



FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL
(Luxembourg)
15 October 2018

The Foreign Affairs Council, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, will start at 10.00 with a discussion on **current affairs** allowing ministers to review pressing issues on the international agenda.

Foreign ministers will discuss **Libya** and prepare for the forthcoming conference on Libya scheduled for mid-November in Palermo (Italy). The discussion will build on the informal meeting of EU foreign ministers in the margins of the recent UN General Assembly.

The Council will discuss the latest developments in the **Central African Republic** and is expected to adopt conclusions.

Foreign ministers will discuss the **external aspects of migration** together with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and the Director-General of the International Organisation for Migration António Vitorino. They will take stock of progress achieved and recent developments. This discussion is expected to prepare the leaders' discussion at the forthcoming European Council meeting on 17-18 October.

Over lunch, foreign ministers will discuss the situation in **Venezuela** and its impact in the region, including the migratory crisis. They are expected to focus on how the EU and its member states can help re-open the way for political process in the country, including together with regional and international actors.

After the Council, the **Eastern Partnership (EaP) foreign ministers meeting** will take place at 15.00

Press opportunities:

- +/- 09.45 Doorstep by High Representative Federica Mogherini
- +/- 14.30 Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council
- +/- 17.45 Doorstep by High Representative Federica Mogherini following the EaP plenary meeting

[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 pressing issues on the international agenda. The High Representative and foreign ministers may discuss the outcome of the 73rd session of the **United Nations General Assembly**. They may also refer to the results of the consultative referendum in the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** on 30 September 2018 and to elections in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** of 7 October 2018. Ministers may also raise the hostile cyber operation against the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The High Representative will also refer to **the EU strategy for connecting Europe and Asia** on which the Council is expected to adopt conclusions and to the adoption of a new legal framework for sanctions of those responsible for the **use of chemical weapons** (see 'other items').

[Joint statement by High Representative Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn on the consultative referendum in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 1 October 2018](#)

[Joint statement by High Representative Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn on the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 8 October 2018](#)

Libya

The Council will discuss Libya. The discussion will focus on the political process and the stability of the country. It will be the opportunity to reiterate the EU's support to the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative Ghassan Salamé. The High Representative will give a briefing on her meeting with him scheduled on 11 October. The discussion follows the debate held at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 16 July and more recently at the informal meeting of EU foreign ministers in the margins of the 73rd UN General Assembly. It will contribute to the preparation for the upcoming high-level meeting on Libya to take place in Palermo (Italy), on 12 and 13 November 2018.

On 24 September 2018 in New York, EU foreign affairs ministers held a discussion with the UNSG Special Representative Ghassan Salamé, in video conference from Tripoli. They reviewed the EU support to Libya on the political process, the security situation and the economic track.

The Council last discussed Libya at its meeting on 16 July 2018, following the visit by the High Representative, Federica Mogherini, to the country on 14 July. The Council emphasised the need to put in place a proper constitutional and legal framework before elections take place. The Council also agreed to increase the EU's work with the United Nations on the economic front.

The EU coordinates the efforts towards a political solution in the framework of the Libya Quartet (European Union, United Nations, African Union and League of Arab States). The last meeting of the Quartet took place on 30 April 2018 in Cairo and discussed progress in the UN mediation efforts led by Ghassan Salamé.

The EU provides bilateral assistance to Libya in the field of governance, health, youth and mediation, as well as humanitarian support. It also cooperates with Libya on migration and protection of migrants. The EU supports in particular the work of UN agencies, including the IOM, as regards the voluntary return of migrants from Libya to their country of origin. The EU is also engaged in providing focused support to Libya through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations EUBAM Libya and EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia.

