



Federal Foreign Office



UDENRIGSMINISTERIET
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Czech Republic



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

H. E. Ms. Federica Mogherini
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vice-President of the European Commission
BRUSSELS

12 July 2017

Dear High Representative,

In recent years, the very tectonic plates on which our foreign policy stands have been changing. We continue to face massive challenges at our borders and beyond, and the link between internal and external challenges is more evident than ever. Politicians in each EU Member State need to be able to explain how Europe can contribute to addressing the concerns of EU citizens. Simultaneously, the dynamics of international cooperation seem to be changing, emphasizing the need to re-affirm alliances and finding new ways of promoting our common interests. This state of affairs is well portrayed also in the EU Global Strategy.

Against this background we welcome and fully support your initiative to discuss the way we work together in the Foreign Affairs Council, which is the core of policy formulation within the Common Foreign and Security Policy as well as an important platform for calibrating positions and exchanging views among Foreign Ministers. It is important that we continuously strive to make the meetings as relevant and responsive to international challenges as possible. As the Chair of the FAC, your role is central in conducting results-oriented Council meetings, and Member States bear a shared responsibility for effective decision-making. We want to lend our support to you and to the EEAS in preparing the FACs, as well as in implementing the political decisions made in the Council.

With this in mind, we look forward to the discussion on working methods at the up-coming Gymnich meeting. As an input to the discussion, we would like to put forward the following practical suggestions for optimizing the FACs:

- The meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council must be as **decision-oriented** and concrete as possible. This requires timely preparation of the FAC. Council Conclusions are useful and could increasingly include specific tasking of the HRVP and/or Member States. These should be considered as political guidelines that leave space for the HRVP's consideration with regard to implementation.
- Recognizing the need for exchange of views on recent developments, it could be useful to provide an opportunity for a brief discussion at Council meetings, which is neither a full agenda item, an "any-other-business" item or part of the HRVPs introductory remarks. One could envisage **"a discussion on pressing issues" at the beginning of each FAC**. Such an

opportunity could be useful for those member states informing on or soliciting support for an important issue and leaves time for more in-depth discussions on the agenda leading to longer-term commitments of the FAC as whole.

- For important strategic discussions and exchange of views on current issues, **annotated agendas and/or questions for discussion** are useful in directing the discussion towards common interests and goals, enabling MS and EEAS to act in a complementary and coordinated way and so reinforcing EU's impact and visibility.
- A **frank dialogue among friends** can be useful in the process of searching for a common position. Controversial items need not be avoided.
- Where relevant, a certain level of **division of labour** could be envisaged, where members of the FAC, at the initiative and oversight of the HRVP, could represent the HRVP on a specific thematic or regional policy issue in the sphere of CFSP.

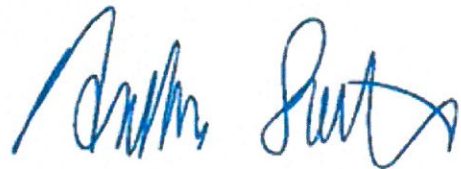
This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of measures for fostering effective decision-making in the FAC. Generally, shared analysis – including through the distribution of EU delegations' reports to Member States' embassies in third countries - and early preparations help us to identify the EU interests and expected results from the FAC.

We appreciate your tireless efforts to enhance our common working methods and strive for results-oriented Council meetings. You can count on our full support. We are looking forward to a fruitful discussion at the Gymnich meeting.

Yours sincerely,



*Lubomír Zaorálek
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
The Czech Republic*



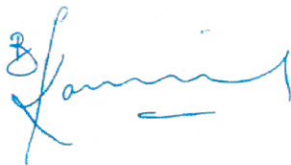
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