



Video conference of foreign affairs ministers

14 August 2020

The video conference of foreign affairs ministers will start at 15:00. It will be chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep **Borrell**.

Ministers will discuss the situation in the **Eastern Mediterranean**, following the latest escalations pursued by Turkey.

Ministers will also discuss the **Belarus** Presidential elections. They will address the Belarusian authorities' actions. They will also review options to support the de-escalation of tensions and assess EU's relations with Belarus.

The High Representative will also cover developments in **Lebanon** following the devastating explosion in Beirut on 4 August and the resignation of the Lebanese government.

The High Representative will also inform ministers of the situation in **Venezuela** and the latest developments regarding the electoral process.

[Video conference of foreign affairs ministers \(meeting page\)](#)

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the Council press office.

Eastern Mediterranean

Ministers will discuss the situation in the **Eastern Mediterranean**, following the latest Turkish actions.

They last discussed the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean at their meeting of 13 July, as part of a broader debate on EU-Turkey relations. In line with the Council conclusions of 15 July 2019 and the statement of the EU Foreign Ministers of 15 May 2020, they stressed that Turkey's unilateral actions, in particular in the Eastern Mediterranean, which run counter to EU interests, to the sovereign rights of EU member states and to international law, must come to an end. There was also a broad support for the High Representative to explore further paths that could contribute to lowering tensions and reaching understandings on issues that are increasingly straining the EU-Turkey relationship.

On 6 August, High Representative Josep Borrell met with the Foreign Minister of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. The meeting was a continuation of their intensive exchanges held over the last months. The High Representative explained to the Turkish minister the outcome of the Foreign Affairs Council debate and they had an open exchange on EU-Turkey relations as well as on the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

[Foreign Affairs Council meeting, 13 July 2020](#)

[Statement of the EU Foreign Ministers on the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean \(press release, 15 May 2020\)](#)

Belarus

Ministers will address the Belarus Presidential elections. They will assess the Belarusian authorities' actions to address the current situation and review the EU's relations with Belarus.

The EU has been closely following the developments leading to the presidential elections which took place in Belarus on 9 August. However, these elections were neither free nor fair. Credible reports of domestic observers show that the electoral process did not meet the international standards expected of an OSCE participating state.

Belarus state authorities are deploying disproportionate and unacceptable violence, thousands of people have been detained and the crackdown on freedoms of assembly, media and expression has intensified.

Against this background, the EU will be assessing the Belarusian authorities' actions to address the current situation and conducting an in-depth review of the EU's relations with Belarus. This may include, inter alia, taking measures against those responsible for the observed violence, unjustified arrests, and falsification of election results.

[Belarus: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the presidential elections](#)

Other items

Lebanon

The High Representative will cover developments in **Lebanon** following the devastating explosion in Beirut on 4 August and the resignation of the Lebanese government.

The EU has expressed its full solidarity with the people in Lebanon following the explosion, through numerous messages of support and notably the visit of the President of the European Council to Beirut on 8 August. The European Commission has announced a total of €63 million for the first emergency needs, medical support and equipment, and protection of critical infrastructure. This comes in addition to 300 European search and rescue, chemical and medical experts deployed on the ground in Beirut, as well as medical aid and equipment sent via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. President Michel and Commissioner Lenarčič participated actively in the International Conference on Assistance and Support to Beirut and the Lebanese people, which took place on 9 August and was co-chaired by French President Macron and the United Nations.

[Joint letter of President Michel and President von der Leyen to the members of the European Council on the situation in Lebanon](#)
[European Commission pledges additional €30 million in immediate support for Lebanon](#)

Venezuela

Following his contacts with different political actors in **Venezuela** over the last few weeks, the High Representative will inform ministers of the situation in the country. He will inform Ministers of the latest developments regarding the electoral process, including as regards the deployment of an EU Election Observation Mission.

[Venezuela: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell](#)
