



Foreign Affairs Council

20 January 2020

The Foreign Affairs Council meeting, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, will start at **9.30** with a discussion on **current affairs**. This discussion item will allow foreign ministers to be updated and comment on a number of recent developments on the international scene.

The Council will then have an exchange of views on the **Sahel**, in light of the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation, and with a view to increasing the impact of EU's actions supporting security, stability and development in the region.

Next the Council will discuss ways to step up **climate diplomacy** and to effectively reach out to third countries, with the objective of generating more climate ambition at global level and enhancing implementation from key partners, with a view to the COP26 in Glasgow. The Council will also adopt **conclusions** on the matter.

Over a working lunch, ministers will discuss the **Middle East peace process** and recent developments in the **wider region**, building on the outcome of the extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council of 10 January 2020, which focused on the current situation in Libya and Iraq.

Press opportunities:

+/- 9.15 Doorstep by High Representative Josep Borrell

After lunch (+/- 15.00) Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council meeting

[Foreign Affairs 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, during which the HRVP will update ministers on a number of recent developments.

Foreign ministers will refer to the situation in **Bolivia**. While there have been some encouraging developments in the run up to the general elections scheduled for 3 May 2020, the overall situation remains fragile.

Ministers will also touch on **Venezuela**, following a further escalation of the crisis related to the recent events in the National Assembly.

The High Representative will briefly report on his trip to New Delhi, **India**, where he participated in the Raisina Dialogue and discussed preparations for the upcoming 15th EU-India Summit with the Indian authorities.

Finally, as a follow up to the extraordinary FAC on 10 January, and in the aftermath of the Berlin conference on Libya, the High Representative will refer to further EU efforts to help solve the **Libyan crisis**.

[Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the situation in Bolivia, 15 November 2019](#)

[Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the latest developments on the National Assembly of Venezuela, 9 January 2020](#)

[High Representative Josep Borrell addressed Raisina Dialogue and met Asian counterparts in New Delhi, press release 16 January 2020](#)

[Foreign Affairs Council, 10 January 2020](#)

Sahel

The Council will exchange views on the response to the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel.

The Council will review the EU engagement in the region and discuss ways forward on the Sahel Strategy with a view to increasing the impact of EU's actions supporting security, stability and development.

In particular ministers are expected to focus on various aspects such as: a possible update of the Sahel Strategy balancing the development and security dimension, the appropriate approach to the most vulnerable areas, the role of and coordination with other international players, and how to revitalise the Malian peace process.

In their interventions, ministers are likely to touch on the France - G5 Sahel summit that took place in Pau on 13 January, and the upcoming meeting with G5 Sahel, which the president of the European Council, Charles Michel, intends to organise in the margins of the March 2020 European Council.

Previous discussions on the Sahel were held in May 2019 in different FAC configurations ([FAC](#), [FAC defence](#) and [FAC development](#)).

On that occasion the Council also adopted conclusions, reiterating that the Sahel is a strategic priority for the EU and its member states. The Council reaffirmed the EU's determination to support the return of the state and of basic services, stabilisation of peripheral areas, the fight against trafficking, and all initiatives for dialogue and reconciliation. Furthermore, it stressed that EU support can only be effective if accompanied by a significant effort by the G5 Sahel countries to improve governance, development and security throughout the region.

[Council conclusions on the Sahel, press release 13 May 2019](#)

[G5 Sahel – Pau Summit – Statement by the Heads of State, 13 January 2020](#)

Climate diplomacy

The European Council conclusions of December 2019 highlighted the crucial importance of international engagement for the success in addressing climate change. Likewise, the Commission's Green Deal communication emphasised the need for the EU to step up its outreach activities in order to achieve its climate action goals.

Against this background, the Council will discuss ways to step up climate diplomacy and to effectively reach out to third countries.

In particular ministers are expected to refer to possible concrete actions, partners to be prioritised, and tools that could be mobilised to generate more climate ambition at global level and enhance implementation from key partners.

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on climate diplomacy.

[European Council Conclusions, press release 12 December 2019](#)

[Commission's communication: The European Green Deal](#)

[Climate diplomacy: Council adopts conclusions, press release 18 February 2019](#)

Working lunch

Ministers will have a working lunch to discuss the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) and the wider Middle East. In doing so they will build on the outcome of the 10 January 2020 extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council, which focused on the current situation in Libya and Iraq.