[Remarks by High Representative F. Mogherini following an informal meeting of EU Foreign Affairs Ministers in the margins of 73rd General Assembly of the United Nations, 24 September 2018](#)

[Statement by High Representative F. Mogherini on the situation in Libya, 03 September 2018](#)

[EU-Libya relations, factsheet](#)

Central African Republic

The Council will discuss the Central African Republic and is expected to adopt conclusions. This discussion follows a side event hosted by the UN and held in the margins of UNGA on 27 September 2018, during which President of CAR Touadéra presented his efforts towards peace, in the presence of the UN Secretary General António Guterres and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki. The EU was represented by Commissioner Neven Mimica.

Ministers will address the fragile situation in CAR. They are expected to confirm the EU commitment to the country. They will discuss how the EU can further strengthen its support through its different instruments on the path to stability, peace and development. In this context, ministers are expected to highlight the ongoing work to deploy a civil-military interoperability pillar integrated in the EU military training mission EUTM RCA to provide additional strategic advice to the Ministry of the Interior, the police and the gendarmerie, in addition to its core mandate of training the Central African Armed Forces (FACA).

The Council is expected to reiterate the EU's support to the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation under the auspices of the African Union and the leadership of CAR President Touadéra as well as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA), and to stress the need for all stakeholders to progress towards the next steps in the peace and reconciliation process. It is also set to underline the need to continue reinforcing the state authority, including through strengthening CAR security forces. Ministers are likely to recall the importance of inclusive involvement of all institutions and all actors of the Central African society, including women, youth and civil society, so as to contribute to lasting reconciliation in the country. The EU is due to call on all international actors, especially those engaged in CAR, to support exclusively the Government and the African Initiative, in good coordination and in full transparency.

The EU is one of the most important political and cooperation partners of CAR, including with its EUTM RCA and a substantial development cooperation contribution (€ 487 million for 2017-2020) as well as significant humanitarian aid.

[Delegation of the EU to RCA](#)

[EUTM RCA](#)

External aspects of migration

Foreign ministers will discuss the external aspects of migration together with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and the Director-General of the International Organisation for Migration António Vitorino. They will take stock of progress achieved and recent developments. This discussion is expected to prepare the leaders' discussion at the forthcoming European Council meeting on 17-18 October.

Over the past three years, joint efforts of the EU, its member states and UN agencies have delivered significant results. The trilateral taskforce on Libya (African Union, European Union and United Nations) has helped more than 37 000 people to return safely to their countries of origin from in Libya, whereas 1 536 persons in need of protection have been evacuated through the Emergency Transit Mechanism. Cooperation on migration, including on returns, with several key countries of origin has been enhanced.

Irregular migration flows to Europe have been significantly decreased (see last page, infographic on migratory flow). Efforts to better tackle irregular migration and to fight smuggling networks have been considerably strengthened in particular through Operation Sophia and EUBAM Libya but also in the Sahel through CSDP missions (EUCAP Sahel Niger, EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUTM Mali).

Significant EU funding is also being allocated under a wide range of instruments to projects in countries of origin and transit. Over the past three years the EU Emergency trust fund for Africa has in particular demonstrated its added value as a swift and effective implementation tool in view of addressing the root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration and to contribute to good migration management. It has currently 165 programmes in place for a total amount of 3.16 billion in targeted initiatives along the main migratory routes. These programmes are dedicated to the creation of jobs and economic development especially for young people and women in local communities, as well as to supporting resilience including support to basic services for local populations, enhancing migration management, including the fight against migrant smuggling, and improving stability and governance.

[EU migration policy \(background information\)](#)

Venezuela

Over lunch, the High Representative and foreign ministers will discuss the situation in Venezuela and its impact in the region, including the migratory crisis. They are expected to focus on how the EU and its member states can help re-open the way for political process in the country, including together with regional and international actors.

The Council last discussed and adopted conclusions on the situation in Venezuela during its meeting of 20 May 2018. The EU recalled its readiness to help find a democratic way out of the current multidimensional crisis, through a meaningful and result-oriented negotiation, conducted in good faith, that includes all relevant Venezuelan political actors.

