



FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

17 June 2019 (Luxembourg)

The Foreign Affairs Council, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, will start at 8.30 with a discussion on **current affairs**, allowing ministers to review pressing issues and latest developments on the international agenda.

They will then discuss ways to improve the **effectiveness of the Common Foreign and Security Policy**.

EU foreign ministers will be **joined by defence ministers** for a comprehensive discussion on the **EU Global Strategy**, three years after its launch. They will take stock of progress and reflect on future perspectives. Ministers may give guidance on the next steps, in particular on the priorities and possible new challenges to be taken into account. Following this debate, the Council is expected to adopt **conclusions on effective multilateralism** and **conclusions on security and defence**.

Foreign ministers will also discuss the situation in **Sudan**, in light of recent developments in the country. The Council is expected to adopt a statement.

Over lunch, EU foreign ministers will have an exchange of views with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Jordan, **Ayman Safadi** focusing on recent developments in the Middle East region.

The Council is expected to adopt a number of conclusions and decisions without debate, including conclusions on the new EU strategy on **Central Asia** and on the EU's engagement with the **Black Sea regional cooperation**.

The **EU-Jordan Association Council** will take place in the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council, in the afternoon.

Press opportunities:

- +/- 8.20 Doorstep by High Representative Federica Mogherini
- +/- 15.00 Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council
- +/- 17.00 Press conference following the Association Council with Jordan

[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.

Current affairs

The Foreign Affairs Council will start with a discussion on current affairs. The High Representative and foreign ministers will touch upon the recent developments in the Republic of **Moldova**, the situation in **Venezuela** as well as recent developments regarding the **Helms-Burton Act**. They will also refer to the situation in the **Middle East**, notably in view of the informal lunch with the Jordanian Foreign Minister later that day. The High Representative is expected to debrief foreign ministers on her visit to the **Horn of Africa** on 20-22 May and refer to the **Prespa Agreement**, signed exactly a year ago (17 June 2018).

[Statement by High Representative Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Johannes Hahn on the political situation in the Republic of Moldova, 9 June 2019](#)

[Statement by the Spokesperson on the political situation in the Republic of Moldova, 8 June 2019](#)

[Venezuela: the Council's response to the crisis \(background information\)](#)

[Statement on the joint meeting of the International Contact Group and the Lima Group on the situation in Venezuela, 3 June 2019](#)

[Federica Mogherini appoints Enrique Iglesias as Special Adviser for Venezuela, May 28 2019](#)

Common Foreign and Security Policy's effectiveness

Foreign ministers will reflect on practical ideas for enhancing the effectiveness of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in view of the rapidly changing global environment and the geopolitical challenges facing the EU and its member states, and in order to act as an **ever more credible, responsive and joined-up Union**. This discussion will be linked to the assessment of the Global Strategy implementation which will also be addressed at the Council.

The EU has come a long way since the establishment of a Common Foreign and Security Policy, as a result of successive efforts which culminated in the Lisbon Treaty. This has contributed to EU unity in CFSP. The major shifts underway in the global landscape and the challenges faced by the European Union in the world today call for an even more effective foreign policy. Ministers may therefore look at how **coherence and consistency** can be further increased as well as reflect on possible ways to strengthen **unity and effectiveness**.

The CFSP was established in 1993 by the Maastricht Treaty, and strengthened since then by subsequent treaties. In particular, the Lisbon Treaty (2009) created the role of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (building on the role the High Representative for the CFSP established by the European Council in December 1999) as well as the permanent President of the European Council. It also created the European External Action Service, the diplomatic service of the EU. The CFSP's general objectives are safeguarding common values and interests of the Union, providing for its security and peace, promoting international co-operation and consolidating democracy and the rule of law.

EU global strategy

EU foreign ministers will be joined by defence ministers for a comprehensive discussion on **the EU Global Strategy, three years after its launch**. After the debate, the Council is expected to adopt conclusions on effective multilateralism and conclusions on security and defence.

The discussion will be based on the third annual progress report by the High Representative "**The EU Global Strategy: three years on, looking forward**". This report on the implementation of the EU Global Strategy focuses on the progress achieved over the past three years in the five priorities areas set out in the EU Global Strategy: the security of the Union, state and social resilience to our east and south, an integrated approach to conflicts and crises, cooperative regional orders and global governance for the 21st century. It also provides possible orientations for the way forward in the coming years.

