



FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

22 January 2018

The Foreign Affairs Council, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, will start with a discussion on **current affairs** allowing ministers to review pressing issues on the international agenda.

The Council will discuss the **future of the EU partnership with the African, Caribbean and Pacific states (ACP)**. Foreign ministers will hold an exchange of views on how to take the partnership forward after 2020, as the current agreement framing the partnership, the **Cotonou agreement**, is due to expire in 2020. It will be the first ministerial discussion on the Commission's recommendation and draft negotiating directives (12 December 2017).

The Council will then review the political, economic and security situation in **Libya**. The UN Secretary General Special Representative in Libya Ghassam Salamé will take part in this discussion via videoconference. This discussion also follows the trilateral meeting of the **joint AU-EU-UN taskforce** in Brussels on 14 December 2017.

The Foreign Affairs Council will discuss the **Middle East Peace Process**. The Council will hold a debate on the latest developments in the region in preparation for the informal lunch with President Abbas.

EU foreign ministers and the High Representative will have an informal lunch with **Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas**, to discuss the Middle East Peace Process, bilateral relations and regional developments.

The Council is expected to adopt a number of decisions and conclusions without debate, including Council conclusions on the EU strategy for Iraq, on Zimbabwe, on the integrated approach to external conflicts and crises and on EU priorities for cooperation with the Council of Europe.

The Foreign Affairs Council meeting will be preceded by an informal breakfast with **European Investment Bank President Werner Hoyer** to discuss the possible establishment of a development branch within the European Investment Bank.

Press opportunities:

+/- 7.55 (tbc) Doorstep by High Representative F. Mogherini

+/- 12.45 Press statements ahead of the informal lunch by High Representative F. Mogherini and President Mahmoud Abbas

+/- 15.30 Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council

[Press conferences and public events via 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.

Current affairs

The Foreign Affairs Council will start with a review of the pressing issues on the international agenda. The High Representative and foreign ministers may touch upon the situations in Iran, Cuba and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

ACP-EU partnership: post-Cotonou framework

Foreign ministers will hold a discussion on 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. They will have an introductory exchange on the Commission's recommendation and draft negotiating directives of 12 December 2017.

The proposal consists of a substantially revised agreement with a common foundation at ACP level combined with three regional tailored partnerships for Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The future agreement is expected to cover priority areas such as democracy and human rights, economic growth and investment, climate change, poverty eradication, peace and security and migration.

On 12 December 2017 the European Commission has adopted a recommendation to the Council, including a proposal for negotiating directives. Development ministers will also discuss the recommendation and draft negotiating directives at their forthcoming meetings in February and May. The Council is expected to adopt a decision authorising the opening of negotiations and the negotiating directives within the first semester of 2018.

[EU proposes a modernised partnership with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific countries, 12 December 2017](#)

[Communication on a renewed partnership with the African, Caribbean and Pacific \(ACP\) countries, 22 November 2016](#)

[Cotonou agreement, Council website](#)

[EU relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states \(ACP\) – EEAS website](#)

[Post-Cotonou process, Commission DG DEVCO website](#)

Libya

The Council will review the political, economic and security situation in Libya. The UN Secretary General Special Representative Ghassam Salamé will take part in this discussion via videoconference. He will update ministers on the latest developments concerning the political process. The discussion also follows the trilateral meeting of the joint AU-EU-UN task force in Brussels on 14 December 2017

The Council last discussed the situation in Libya and adopted conclusions on 17 July 2017. In its conclusions, the EU recalled that there is no solution to the Libyan crisis through the use of force. The Council reiterated its firm support for the Libyan Political Agreement and for the Presidency Council and Government of National Accord led by Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj, which have been established under the Political Agreement as the sole legitimate government authorities in the country. The EU called on all armed groups to refrain from violence, to commit to demobilisation and to recognise the authorities entrusted by the Libyan Political Agreement as the only ones with the right to control Libya's defence and security forces.

The EU provides assistance to Libya and the Libyan people through supporting a political transition and a negotiated settlement acceptable to all legitimate groups in the country, including by coordinating efforts in the framework of the Libya Quartet. It provides bilateral assistance to Libya, including humanitarian assistance and targeted assistance in the field of migration. The EU is also engaged in providing focussed support to Libya through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations EUBAM Libya and EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia.

EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia is the EU's naval operation to disrupt the business model of smugglers of migrants and traffickers of human beings in the Southern Central Mediterranean. In addition, the operation has supporting tasks, including to train the Libyan Coastguard and Navy and to contribute to the implementation of the UN arms embargo.

EUBAM Libya assists and engages with the Libyan authorities on border management, law enforcement and criminal justice with a particular emphasis on the South of Libya. The mission plans for a possible civilian capacity-building and crisis assistance mission.

[EU-Libya relations, factsheet](#)

[Meeting of the joint AU-EU-UN task force to address the migrant situation in Libya, 14 December 2017](#)

Middle East Peace Process

The Foreign Affairs Council will discuss the state of play on the Middle East Peace Process, including the latest developments in the region.

Following the discussion among EU leaders at their last meeting on 14 December 2017, foreign ministers will further discuss the consequences of the recent announcement by the United States notably on the status of Jerusalem. Foreign ministers will discuss how to help ensure engagement by all relevant players in order to advance the peace process.

Ministers may also touch upon their expectations in view of the extraordinary session of the international donor group (AHLC) that will take place in Brussels on 31 January 2018, hosted by the EU and chaired by Norway. The meeting will bring all parties together to discuss measures to speed up efforts that can underpin a negotiated two-state solution, and to enable the Palestinian Authority to execute full control over Gaza, based on the Cairo agreement from 12 October 2017.

The discussion will lead in to the informal lunch with Palestinian President Abbas.

In its conclusions of 14 December 2017, the European Council reiterated its firm commitment to the two-state solution and, in this context, recalled that the EU position on Jerusalem remains unchanged.

[European Council conclusions of 14 December 2017](#)

[Council conclusions on the Middle East peace process of 18 January 2016](#)

[The Middle East peace process \(EEAS website\)](#)

[EU and Norway to convene an extraordinary session of the international donor group for Palestine \(AHLC\), 10 January 2018](#)

Informal lunch with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas

EU foreign ministers and the High Representative will have an informal lunch with **Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas**, to discuss the Middle East Peace Process, bilateral relations and regional developments.

A similar meeting was held on 11 December with Israeli Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Benjamin Netanyahu.

[Main results of the Foreign Affairs Council meeting of 11 December 2017](#)

Other items

The Council is expected to adopt a number of decisions and conclusions without debate, including Council conclusions on Iraq and on Zimbabwe.

Council conclusions on Iraq

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions establishing a new strategy on Iraq, following the joint communication by the High Representative and the Commission on elements for an EU strategy on Iraq adopted on 8 January 2018.

In its conclusions, the EU is due to commend the Iraqi Government of Prime Minister al-Abadi and the Iraqi security forces on the territorial defeat of Da'esh, reiterate its commitment to supporting the Iraqi authorities in the reconstruction phase and underline the necessity to tackle the root causes of crisis in the country.

The Council is expected to endorse the objectives and the proposed policy approach detailed in the communication and thereby to establish the strategic objectives of the EU in Iraq.

The conclusions also are expected to underline the relevance of the upcoming Kuwait international conference for reconstruction on Iraq, co-chaired by the EU, which represents an opportunity for the government of Iraq to continue to manage the transition from stabilisation to reconstruction, focusing also on continuing humanitarian needs, in a structured and coordinated manner with its international partners.

[Joint communication on elements for an EU strategy on Iraq](#), 8 January 2018

[The EU and Iraq](#)

Council conclusions on Zimbabwe

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on Zimbabwe.

In the light of the ongoing political transition, the EU is set to reaffirm its availability to engage constructively with the new authorities, with political actors across the spectrum, and with civil society, on the basis of a mutual commitment to shared values focused on human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law. In this context, the upcoming electoral process will be key.

The EU is expected to welcome the stated intention of the Zimbabwean authorities to deliver economic reforms, and to reaffirm its willingness to support the planning and implementation of much-needed structural changes and the promotion of good governance.

[EU delegation to Zimbabwe](#)

The Council is also expected to adopt conclusions on the EU approach integrated approach to external conflicts and crises as well as the EU priorities for cooperation with the Council of Europe for 2018-2019.

In the margins

Informal ministerial breakfast with EIB President Werner Hoyer

The Foreign Affairs Council meeting will be preceded by an informal breakfast with European Investment Bank (EIB) President Werner Hoyer to discuss the EIB proposal to establish a subsidiary dedicated to development.

[The European Investment Bank](#)