The EU is committed to supporting the population of Venezuela and, in neighbouring countries, to supporting the socio-economic inclusion of Venezuelans and the resilience of host communities. To that end, as announced in June 2018, the EU provides €35.1 million in emergency aid and medium-term development assistance to support the Venezuelan people and the countries in the region most affected by this crisis.

Since 13 November 2017, the Council has had targeted restrictive measures in place on Venezuela. These include an embargo on arms and on equipment for internal repression, together with restrictive measures (travel ban and an asset freeze) on 18 individuals involved in non-compliance with democratic principles and the rule of law as well as in serious human rights violation. The restrictive measures aim to help foster democratic shared solutions that can bring political stability to the country and allow it to address the pressing needs of the population.

[Discurso de Mogherini en el encuentro de alto nivel “migrantes y refugiados de Venezuela: hacia una respuesta regional”, 25 September 2018](#)

[Venezuela: EU adds 11 officials to sanctions list, 25 June 2018](#)

[Council conclusions on Venezuela on 28 May 2018](#)

[Delegation of the European Union to Venezuela](#)

Other items

The Council is expected to adopt a number of decisions and conclusions without debate, including Council conclusions on an EU strategy on connecting Europe and Asia, the decisions to extend the EU advisory mission in Iraq and the EU training mission in Somalia, and the recommendation on the sequencing of the fulfilment of the more binding commitments taken in the context of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

Council conclusions on "Connecting Europe and Asia"

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on "Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU strategy", following the joint communication of the Commission and the High Representative of 19 September. The strategy will feed into the upcoming Asia-Europe meeting (ASEM) summit on 18-19 October.

In its conclusions, the Council is expected to underline that the EU will promote an approach to connectivity which is sustainable, comprehensive, and rules-based, and will advance investment and trade. It is due to further elaborate on this European approach, an approach based on high standards of social and environmental protection and inspired by the EU's internal market, enabling countries to achieve higher levels of quality of life while guaranteeing respect for individual rights.

The Council is also expected to call for strengthened cooperation at the regional level between the EU and Asia, noting that the EU should consider developing regional approaches for sustainable connectivity identifying opportunities for cooperation.

[Connecting Europe and Asia - building blocks for an EU strategy \(European Commission press release, 19 September 2018\)](#)

[Asia-Europe Meeting \(ASEM\), 18-19/10/2018](#)

Legal framework to address the use and proliferation of chemical weapons

The Council is expected to adopt a new regime of restrictive measures to address the use and proliferation of chemical weapons, as a direct follow-up to the conclusions of the European Council of 28 June 2018.

This legal framework will enable the EU to impose sanctions on persons and entities involved in the development and use of chemical weapons anywhere, regardless of their nationality and location. The restrictive measures will target persons and entities who are directly responsible for the development and use of chemical weapons as well as those who provide financial, technical or material support, and those who assist, encourage or are associated with them.

Sanctions will consist of a travel ban to the EU and an asset freeze for persons, and an asset freeze for entities. In addition, EU persons and entities will be forbidden from making funds available to those listed. This decision is expected to contribute to the EU's efforts to counter the proliferation and use of chemical weapons which poses a serious threat to international security. It will support the global prohibition of chemical weapons as laid down by the Chemical Weapons Convention, against a background of increasing chemical attacks in various parts of the world.

[EU restrictive measures](#)

Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) ministerial meeting will bring together EU foreign ministers and their counterparts from the six Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine), as well as key stakeholders involved in the region. The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini will chair the meeting.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to resume the political dialogue between the EU and its Eastern partners. Foreign ministers will also take stock of the implementation of the partnership's commitments, including the priorities identified as the '20 deliverables for 2020' adopted at the last Eastern Partnership Summit in November 2017, to achieve stronger economy, governance, connectivity and society.

The meeting will also be the opportunity to discuss first ideas to mark the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership due in May next year.

Ahead of this meeting, EU ministers exchanged views on the Eastern Partnership at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting in July 2018.

