



Foreign Affairs Council (Development)

25 November 2019

The Foreign Affairs Council (Development), chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, will start at 9h00 with **current affairs**.

Development ministers will discuss the **future financial architecture for sustainable development and neighbourhood**, following the release of the Wise Persons Group's report on 8 October 2019. The Chair of the Wise Persons Group Thomas Wieser, the EIB President Werner Hoyer and the EBRD President Sir Suma Chakrabarti will attend the discussion and present their views.

The Council will also have an exchange of views on how the EU and member states can work better together to **support the development of countries in transition**, focusing on the cases of **Ethiopia** and **Sudan**. Ministers will share their experience, identifying best practices, challenges and common interests.

Over lunch, development ministers will discuss **gender and education**. The Minister of Education of Ethiopia, **Dr. Tilaye Gete**, is expected to participate in this lunch exchange. The discussion will focus on learning challenges from a gender equality perspective in Africa.

A number of **conclusions** are expected to be adopted by the Council without debate, including Council conclusions on humanitarian assistance and international humanitarian law, on addressing inequality in partner countries; on the third report on the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan; as well as on the fourth progress report on the nutrition action plan.

The Council will take place on the **international day for the elimination of violence against women**, which will be marked by the EU institutions by the illumination of the EU buildings in orange.

Press opportunities:

+/- 8.45 (tbc) Doorstep by High Representative Federica Mogherini

[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 current affairs.

The High Representative will highlight the **Global Refugee Forum**, which will take place in Geneva on 17-18 December 2019. Jointly hosted by the UNHCR and Switzerland, it will be the first event at ministerial level following up on the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees, which was affirmed at the UN in New York in December 2018. Development ministers will be informed about the EU's wider engagement covering the entire range of areas of the Compact.

The **Council conclusions on democracy** adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 14 October 2019 will be highlighted, in particular regarding the contribution of development in the EU external action to support the advancement of democracy in partner countries.

The Council will also be briefed on the state of play of negotiations on the **Post-Cotonou framework**.

[Global Refugee Forum \(UNHCR website\)](#)

[EU's conclusions on democracy, 14 October 2019](#)

[Cotonou Agreement \(background information\)](#)

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

Future financial architecture for sustainable development and neighbourhood

Development ministers will have an exchange of views on the future financial architecture for sustainable development following the release of the Wise Persons Group's report on 8 October 2019. Ministers will receive a presentation by the Chair of the Wise Persons Group Thomas Wieser. The President of the European Investment Bank (EIB) Werner Hoyer and the President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Sir Suma Chakrabarti will also attend and present their views. This discussion will be live-streamed.

The report of the Wise Person's Group focuses on how to maximise the added value of the European financial architecture for development, taking into account existing national and international bodies involved. The report argues in support of consolidating and streamlining development finance and climate activities outside the EU into a single entity, a "European Climate and Sustainable Development Bank", in order to avoid overlaps and to strengthen the EU's presence, role and long-term capacity to deliver on its development priorities. It also outlines several options on how to achieve this. In addition, the report makes the case for taking more immediate steps to create a strong policy centre in the EU and to use the EU development budget in the forthcoming Multiannual Financial Framework as a catalyst for reforming the existing system.

The Economic and Financial Affairs Council held a first discussion on 10 October 2019. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the report in December 2019. The discussion by the development ministers will provide guidance in this view.

[Europe in the world: The future of the European financial architecture for development \(report, October 2019\)](#)

Working better together to support the development of countries in transition - the cases of Ethiopia and Sudan

Development ministers will have a discussion on bilateral cooperation, common interests and challenges with a view for the EU and member states to work better together to support the development of countries in transition. The discussion will focus on the cases of Ethiopia and Sudan on the basis of presentations by two member states.

The exchange of views on Ethiopia may focus on the angle of economic transition, including private sector engagement and economic reforms, as well as challenges and opportunities for partnerships. In 2016, the EU and Ethiopia signed a “Strategic Engagement”, committing both sides to close cooperation in areas such as trade and investment. Ethiopia is already one of Sub-Saharan Africa front-runners after more than 10 years of rapid economic development growth, but it also faces challenges for its internal stability.

Minister will also discuss the case of Sudan, building on the discussion held by the foreign ministers on 11 November, which confirmed support to the peace process and to the importance of including women and youth to achieve long-term stability, as well as the urgency of accompanying the democratic transition with the needed resources.

[EU-Ethiopia relations \(factsheet\)](#)

[EU-Sudan relations \(factsheet\)](#)

Gender and education

Development ministers will have a discussion on gender and education over a working lunch. The main focus is expected to be the learning challenges from a gender equality perspective in Africa. The Minister of Education of Ethiopia, Dr. Tilaye Gete, will attend and have an exchange of views with the EU development ministers.

Other items

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

Council conclusions on addressing inequality in partner countries

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on addressing inequality in partner countries. In the conclusions, the Council will note that many partner countries remain confronted with levels of inequality that are higher than they were 30 years ago and which threaten the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Inequality is a major brake on the eradication of poverty and sustainable economic growth and can threaten democracy, social cohesion and inclusion, resilience and stability as well as exacerbate environmental degradation and climate change.

The multidimensional nature of inequality, which encompasses economic, social, political and environmental aspects and requires urgent attention will also be acknowledged.

The conclusions will also reaffirm that tackling inequality is an internal and external priority for the European Union and that equality and solidarity are among the values and principles guiding the European Union and its external action.

Council conclusions on humanitarian assistance and international humanitarian law

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on humanitarian assistance and international humanitarian law (IHL). These conclusions will guide the common messaging of the EU and the member states at the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent that will take place in Geneva on 9-12 December.

The Council is expected to reaffirm strong support for the respect for and the promotion of IHL as operationalised in the EU Guidelines on Promoting Compliance with IHL. The Council will underline that international law is one of the strongest tools the international community has for ensuring the protection and dignity of all persons and will recall the obligation to respect and ensure respect for it in all circumstances. The conclusions are expected to highlight the EU's commitment to do its utmost to strengthen effective multilateralism and to promote a rules-based international order where no state or individual is above the law and no person is outside the protection of the law.

The conclusions will express the EU's commitment to respond to the rapidly growing humanitarian needs around the world, to strengthen coordination between humanitarian, development and peace action, and to more effectively address the humanitarian impact of climate change.

Council conclusions on the third report on the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan

The goal of the EU gender action plan is to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action. Recognising the progress made globally towards achieving gender equality, while also acknowledging the remaining challenges, the Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the third report on the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan.

The conclusions reaffirm the EU's and member states' commitment to promote women's and girls' full enjoyment of all human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a priority across all areas of action.

[EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020](#)

[Conclusions on the EU gender action plan, 26 November 2018](#)

Council conclusions on the fourth progress report on the Nutrition Action Plan

The Council will adopt conclusions on the fourth progress report on the Nutrition Action Plan. The EU Nutrition Action Plan is aimed at reducing stunting in children under five by at least 10% (7 million children) of the World Health Assembly goal by 2025. The Action Plan addresses how its strategic objectives in the areas of governance, scaled up interventions and research are to be attained.

Since 2016, the European Commission has been producing annual progress reports on the implementation of its Nutrition Action Plan. They present highlights of operational developments in the European Union's external assistance concerned with nutrition and provides updates on progress towards its two commitments in nutrition:

- to support partner countries in reducing the number of stunted children under the age of five by at least 7 million by 2025.
 - to ensure the allocation of EUR 3.5 billion between 2014 and 2020 to improve nutrition in developing countries.
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