



FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL (Defence)

14 May 2019 (Brussels)

The Foreign Affairs Council (with EU defence ministers), chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, will start at 9.30. EU foreign ministers and defence ministers will have an exchange of views with their counterparts from the **G5 Sahel countries** (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger).

Defence ministers will then discuss among themselves progress made on **PESCO** (Permanent Structured Cooperation) and in particular, the implementation of the 34 projects agreed within this framework. The Council is expected to adopt a recommendation assessing the progress made by the participating member states to fulfil their commitments undertaken in the framework of PESCO. Over lunch, defence ministers will exchange views on **EU-NATO cooperation**, with particular focus on hybrid threats, with Deputy Secretary-General Rose Gottemoeller.

In the afternoon (15.00), there will be a meeting of the **European Defence Agency (EDA) steering board**.

The Council is expected to adopt a number of decisions without debate including the decision to extend the mandate of the EU Advisory Mission (EUAM) in Ukraine and the decisions to modify the mandate of EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUCAP Sahel Niger to allow for the further regionalisation of the EU's CSDP missions in the Sahel.

See also: [background note on the Foreign Affairs Council](#) (foreign ministers, 13 May)

Press opportunities:

- As of 7.45 Opportunities for doorstep statements
- +/- 12.00 Family photo of EU and G5 Sahel countries foreign and defence ministers
- +/- 16.15 Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council

[Council meeting page](#)

[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 Council press office.

Sahel

EU foreign ministers and defence ministers will have an exchange of views with their counterparts from the G5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger). The Sahel is a strategic priority for the EU and its member states. The various meetings taking place during the week of 13 May demonstrate this sense of priority and the **EU's integrated approach to the region**. Foreign ministers will first have a discussion on Monday 13 May to set out the political framework. This will prepare for Tuesday's discussion, which is expected to focus on security aspects. On Thursday 16 May, EU development ministers will discuss how to step up the EU's long-term engagement with and support for the region.

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the Sahel on 13 May. The conclusions are expected to take note of the **many challenges** that the authorities and the populations of the region face: i) political, in particular serious shortcomings in governance, the rule of law and the protection of human rights; (ii) security, with the expansion of the terrorist threat, extremist violence, organised crime including trafficking in human beings, climate change having a negative impact on natural resources and fuelling local conflicts; (iii) development, with endemic poverty, high population dynamics, low socio-economic cohesion; (iv) these elements contribute to increased food insecurity, increased migratory pressure and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation. It is in this context that inter-community conflicts have resurfaced significantly in recent months in several countries in the region. The Council will reaffirm that addressing these challenges and shortcomings is primarily the responsibility of the Sahelian States and that the international community supports them in their efforts.

The EU is committed to the security and development of the Sahel, and is the **leading partner in the region**. It has a comprehensive approach integrating political and diplomatic dialogue, security and stability, and development and humanitarian support.

The **political and diplomatic dialogue** is focused around the EU-G5 Sahel political partnership, including ministerial meetings and the implementation of the EU Sahel strategy, the regional action plan as well as the Malian peace process. The EU High Representative holds regular meetings with her G5 Sahel counterparts to review and strengthen cooperation and coordination in areas of interest such as development, governance, and security. In addition, the EU acts as a guarantor of the Malian peace process.

The EU also supports the **security and stability** of the region through three CSDP missions: EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Niger with a reinforced regional approach. The missions include training, advising, as well as direct support to security forces with the ultimate objective of reinforcing respective national capacities. In addition, the EU assists in the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

Total **development cooperation** support from the EU and its member states to the G5 Sahel countries amounts to € 8 billion for the period 2014-2020. The EU provides long-term assistance to the Sahel mainly through the EU trust fund for Africa (through which €930 million has already been mobilised), and the European development fund, which for the period of 2014-2020 has allocated €628 million for Burkina Faso, €542 million for Chad, €664 million for Mali, €160 million for Mauritania, and €686 million for Niger. The EU is also a major **humanitarian donor**, with more than €250 million allocated to G5 Sahel populations over the past two years.

[The European Union and the Sahel, fact sheet \(EEAS\)](#)

[Sahel: EU takes further steps to better support the security of the region, 3 May 2019](#)

[Council conclusions on the Sahel, 25 June 2018](#)

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)

Defence ministers will discuss progress made on PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation), including the implementation of the 34 projects agreed within this framework. The Council is expected to adopt a recommendation assessing the progress made by the participating member states to fulfil the more binding commitments undertaken in the framework of PESCO.

The Council adopted a decision establishing PESCO on 11 December 2017. PESCO enables participating member states to work more closely together in the area of security and defence. This permanent framework for defence cooperation allows willing and able member states to develop jointly defence capabilities, invest in shared projects, and enhance the operational readiness and contribution of their armed forces.

The 25 member states participating in PESCO are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

The Council agreed on 17 initial projects on 11 December 2017 and formally adopted them on 6 March 2018. The Council adopted 17 additional projects on 11 November 2018. The projects cover areas such as training, capability development and operational readiness on land, at sea and in the air, as well as cyber-defence.

