



FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

6 February 2017

The Council, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, will discuss the situation in **Ukraine**. Ministers are expected to assess progress in the implementation of the reform agenda in Ukraine over the past year as well as the EU support for the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The Council will then review the political situation in **Libya**, one year after the formation of the Government of National Accord. The economic and security situation may also be touched upon. Foreign ministers will also discuss how to work with Libya to address irregular migration along the Central Mediterranean Route.

Over lunch, foreign affairs ministers will discuss the situation in **Egypt** and the way forward for bilateral relations. Ministers may also more specifically address socio-economic development, migration, counterterrorism and Egypt's role in the region.

In the afternoon, the Council will discuss the **Middle East Peace Process**, following up on the informal discussion ministers held in January and taking stock of most recent developments.

Press opportunities:

- +/- 09.30 tbc Doorstep statement by High Representative Federica Mogherini
- +/- 16.30 Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council

[Press conferences and public events by video streaming](#)

[Video coverage in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

Ukraine

The Council will review the situation in Ukraine. Ministers are expected to assess progress in the implementation of the reform agenda in Ukraine over the past year and hold a debate on how to increase the impact of EU support.

Following up on their discussion at their informal meeting (Gymnich) of 2–3 September 2016, foreign ministers will also take stock of developments related to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and assess EU support for the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The EU-Ukraine Summit took place in Brussels on 24 November 2016 and the third meeting of the EU-Ukraine Association Council on 19 December.

In its conclusions of 15 December 2016, the European Council reconfirmed its commitment to international law and the territorial integrity of Ukraine as well as the conclusion of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement (AA), including the establishment of a deep and comprehensive free trade area (DCFTA). A declaration was adopted to enable the completion of ratification of the AA/DCFTA.

Progress has also been made on visa liberalisation: an agreement was reached between the European Parliament and the Council on the revised suspension mechanism at the end of 2016, which will in turn enable them to take a decision to allow visa-free travel for Ukrainian citizens.

Ukraine has taken important positive legislative steps in many areas such as decentralisation, energy sector reform, public procurement, macro-economic stabilisation, banking sector, reform of the police and fight against corruption. The Council is expected to encourage full implementation of these reforms and also further progress in areas such as constitutional reform, judicial and electoral reform, public administration, energy efficiency and the electricity market.

The EU assists the reform process in Ukraine through the support group for Ukraine as well as through significant financial assistance. The EU also supports security sector reform in Ukraine through the EU Advisory Mission in Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine).

[EU relations with Ukraine](#)

[Ukraine and the EU \(Factsheet\)](#)

[European Council conclusions on Ukraine, 15 December 2016](#)

[EU–Ukraine: 3rd meeting of the Association Council on 19 December](#)

[EUAM Ukraine](#)

Libya

The Council will discuss Libya and is expected to adopt conclusions. Ministers will discuss the political situation in Libya, more than one year after the formation of the Government of National Accord. The High Representative is expected to debrief ministers on Prime Minister Al-Sarraj visit in Brussels on 2-3 February 2017. The economic and security situation may be touched upon in the debate.

Foreign ministers will also discuss how to work with Libya to address irregular migration along the Central Mediterranean Route on the basis of the joint communication presented on 25 January 2017, entitled "Migration on the Central Mediterranean route: managing flows, saving lives." The discussion will follow the informal Heads of State and Government meeting in Malta on 3 February, which is expected to take stock of the EU's approach to the Central Mediterranean migratory route.

Ministers may also touch upon the state of play of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, the EU naval operation to disrupt the business model of human smugglers and traffickers in the Southern Central Mediterranean.

In its conclusions of 18 April 2016, the Council welcomed the arrival of the Presidency Council in Tripoli on 30 March 2016, which helped pave the way for the effective government of the country by the Government of National Accord (GNA) and for addressing the needs of the Libyan people. The Council underlined the Libyan ownership of the political process and the importance of its inclusiveness, notably through the continued participation of political and local actors, women and civil society.

[EU-Libya relations \(Factsheet\)](#)

[Council conclusions on Libya, 18 April 2016](#)

[EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA](#)

[EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya \(EUBAM\)](#)

[Remarks by President Donald Tusk after his meeting with Prime Minister of Libya Fayez al-Sarraj](#)

Egypt

Over lunch, ministers will discuss the situation in Egypt and the way forward for EU-Egypt relations. They may address more specifically security, counterterrorism, migration, and Egypt's role in the region.

The framework for EU-Egypt relations is the Association Agreement. The agreement provides for regular political dialogue between the two partners, enhanced cooperation in a number of key sectors, ranging from trade and investment to energy and education, as well as EU assistance to Egypt's reform efforts. EU bilateral assistance to Egypt for 2014-2016 amounted to € 320 million.

The EU and Egypt will adopt their partnership priorities for 2017-2020 at the next Association Council which is due to take place in spring 2017. Priorities are expected to include support for Egypt's sustainable economic and social development, strengthened cooperation in foreign policy and in the stabilisation process, in particular in the fields of democratic governance, security and migration. The EU will set out a new assistance programme for 2017-2020 to support these jointly agreed priorities.

Ministers may also touch upon the space for the civil society in the country. The EU has expressed concern over a new law that restricts the functioning and operating of NGOs in Egypt. The law was approved in November 2016 by the Egyptian parliament. President Sisi asked the Parliament to reconsider the law in light of NGOs concerns in December.

The EU cooperates with Egypt on migration. Egypt is eligible for the EU Trust Fund for Africa (also known as the Valetta Emergency Trust Fund) and projects to increase cooperation in this field are under discussion. Cooperation in the field of migration and mobility is also included in the new partnership priorities with Egypt, which provide for the adequate framework for stronger and more strategic engagement in this field.

The Council may also discuss how to engage with Egypt on regional issues, such as the Libyan crisis, the Middle East peace process and Syria. Egypt is one of the key regional players with which the EU has engaged in the framework of its initiative on the future of Syria. Currently holding a seat in the United Nations Security Council, as well as in the African Union Political and Security Council, Egypt is and can be even more an important partner of the EU on regional issues and beyond.

[Egypt and the EU](#)

[The European Union Delegation to Egypt](#)

Middle East Peace Process

The Council will discuss the Middle East Peace Process following their informal discussion at the Foreign Affairs Council of 16 January, and taking stock of most recent developments. Foreign affairs ministers will discuss ways to preserve the viability of the two-state solution and reverse ongoing negative trends on the ground.

The resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of relevant UNSC resolutions since 1947, Middle East Quartet recommendations, the Arab Peace Initiative (2002) as well as agreements already reached between the parties, is a fundamental interest of the EU. A common objective is a two-state solution with an independent, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. The EU has striven to keep the Middle East peace process on the international agenda and supported initiatives encouraging both Israeli and Palestinian governments' political will and concrete steps towards a two-state solution.

[Statement by the HR Federica Mogherini on the most recent announcement of 3 000 new settlements in the West Bank](#)

[Middle East Peace Process](#)
