Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/938 of 6 June 2019 in support of a process of confidence-building leading to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East

COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2019/938

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Articles 28(1) and 31(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

(1) The 2016 European Union Global Strategy for the Union's Foreign and Security Policy as well as the 2003 European Union Strategy against the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) are founded on the conviction that a multilateral approach to security, including disarmament and non-proliferation, provides the best way to maintain international order.

(2) The Union's policy therefore is to uphold, implement and strengthen the implementation and universalisation of existing disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, agreements and norms and to cooperate with and assist third countries in the fulfilment of their obligations under multilateral conventions and regimes.

(3) The Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean of 13 July 2008, establishing the Union for the Mediterranean, reaffirmed the common aspiration to achieve peace as well as regional security as set out in the Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of 27-28 November 1995, which, *inter alia*, promotes regional security through, *inter alia*, nuclear, chemical and biological non-proliferation, adherence to and compliance with international and regional non-proliferation regimes and arms control and disarmament agreements such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and/or regional arrangements such as zones free of nuclear weapons, including their verification regimes, as well as by fulfilling in good faith the commitments of the signatories to the Barcelona Declaration under arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation conventions.

(4) The parties to the Union for the Mediterranean will pursue a mutually and effectively a verifiable Middle East zone free of WMD — nuclear, chemical and biological — and their delivery systems. Furthermore, the parties will consider practical steps, *inter alia*,

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to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons as well as the excessive accumulation of conventional arms.

(5) In 2008, the Union organised a seminar in Paris on 'Middle East Security, WMD Non-Proliferation and Disarmament', which brought together representatives of States of the region and Union Member States, as well as academics and national nuclear energy agencies.

(6) The 2010 NPT Review Conference emphasised the importance of a process leading to full implementation of its 1995 Resolution on the Middle East (the '1995 Resolution'). To that end, the Conference endorsed practical steps, *inter alia*, consideration of all offers aimed at supporting the implementation of the 1995 Resolution, including the offer of the Union to host a follow-up seminar related to the one organised in June 2008.

(7) The 2010 NPT Review Conference further recognised the important role played by civil society in contributing to the implementation of the 1995 Resolution and encouraged all efforts in that regard.

(8) In 2011, the Union organised a seminar in Brussels to promote confidence building and in support of a process aimed at establishing a zone free of WMD and means of delivery in the Middle East, which brought together senior representatives of States of the region, the three NPT depository States, the Union Member States, other interested States, as well as academics and official representatives of the major regional and international organisations.

(9) In 2012, the Union decided to further support a process of confidence-building leading to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMD in the Middle East, amongst others by supporting the work of the UN-appointed Facilitator for the 2012 Conference on the establishment of such a zone and by organising a capacity-building workshop and a follow-up event to the 2008 and 2011 Union seminars.

(10) The Union has continuously expressed its readiness to continue to assist in the process leading to the establishment of a WMD-free zone (WMDFZ) in the Middle East and wishes to continue to support confidence building processes similar to those provided by the Union seminars and workshops held in in 2008, 2011 and 2012.

(11) In his Agenda for Disarmament 'Securing our Common Future' presented on 24 May 2018, the United Nations Secretary-General pledge to work with UN Member States to strengthen and consolidate nuclear-weapon-free zones, including by supporting the further establishment of such zones, including in the Middle East,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

1 For the purposes of advancing the Union's commitment to establishing a WMDFZ in the Middle East, and in order to provide follow-up to earlier Union activities in 2008, 2011 and 2012 and promote confidence building in support of a process aimed at establishing such a zone, the Union shall support activities to foster inclusive dialogue among experts and policymakers on a WMDFZ in the Middle East through, inter alia:

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a identifying lessons learned from efforts to advance the WMDFZ during the period 1996-2015;

b building analytic capacity to support new thinking on regional security issues and the WMDFZ, including drawing on lessons from the establishment of other regional nuclear weapons-free zones;

c collating ideas and developing new proposals on how to move forward on the issue.

2 In that context, the project to be supported by the Union shall cover the following specific activities:

a Phase I

The first phase of the project will focus on establishing networks of experts, outreach and communication, and framing the issues and themes to be explored. Key activities include:

(i) the establishment of an initial regional network of relevant experts and institutions;

(ii) outreach, interviews and literature review and relevant documentation-gathering;

(iii) a first meeting of the project reference group;

(iv) a side event at the General Assembly First Committee in October 2019;

(v) a workshop, bringing together 15-20 members of the project's regional network and members of the project reference group;

b Phase II

The second phase of the project will focus on engaging with relevant individuals, experts, academic and policy researchers, and institutes in the region for the purpose of obtaining insights and perspectives on the issues and themes identified in Phase I as well as validation of the narrative on WMDFZ efforts between 1995-2015. Key activities include:

(i) up to 50 one-on-one interviews with individuals from within and outside the region;

(ii) up to six small research institute-facilitated meetings of relevant experts in the region;

(iii) a full draft of United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)'s report on the WMDFZ initiative in the Middle East to be made available to UN Member States and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs;

(iv) a special event organised in the margins of the 2020 NPT Review Conference;

(v) a meeting organised at UN Headquarters in New York in 2020 to present relevant updates and findings of the project to UN Member states and other relevant stakeholders;

c Phase III

(i) two multi-stakeholder workshops to consider the summary of options and recommendations on the way forward;

(ii) publication of remaining briefing papers setting out those options and perspectives that have been identified as potentially promising for prospects

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for enhanced regional security cooperation, *inter alia*, via a WMDFZ in the Middle East;

(iii) two workshops that bring together experts and officials acting in their personal capacities.

A detailed description of the projects is set out in the Annex.

Article 2

1 The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) shall be responsible for the implementation of this Decision.

2 Technical implementation of the projects referred to in Article 1(2) shall be carried out by the UNIDIR, which shall perform this task under the responsibility of the HR. For that purpose, the HR shall enter into the necessary arrangements with UNIDIR.

Article 3

1 The financial reference amount for the implementation of the projects referred to in Article 1(2) shall be EUR 2 856 278.

2 The expenditure financed by the amount set out in paragraph 1 shall be managed in accordance with the procedures and rules applicable to the Union budget.

3 The Commission shall supervise the proper management of the expenditure referred to in paragraph 1. For that purpose, it shall conclude a financing agreement with UNIDIR. The agreement shall stipulate that the implementing partner is to ensure visibility of the Union contribution, appropriate to its size.

4 The Commission shall endeavour to conclude the financing agreement referred to in paragraph 3 as soon as possible after the entry into force of this Decision. It shall inform the Council of any difficulties in that process and of the date of conclusion of the agreement.

Article 4

1 The HR shall report to the Council on the implementation of this Decision on the basis of 6-monthly narrative reports prepared by UNIDIR. Those reports shall form the basis for the evaluation carried out by the Council by the end of the project.

2 The Commission shall provide information on the financial aspects of the projects referred to in Article 1(2).

Article 5

1 This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

2 This Decision shall expire 36 months after the date of the conclusion of the financing agreement referred to in Article 3(3). However, it shall expire six months after its entry into force if no financing agreement has been concluded by that time.

Done at Luxembourg, 6 June 2019.

For the Council

The President

A. BIRCHALL