

Mon, 20/06/2016 - 10:17  
News stories

## **EU extends anti-people smuggling Operation Sophia for a year**



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Ministers also backed the initiative of High Representative Federica Mogherini to launch a trilateral

dialogue between Libya, Niger and Chad on joint border management of the southern border of Libya, which presents many challenges, both in terms of migration and security issues.

“This was extremely well received by the Ministers,” Mogherini told the media after the Foreign Affairs Council in Luxembourg, which she chaired. “The European Union will continue to prepare the ground and facilitate contacts at a trilateral level and we will accompany this also with our CSDP presence in the region of Sahel, but also our work with the Libyan authorities and also obviously with Operation Sophia at sea.”

Ministers also discussed the latest initiatives on the Middle East Peace Process, with EU Special Representative for the MEPP, Fernando Gentilini, looking ahead to the publication of a new report by the Quartet (the EU, US, Russia and the UN).

“The European Union has invested a lot in revitalising the Quartet. We are now in the last phase of preparation of this report that will include also important recommendations to the parties. The Member States shared the views that were presented to them, the basic content of the report as it stands now and expressed the wish to see it published in the coming days and to engage with the parties, with Palestinians and Israelis, and their leaderships, on the basis of that report,” said Mogherini, who will meet the Presidents of both sides in Brussels this week.

Mogherini also briefed ministers on her meeting last week with the G5 Sahel countries - Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger - and she presented the idea presented earlier this month of Migration Compacts with a number of countries.

“We also discussed, related to the Sahel, the implementation of the Trust Fund for Africa we established at the Valletta Summit. The funds have now reached a total amount of €2.3 billion from EU funds, and we have already started to finance projects. For the Sahel only, it is about €530 million worth of projects that are already funded and going to the area,” she said.

Ministers also discussed the EU’s Arctic policy, latest developments in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the visa liberalisation process for Georgia, and the situation in Venezuela.

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