[Overview of the collaborative PESCO projects \(table\)](#)

[Factsheet on permanent Structured Cooperation \(PESCO\) \(EEAS\)](#)

[EU cooperation on security and defence \(background information\)](#)

EU-NATO cooperation

EU defence ministers will have an informal discussion on the latest developments in EU-NATO cooperation, in the presence of the NATO Deputy Secretary-General Rose Gottemoeller. The discussion will focus on ways to counter hybrid threats.

Ministers discussed EU-NATO cooperation during their meeting on 20 November 2018, together with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. The debate gave the opportunity to reaffirm the strong transatlantic link and the continued commitment of both organisations to work together. Ministers highlighted the importance of EU-NATO cooperation, in particular in the areas of military mobility as well as on countering hybrid threats, including disinformation. They also underlined the need for coherence and complementarity between the two organisations. Ministers also discussed the EU cooperation with NATO as well as with the United Nations at the informal meeting of defence ministers on 30-31 January 2019 in Bucharest. The discussion focused on women, peace and security.

President of the European Council Donald Tusk, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, and Secretary General of NATO Jens Stoltenberg signed the second joint declaration on EU-NATO cooperation on 10 July 2018, reaffirming the importance of and the need for closer collaboration between the EU and NATO, underlining that their security and defence initiatives benefit each other.

EU and NATO cooperate through the implementation of 74 common actions under the Warsaw joint declaration in the areas of hybrid threats, operational cooperation including maritime issues, cyber security, defence capabilities, defence industry and research, exercises, supporting partners' capacity building as well as strengthening political dialogue between the two organisations. Common work focuses on concrete practical deliverables.

[Factsheet on EU-NATO cooperation \(EEAS\)](#)

Other items

The Council is expected to adopt a number of decisions and conclusions without debate, in particular:

EU Advisory Mission (EUAM) in Ukraine

The Council is expected to adopt the decision to prolong the mandate of the EU Advisory Mission (EUAM) in Ukraine until 31 May 2021. It is also due to approve a budget of € 54 million for the next two years, an increase of more than 25% which reflects the intensification of the mission's activities, including through the establishment of a second mobile unit which will be deployed in the east and south-east of Ukraine.

EUAM Ukraine aims to strengthen and support the reform of the civilian security sector, jointly with the police, other law enforcement agencies and the judicial sector, including the prosecutor's office. The mission provides strategic advice to the Ukrainian authorities and supports them through operational activities, including training. The mission has five priorities: 1) human resource management, 2) criminal investigation, 3) public order, 4) community policing, and 5) delineation of competencies. It also focuses on three cross-cutting issues: human rights and gender, anti-corruption, and good governance.

The mission's overall aim is to support Ukraine in developing sustainable, accountable and efficient security services that strengthen the rule of law. This process is ultimately designed to restore the trust of the Ukrainian people in their civilian security services.

EUAM Ukraine is an unarmed, non-executive civilian mission with its headquarters in Kyiv and field offices in Lviv and Kharkiv and Odessa. It also carries out projects across the country.

The European Union Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform was established on 22 July 2014. It began operations on 1 December 2014 and has currently a team of over 300 staff.

Civilian missions in the Sahel

The Council is expected to adopt the decisions to modify the mandates of EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUCAP Sahel Niger extending the area of operations in the context of regionalisation of the EU's CSDP activities in the Sahel.

These modifications are necessary steps to implement the second phase of the regionalisation of CSDP missions in the Sahel, which was agreed by the Council on 18 February 2019 (see below, press release of 18 February 2019). In addition, the Council is due to allocate an additional € 1.22 million to EUCAP Sahel Mali, bringing the total budget for the mission to € 68.15 million for the period 1 March 2019 to 14 January 2021.

[Sahel: EU takes further steps to better support the security of the region, press release, 18 February 2019](#)

[EUCAP Sahel Mali](#)

[EUCAP Sahel Niger](#)

After the Council meeting

European Defence Agency Steering Board

Ministers of defence will meet in the European Defence Agency (EDA) Steering Board under the chairmanship of High Representative Federica Mogherini in her capacity as Head of the Agency.

Ministers are expected to discuss the Head of Agency report on the implementation of EDA's revised statute (adopted in 2015) as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the long-term review, completed in May 2017, which reinforced the Agency's mission at various levels. The long-term review notably acknowledged EDA as the main intergovernmental instrument for capability prioritisation at EU level, as the European hub for multinational capability development and as a central operator of EU-funded defence-related activities. The strengthening of the Agency was important to allow it to support the implementation of major EU defence initiatives such as the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF).

Ministers will also review the progress made on ongoing EDA capability and research & technology projects and provide further guidance. After the 2018 revision of the Capability Development Plan (CDP), Ministers are expected to task the EDA with pursuing its work on the implementation of the new European capability development priorities through the development of so-called strategic context cases (SCCs) with a focus on real capability output. The EDA is committed to considering the research and industrial dimensions of capability development by linking the SCCs to other prioritisation activities such as the overarching strategic research agenda and key strategic activities.

In the margins of the Steering Board, ministers will be invited to sign the new EDA programme on "Optimising cross border movement permission in Europe". The programme aims at decreasing the administrative burden for military movement in the framework of the Agency's work on military mobility.

[European Defence Agency website](#)
