

FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council

12 October 2015 in Luxembourg

The Council, starting at 9.30, will be chaired by Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Ministers will have an exchange of views on **Syria**, taking into account the latest developments in the country. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions.

Over lunch, ministers will have a discussion on **migration**, following-up on the Eastern Mediterranean - Western Balkans route conference (8 October) and in preparation for the **Valletta Summit** on migration on 11-12 November. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the external dimension of migration.

In the afternoon, the Council will have a first exchange of views on the future of **EU's relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries** following the expiry of the Cotonou agreement in 2020.

Finally, ministers will take stock of the recent political developments in **Libya**, following the announcement by the UNSG Special Representative Bernardino León of the final package of the political agreement on 8 October.

Press conference:

16.00 Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council

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Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery on: www.eucouncil.tv

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

Syria

The Council will have a comprehensive discussion on Syria. Ministers will take stock of recent developments and discuss the political consequences of the military escalation on the ground.

The EU approach to the Syrian crisis has two tracks: the fight against Da'esh and the search for a political solution to end the long-running conflict, under the UN framework. The EU itself is not engaged in the military side of the fight against Da'esh, but is active in support of stabilisation, against foreign terrorist fighters and on counter-financing, as well as on humanitarian aid.

The EU implements the EU regional strategy for Syria, Iraq as well as the ISIL/Da'esh threat adopted in March 2015, a major contribution to the non-military aspects of the Global Coalition against Da'esh.

On the political process, the EU fully supports the efforts of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura to achieve a peaceful inclusive transition for Syria.

The debate on Syria follows a ministerial-level meeting on the Syrian crisis in New York on 29 September co-chaired by the EU and Jordan which discussed ways to re-energise international humanitarian efforts and step up vital assistance.

More than 12 million Syrians – more than half of the population - are in need of urgent assistance inside Syria. Half of the population has been displaced internally or to neighbouring countries. Close to 4 million refugees have fled Syria to neighbouring countries, mostly to Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

The EU is the leading donor in the response to the Syria crisis with a total of more than €4.2 billion mobilised by the Commission and member states collectively in humanitarian, development, economic and stabilisation assistance inside Syria and to Syrian refugees and their hosts. An EU trust fund, the Madad fund, was established in 2015 and is open to contribution from EU member states and third countries. The Commission has announced it will contribute 500 million euros to the fund from the EU budget.

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on Syria.

[Communiqué of the co-chairs: Informal Ministerial-Level Meeting on the Syrian Crisis, 29 September 2015, New York](#)

[Council conclusions of 16 March 2015 on the EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL/Da'esh threat](#)

Migration

Over lunch, ministers will have an exchange of views on the external aspects of migration policy, following-up on the Eastern Mediterranean - Western Balkans route conference (8 October) and in preparation for the Valletta Summit on migration on 11-12 November.

The High Representative will update ministers on her diplomatic outreach activities to date, including on her visit to Niger and the contacts she had during the United Nations General Assembly. She will report on the ministers' discussion to the European Council on 15-16 October.

A broad foreign and security policy approach is essential to strengthen cooperation with countries of origin and transit in both addressing root causes of irregular migration and managing migratory flows. A state of play of the establishment of the EU's emergency trust fund on Africa will be given.

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the external aspects of migration policy.

[Statement of the Informal meeting of EU Heads of State and government on migration, 23 September 2015](#)

[Council conclusions on migration, 20 July 2015](#)

[Eastern Mediterranean - Western Balkans route conference, 08/10/2015](#)

[Valletta Summit on migration, 11-12/11/2015](#)

[Finding solutions to migratory pressures](#)

EU-ACP relations post 2020

The Council will take stock and discuss the future relations between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries in view of the expiry of the Cotonou agreement in 2020. Ministers will explore what would be the best successor arrangement to advance joint interests after 2020.

The Council discussion will be based on the joint consultation paper adopted by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security policy and the Commission on 6 October 2015. The consultation paper opens the discussion on the post-Cotonou EU-ACP relationship both on *what* the content of partnership should be ("Shared values and common interests"), and *how* it can be best functioning ("Towards a more effective partnership").

The Cotonou agreement was signed on 23 June 2000 and is due to expire on 29 February 2020.

Relations between the EU and the ACP are of a long standing nature, dating back to 1975 and the first Lomé convention. Today, the EU-ACP partnership is comprehensive: it includes a political dimension, economic and trade cooperation as well as development cooperation.

Over the last two decades, major developments have taken place within the EU and within the ACP group of states. The EU has now 28 member states. The ACP group of States, composed of 79 countries (all ACP States are party to the Cotonou partnership agreement except Cuba), is more diverse than ever. The economic situation of many ACP countries has improved while others still face major challenges.

EU regional partnerships with Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific Island have been strengthened. At the international level, world leaders have just agreed Agenda 2030, setting a new global framework for poverty reduction and sustainable development with ambitious goals. The future relationship needs to adapt to the new realities of a multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder partnership.

The Council will have a preliminary discussion on the relationship the EU want to have with the ACP countries, and its overall framework and instruments. Issues related to peace and security, the fight against terrorism and organised crime, migration and political cooperation will also be discussed. A first in-depth discussion on the development dimension of the future relationship is foreseen between the ministers for development cooperation at the Council meeting of 26 October.

[Joint consultation paper "Towards a new partnership between the EU and the ACP countries after 2020"](#)

[EU relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States \(ACP\)](#)

Libya

Ministers will take stock of the recent political developments in **Libya**, following the announcement by the UNSG Special Representative Bernardino León of the final package of the political agreement on 8 October.

[Statement by High Representative Federica Mogherini in support of final political agreement on Libya talks - 9 October 2015](#)

Other items

The Council is expected to take a number of decisions without discussion ("A-items"):

South Sudan

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on South Sudan. On 26 August 2015, the government of South Sudan signed a peace agreement. The Council is expected to welcome the signature of this agreement as an important step forward and call for its implementation in a timely, full, effective and inclusive way.

The humanitarian situation in the country remains disastrous. 2.2 million people are displaced due to the civil war both inside and outside the country. Over 4.5 million people have faced severe food insecurity and South Sudan's population has experienced horrific violations and abuses of human rights over the past 18 months. The EU currently provides around one third of all humanitarian financing to South Sudan to support life-saving programmes for an estimated 2 million people.

The Council will reaffirm the EU readiness to step up its engagement to support the implementation of the peace agreement. The EU will continue its development assistance targeting the direct needs of the people, including basic services throughout the country.

[EU relations with the Republic of South Sudan](#)

Bosnia and Herzegovina / Operation EUFOR Althea

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on Bosnia and Herzegovina and the operation EUFOR Althea. It is expected to renew the mandate of the operation to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities to maintain a safe and secure environment.

[EU relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

[Operation EUFOR ALTHEA](#)