



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Speech by President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy
at the "A new deal for Somalia" conference**

I would like to personally welcome all of you today to this Conference. We are here to deliver a New Deal for Somalia. And I am delighted to see so many representatives from Somalia, from the region and from around the world. This is fundamentally what this New Deal is about: the people of Somalia and the international community coming together, in partnership, to help build a better future for all Somalis.

Over the past two years, there has been considerable change in the country. Where there was despair after 20 years of war, of famine, of destitution, now there is hope – hope that a better future is achievable. The Compact will be the expression of that hope and I would like to praise all those who have been involved in preparing it for today – great work, at great speed. We now need a great effort to ensure it is implemented. There are three particular elements of the Compact, and how it came into being, that I want to highlight.

First, and above all, that it comes from the Somali people. They were the ones who committed themselves to the changes, who have carried through the political reforms, and who put forward the Compact's priorities and its purpose. It is essential that the trust between the people and those who represent them, and between the clans and regions of Somalia, is re-built. This takes time. But this time all parties have shown their commitment to make it work, and to take ownership of the process. Without this, we cannot succeed.

P R E S S

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Secondly, we must always keep in mind that Somalia does not exist in a vacuum. It is a part – a central part – of the Horn of Africa region. We have reached where we are also thanks to Somalia's neighbours in the Horn, and to the African Union beyond that, who are actively engaged in finding a *lasting* solution to Somalia's problems.

I pay tribute to the AMISOM troop-contributing countries – Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Djibouti, Sierra Leone – , to all the members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and a special tribute to the Government of Ethiopia for their tireless efforts to encourage the process of peace-building. Without an active, constructive, committed region, peace would never be achieved – just as without a peaceful Somalia, the Horn of Africa as a whole will not be able to thrive.

My third point is the role of the international community as a whole, which has lent its support – political, financial and economic – to the search for solutions. Alongside the African Union, the United Nations have been an essential partner. And beyond the region, the countries of the Gulf and the Government of Turkey have become increasingly closely involved in putting the country back on its feet.

The European Union has also been much engaged. In just over five years, over €1 billion of European support has gone to Somalia.

More than half on development and on humanitarian priorities:

- to build up basic services in a number of regions,
- and to bring emergency assistance to the worst affected areas, particularly in the famine of 2011-12.

The other half, on security operations:

- supporting the African Union's military mission, AMISOM;
- helping re-build and train the Somali Army;
- and keeping pirates away from the Somali coast with Operation Atalanta.

All along the European Union also provides, through our Special Representative and Special Envoy to Somalia, active political support to the negotiations.

These are all important tasks, but none of us can complete any of them alone. The international community has the responsibility to come ever closer together, as the Somalis themselves are coming together, and to coordinate our support, so that it can be as effective and useful as possible.

That is a large part of the purpose of the Compact, and of the purpose of this conference. Our discussions and conclusions today are an important step in establishing our shared commitment to help Somalia build a better future – through a shared vision, agreed processes and new funds.

The Somali people deserve a state that represents all regions and all parts of society. They deserve the provision of basic social services. People must see that, after twenty years of coping without functioning state structures, public institutions do deliver and can again provide much needed healthcare and education. New jobs must be created to revive the economy.

To achieve all this, Somalis need security, freedom from violence, from fear, from intimidation. Re-establishing the rule of law, providing justice and a sense of security to the people: those are the foundations to reconcile the nation, to gain its trust.

This is a historic day for Somalia, a day that can make a substantial difference for the better to its future. This is also a historic day for the European Union, a partner that has been at the side of Somalia for many years. We are proud to co-host today's Conference and proud to remain committed to supporting Somalia as we take forward the Compact.

I would like to thank all of you for coming. And finally I would like to say many thanks on behalf of all my colleagues here, to the Belgian Foreign Ministry for their provision of such an impressive venue for today. If I could now hand back to High Representative Cathy Ashton who has been the drive behind today's Conference for the European Union, and who will be leading the discussions through the day.