Ministers are expected to take stock of progress made and reflect on future perspectives. They may discuss how the rapidly changing environment and the **geopolitical trends** of recent years affect the priorities of the Global Strategy. These trends include **greater international complexity**, marked by an evolution towards a more fragmented distribution of power, leading to growing uncertainty and rivalry as noted in the High Representative's report.

Ministers may focus on how to continue to support and **strengthen multilateralism**. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on effective multilateralism, underlining that the **need to promote multilateral solutions is more urgent than ever**. The Council is also expected to highlight that the EU's interest lies in a multilateral system that is rules and rights-based, protects the global commons, promotes shared public goods, and delivers benefits for citizens in Europe and across the globe.

The Council is due to underline that **cooperation through effective multilateralism remains the best way to advance national as well as collective interests**. The Council is expected to state that in the current geopolitical environment, the EU will step up efforts to promote and strengthen multilateralism based on three strands of action: 1) the need to uphold international norms and agreements, 2) the necessity to extend multilateralism to new global realities, and 3) the path to reform in making multilateral organisations fit for purpose.

Ministers may also focus on the work that has been achieved and the priorities ahead **on security and defence cooperation**. They may focus on ways for the Union to enhance its capacity to act as a security provider, its strategic autonomy and its ability to cooperate with partners. The Council is expected to adopt Council Conclusions on security and defence in the context of the EU Global Strategy, and underline that, since the launch of the EU Global Strategy in June 2016, the EU has taken ground-breaking steps forward in the area of security and defence.

The Council is due to welcome the **substantive progress** made to enhance the security of the Union and its role as a security provider and global actor, including through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The conclusions will take stock of progress and provide further guidance on the various stands of work on security and defence cooperation, including on CSDP missions and operations, climate change, the civilian CSDP compact, coherence between the various defence initiatives, Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD, European Defence Fund, EU- NATO and EU-UN cooperation, countering hybrid threats, cyber defence, energy challenges, situational awareness, and military mobility.

[The EU Global Strategy: three years on, looking forward, report, June 2019](#)

[EU Global Strategy \(EEAS\)](#)

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

Sudan

Foreign ministers will discuss Sudan. At the beginning of the discussion, the African Union Special Envoy for Sudan **Mohamed El Hacen Lebatt** will exchange views with ministers via video conference.

The discussion will be an opportunity to review the situation in Sudan after the **violent attacks in early June 2019** and the most recent political developments. Ministers will focus on the steps the EU can take to avoid any further escalation of violence and to support a peaceful and orderly transfer of power to a **civilian-led transitional authority**. The Foreign Affairs Council is expected to agree on a statement following the discussion.

The EU has been closely following the situation in Sudan since the initial developments in December 2018. It has consistently denounced the use of violence, including the most recent attacks, and clearly stated that the **Transitional Military Council bears responsibility** for the safety and security of all in Sudan and has the responsibility to act with restraint. The EU has maintained that negotiations must address the **legitimate demands of the Sudanese people**, and has reiterated its readiness to assist Sudan politically and economically once a civilian transition has taken place. The EU has also consistently supported the **African Union** in its leadership and mediation efforts to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

The Council last adopted conclusions on Sudan on 19 November 2018, prior to the beginning of the ongoing civilian protest movement and the subsequent change in leadership. In these conclusions, the Council recalled **Sudan's crucial role for peace and stability in the wider region**, and confirmed its readiness to engage with Khartoum depending on progress shown in internal reforms, human rights, good governance, facilitation of humanitarian assistance, sustainable peace and a constructive role in the region.

[Statement by the Spokesperson on the political situation in Sudan, 6 June 2019](#)

[Statement by the Spokesperson on the current situation in Sudan, 3 June 2019](#)

[Statement by the Spokesperson on the current situation in Sudan, 29 May 2019](#)

[Statement by the Spokesperson on the current situation in Sudan, 15 May 2019](#)

[Declaration by the High Representative, Federica Mogherini, on behalf of the European Union on Sudan, 17 April 2019](#)

[Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the situation in Sudan, 28 February 2019](#)

[Council conclusions on Sudan, 19 November 2018](#)

[EU delegation to Sudan \(EEAS\)](#)

Informal lunch

Foreign ministers will have an exchange of views on development in the Middle East with the Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Ayman Safadi**. It will be an opportunity to discuss latest developments in the region, including Syria, the Gulf region, and prospects for the Middle East Peace Process.