They reaffirmed the EU's commitment to the region, to the reform agenda and to the priorities identified as the '20 deliverables for 2020'. They confirmed the relevance of the tailor-made and differentiated approach and underlined the need to step up reforms in several areas.

[Eastern Partnership \(background information\)](#)

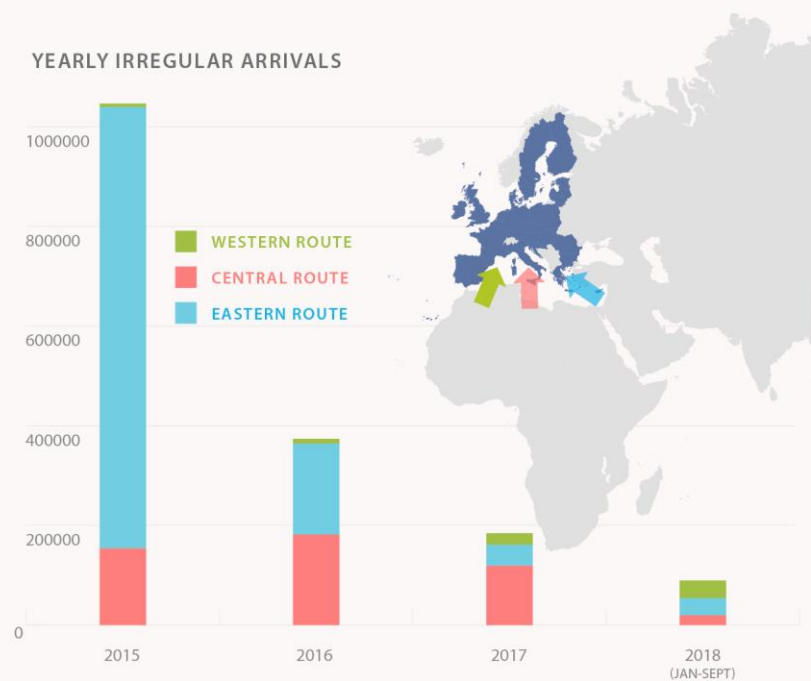
[Eastern Partnership summit, 24/11/2017](#)

[Factsheet on the Eastern Partnership's 20 deliverables for 2020 \(EEAS\)](#)

[The Eastern Partnership \(EEAS\)](#)

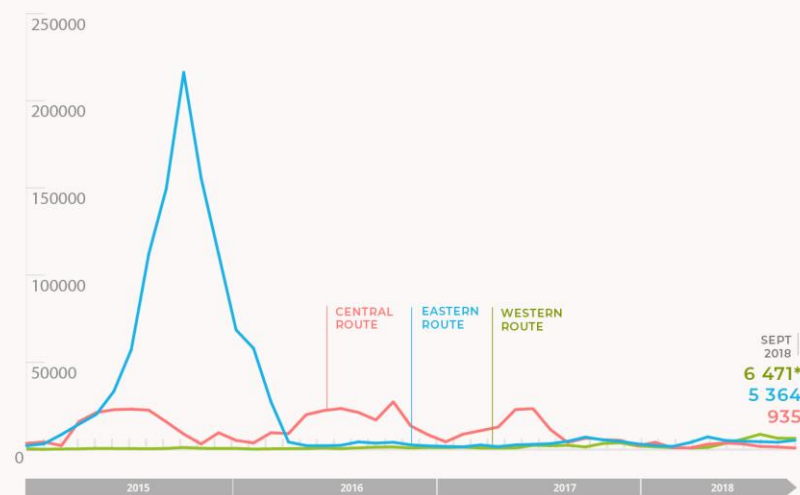
Annex - Infographic on migration

Migration flows: Eastern, Central and Western Mediterranean routes



Source : Frontex

MONTHLY IRREGULAR ARRIVALS
2015 - SEPT 2018



Source : Frontex

* Data from joint operations (sea crossings)