights.
3. The EU takes positive note of the adoption of the new Constitution by referendum on 14 and 15 January. An important step of the road map has been achieved. However, the EU deplors the absence of a fully inclusive process, the lack of attempts to overcome the polarization of society and the closing of political space for dissenting opinion before and during the referendum. It is now important that the remaining steps of the road map are implemented, in particular by finalizing the electoral cycle, the media code of ethics, empowering youth in the political process and the establishment of a higher commission for national reconciliation.
4. The EU welcomes that the new Constitution enshrines human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, assembly and women's rights. Existing and future national legislation has to be in full compliance and implemented in line with the Constitution and international standards. The EU encourages the Egyptian interim authorities to cooperate with the Office the High Commissioner for Human Rights and looks forward to the opening of the regional office in Egypt. The Constitution should be applied in a way that ensures full civilian control over all branches of government, and civilians should be tried in civilian courts at all times.

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5. The EU condemns in the clearest possible terms all acts of violence. It is therefore with great concern that the EU followed the recent violent events and it deplores the loss of life during the constitutional referendum, and on the occasion of the third anniversary of the Egyptian revolution, including from the disproportionate use of force and of live ammunition. In this context, the EU takes note that the killing of protesters and security forces during violent events since 30 June 2013 have not been investigated, and calls on the Egyptian interim government to act on its promise and complete a transparent and independent investigation.
6. The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks in the Sinai and other parts of Egypt, in which a number of civilians and security personnel have been killed or injured. No cause can justify terrorist violence. The EU reaffirms its commitment to support the stability and security in Egypt.
7. The EU reiterates its calls on all Egyptians to halt the cycle of violence and cease all actions that incite further violence, such as provocations, hate speech - including against Christian and other religious communities - and political statements that only serve to increase polarisation. It is only then that lasting stability and economic recovery can be achieved.
8. The EU welcomes the announcement of elections and reiterates that only an inclusive political process will lead to a democratically elected government and a fair representation of different political views in the future parliament. The EU also reiterates its readiness to observe the upcoming elections, if conditions are met, and calls on the Egyptian interim authorities to ensure an environment conducive to inclusive, transparent and credible elections, including a level playing field for the election campaigns. In view of the recent developments, the Council recalls that no political groups should be excluded or banned as long as they renounce violence and respect democratic principles. It also recalls that decisions on the legality of parties must be based on clear evidence and due process of law.
9. The building of a deep and sustainable democracy will only succeed with the establishment of democratic, transparent and accountable institutions that protect all people of Egypt and their fundamental rights. The EU is concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation, including the indiscriminate detention of political opposition and activists. Freedoms of expression, assembly and peaceful protest must be safeguarded. The EU reiterates its support to and recalls the important role of an active and independent civil society - including NGOs - as well as the role of the youth, as key components of any democratic society.
10. The EU deplores the deteriorating climate for the press. It calls upon the Egyptian interim authorities and state media to ensure a safe working environment for all journalists and to end politicized arrests as well as intimidation of and incitement against domestic and foreign journalists.
11. The EU continues to be concerned about selective justice against the political opposition. The EU calls on the Egyptian interim authorities, in line with international standards, to ensure the defendants' rights to a fair and timely trial based on clear charges and proper and independent investigations, as well as the right of access and contact to lawyers and family members.

12. The EU reiterates its growing concern over the economic situation of the country and the negative impact on the most vulnerable groups of society. The EU recalls the crucial importance for Egypt to undertake necessary, fundamental economic reforms to ensure stability, investment, improved business environment, progress towards social justice, including better access to education. The EU will continue its support towards improving the social and economic conditions of the people, especially the poor, and stands ready to assist Egypt in carrying out these reform measures.
 13. The EU stresses the importance of Egypt's continued engagement in the region in order to enhance stability, peace and prosperity for Egypt and its neighbours. To this end, The EU is committed to work with Egypt as a key partner in the region.
 14. The EU reiterates its readiness to assist the people of Egypt in their quest for a stable, inclusive, democratic and prosperous Egypt, and the Council welcomes the High Representative's sustained engagement, including her regular visits to the region. The EU also reiterates its willingness to maintain dialogue with all political forces that reject violence and support credible initiatives for dialogue and reconciliation through the good offices of the High Representative and the EU Special Representatives.
 15. It reconfirms the Council Conclusions of 21 August 2013."
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