The EU-Jordan Association Council will take place in the afternoon.

[EU-Jordan Association Council, 17/06/2019](#)

Other items

The Council is expected to adopt a number of decisions and conclusions without debate.

Council conclusions on Central Asia Strategy

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on a new EU strategy on Central Asia, bringing EU engagement in line with the new opportunities which have emerged in the region. The Council is due to welcome the strengthened relations between the EU and Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan since the adoption of the first EU strategy for Central Asia in 2007.

The Council is due to endorse the Joint Communication on "The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership" by the High Representative and the European Commission which, together with these Council conclusions, provides the new policy framework for EU engagement with the countries of Central Asia over the coming years. The new strategy focuses on promoting resilience, prosperity, and regional cooperation in Central Asia.

The Council is expected to underline its commitment to conclude and implement ambitious and mutually beneficial Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (EPCAs) with the interested countries of the region. These agreements remain a cornerstone of the EU's engagement with Central Asia. The Council is expected to reiterate that the scope of the EU's relations is linked to the readiness of individual Central Asian countries to undertake reforms and strengthen democracy, human rights, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, as well as to modernise and diversify the economy, including by supporting the private sector, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, in a free market economy.

Recognising the strategic role of Central Asia in global efforts to promote Euro-Asian connectivity and stressing that these efforts should bring benefits to the region, the Council will also state that it looks forward to increased cooperation with Central Asian countries to promote sustainable, comprehensive and rules-based connectivity. The Council will also emphasise the joint interest of the EU and of Central Asian states to intensify cooperation to promote peace in Afghanistan.

[New EU Strategy on Central Asia, 15 May 2019 \(EEAS\)](#)

[Joint Communication on the EU and Central Asia: New opportunities for a stronger partnership, 15 May 2019 \(EEAS\)](#)

Council conclusions on EU's engagement to the Black Sea regional cooperation

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on EU's engagement to the Black Sea regional cooperation.

The Council is due to reaffirm its long-standing commitment to fostering prosperity, stability, and resilience in the Black Sea area, to emphasise the increasing strategic importance of the Black Sea area for the EU and call for enhanced EU involvement in the regional cooperation, with the Black Sea Synergy initiative at its basis. In particular, it will highlight the importance of harnessing the new opportunities for economic development, resilience and connectivity in the region and beyond.

The Council is expected to recall that it remains concerned about the security challenges in the Black Sea area. In this context, it is due to reiterate that respect for international law, including the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including freedom of navigation, as well as EU policy decisions and its non-recognition policy on the illegal annexation of Crimea are fundamental to the EU's approach to regional cooperation in the Black Sea area.

[EU supports better cooperation in the Black Sea region \(EEAS, 6 March 2019\)](#)

Decision to revoke the framework for restrictive measures against the Maldives

The Council is expected to revoke the framework for restrictive measures against the Maldives that it adopted on 16 July 2018.

This framework provided for the possibility of imposing a travel ban and an asset freeze on persons and entities responsible for undermining the rule of law or obstructing an inclusive political solution in the Maldives as well as persons and entities responsible for serious human rights violations. It was adopted following a deterioration of the political situation in the Maldives in the first half of 2018, particularly as institutions such as Parliament and the judiciary were being prevented from functioning properly. No persons or entities were listed under this sanctions regime.

The decision expected on Monday takes account of the Council's objectives and of the current situation in the Maldives. Since the inauguration of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih' administration in November 2018, the political situation has improved. The holding of peaceful and democratic parliamentary elections on 6 April 2019 was a welcome step. The Maldivian government confirmed its firm commitment to consolidate democracy, ensure good governance, and promote respect for human rights during the fourth annual policy dialogue between the Maldives and the EU which was held on 11 March 2019.

[Maldives: EU adopts a framework for targeted sanctions \(press release, 16/7/2018\)](#)

[EU Delegation to Sri Lanka and the Maldives](#)

EU human rights guidelines on safe drinking water and sanitation

The Council is expected to adopt the EU human rights guidelines on safe drinking water and sanitation. The adoption of these guidelines is one of many steps that the EU is taking to realise its commitment to ensure the progressive realisation of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation for all, as well as its commitment to the human rights defenders fighting for these rights.

Building on existing human rights norms, these guidelines give instructions and guidance on how to use the available EU foreign policy tools, including development cooperation, to promote and protect the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.

[Council conclusions on water diplomacy, 19 November 2018](#)