

OBSERVATORY ON IAI EUROPEAN DEFENCE

JANUARY 2014

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

THE EU COUNCIL LIFTS CERTAIN SANCTIONS FROM IRAN

JANUARY 20

The EU Council has suspended certain restrictive measures against Iran, following confirmation of Iran's compliance with nuclear measures in the agreed joint action plan. The action plan agreed by the EU+3 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK and the United States) and Iran in 24 November 2013 lays out a series of measures to address global concerns about Iran's nuclear program. As a first step, it requires both sides to implement a series of voluntary measures for a period of six months. Iran committed to addressing the most pressing concerns about their nuclear activities, including suspending nuclear enrichment above 5%, freezing enrichment capacity, significantly reducing their stockpile of enriched uranium and allowing international nuclear inspectors better access to key Iranian nuclear sites. The International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed during the Council meeting that Iran has started to implement these measures. As a result, the Council suspended EU sanctions against Iran for crude oil, petrochemicals, gold and precious metals. This will also allow the provision of transportation and insurance services to countries importing Iranian oil. The suspension will last for a period of six months.

JANUARY 20

EU COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT STABILIZATION IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Following a discussion on the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR), the EU ministers adopted conclusions underlining the EU's commitment to supporting stabilization in the country. They approved an EU military operation in CAR and the related crisis concept for the

mission. The mission aims to help develop a safer environment for citizens in the area around the capital city, Bangui. It will be in place for up to 6 months before handing over to the African-led international support mission (MISCA). In this context, the EU's Political and Security Committee confirmed the selection of Major General Philippe Pontières, from France, as Operation Commander for the EU military operation in the Central African Republic; he will now start the operational planning of EUFOR RCA, together with the Operational Headquarters in Larissa, Greece.

JANUARY 21

NEW ZEALAND JOINS NATO'S COUNTER-PIRACY MISSION OCEAN SHIELD

Following a formal exchange of letters between NATO and the New Zealand Government, the Royal New Zealand Navy frigate HMNZS TE MANA is set to join the Alliance's Operation Ocean Shield on 23 January, marking the second time a partner nation has contributed to NATO's counter-piracy effort. New Zealand is the second NATO partner nation, after Ukraine, to contribute to Operation Ocean Shield. New Zealand has previously contributed to NATO operations, including SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina and ISAF in Afghanistan.

JANUARY 27

NORWEGIAN JETS TAKE OVER NATO'S PEACETIME PREPAREDNESS MISSION IN ICELAND

Six Norwegian F-16 fighter jets touched down in Iceland to take on NATO's mission to provide airborne surveillance and interception capabilities to meet Iceland's peacetime preparedness needs. The deployment provides Iceland with a quick-reaction capability of fighter jets ready to scramble if required to conduct the

Observatory on European Defence is edited by Alessandro R. Ungaro and Irene Spaziani.

peacetime NATO Air Policing Mission, while ensuring that Icelandic and NATO personnel are fully trained and experienced to support all future such deployments. The Norwegian jets will be deployed to Iceland until 21 February.

JANUARY 28

JOINT EU-RUSSIA STATEMENT ON COMBATING TERRORISM

The 32nd EU-Russia summit was held in Brussels to reflect upon the nature and direction of the EU- Russia strategic partnership. The respective leaders agreed to further develop a strategic partnership between the Russian Federation and the European Union, especially in combating and preventing terrorism, and to this end, in particular: they considered the possibilities for further strengthening cooperation in response to crimes committed by terrorists and organized crime, including exploring prospects of signing cooperation agreements in the future, to ensure an information exchange between Russia and the EU in the sphere of combating terrorism in conformity with their respective internal legislation including data protection standards.