



Video conference of foreign affairs ministers 19 November 2020

The video conference of foreign affairs ministers will be chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep **Borrell**, starting at **09.30**.

Under **current affairs**, the Council will take stock of the latest international developments.

These should include the outcome of the **US elections**, **Afghanistan** ahead of the international ministerial donors conference scheduled on 23-24 November, **Belarus**, **Nagorno-Karabakh**, **Libya**, **Turkey** (the **Eastern Mediterranean** and **Varosha**), and **Ethiopia**. Under Any other Business, the High Representative will briefly inform ministers on the threat analysis that has been conducted in the framework of the **Strategic Compass**.

Ministers will then have an exchange of views on **multilateralism**, with the aim of providing guidance on how the EU can best reinvigorate the multilateral system with the UN at its heart.

In the margins of the video conference, ministers are due to exchange views with the **Palestinian Foreign Minister**, Riyad al-Maliki.

In connection to this meeting the Council will adopt the new **EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-24)**.

Press conference: +/- 14.30 in a virtual format.

[Meeting page of the video conference of foreign affairs ministers](#)

[Press conferences and public events via video streaming](#)

[Video coverage of the event in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

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

Current affairs

The video conference of foreign affairs ministers will start with a discussion on **current affairs**, during which ministers will have the opportunity to be updated on recent developments that are most pressing in the international agenda.

First, ministers will take stock of the **outcome of the US elections** of 3 November 2020. The possible implications on the future of transatlantic relations are expected to be discussed at length at the December meeting.

Discussions will then touch on **Afghanistan**, in relation to the ongoing Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, and the upcoming international ministerial donors conference on 23-24 November 2020.

Ministers will also exchange on the EU response to the increasingly violent wave of repression of peaceful demonstrators in **Belarus**.

The 9 November cease-fire reached between Armenia and Azerbaijan in relation to the military confrontation over **Nagorno-Karabakh** is also a point that ministers will refer to.

Ministers will also touch on recent important developments in **Libya**, including the ceasefire agreement reached on 23 October, and the ongoing political talks under UN auspices.

Ministers will exchange views on the ongoing confrontations in Tigray region and ways for the EU to encourage a peaceful solution in **Ethiopia**.

Finally the High Representative will brief ministers on **Turkey**, including the latest developments in **Eastern Mediterranean and Varosha**.

[US: Speech by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the EP debate on the outcome of the Presidential election, 11 November 2020 \(EEAS Website\)](#)

[Key elements for sustained international support to Peace and Development in Afghanistan \(EEAS Website\)](#)

[Belarus: Alexandr Lukashenko and 14 other officials sanctioned over ongoing repression, Press Release 6 November 2020](#)

[Nagorno Karabakh: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell on the cessation of hostilities, 10 November 2020 \(EEAS Website\)](#)

[Ethiopia: Joint Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell and Commissioner Janez Lenarčič, 12 November 2020 \(EEAS Website\)](#)

[Varosha: Statement by the High Representative Josep Borrell, 15 November 2020 \(EEAS website\)](#)

[Sanctions regime against illegal drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean extended by one year, Press release 6 November 2020](#)

AoB Threat analysis in the Strategic Compass

The High Representative will inform ministers about the threat analysis of the full range of threats and challenges the EU currently faces or might face in the near future. This serves as background for the development of the **Strategic Compass**.

Multilateralism

Under this item, ministers will discuss ways to **reinvigorate the multilateral system**, with the UN at its heart but also including International Financial Institutions and other international and regional organisations, in order to ensure that these organisations deliver results and help respond effectively to global challenges. Ministers will exchange views on concrete proposals and action-oriented steps to **strengthen the EU's role and influence in the multilateral system**, and **foster international partnerships and alliances**.

The discussion takes place against the background of the challenges currently posed to the rules-based order and in the larger context of European strategic autonomy. The outcome is due to inform upcoming work on a Joint Communication by the High Representative and the Commission on strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism, foreseen for the first semester of 2021. The EU will no doubt also wish to make an active contribution to the UNSG's reflection process on the implementation of the UN's 75th anniversary Declaration.

[State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary, 16 September 2020](#)

[EU action to strengthen rules-based multilateralism - Council conclusions \(17 June 2019\)](#)

Other issues

EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-24)

In parallel with the video conference, the Council will adopt conclusions on the new EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy. This is an ambitious roadmap guiding EU external action for the next five years. The new Action Plan comes at a time when human rights are under severe stress. The Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated this trend.

Meeting with Palestinian Foreign Minister

In the margins of the Council, ministers will exchange views with the Palestinian Foreign Minister, Riyad al-Maliki.

The discussion should touch on bilateral relations the importance of advancing intra-Palestinian reconciliation and holding elections next year, and on how the EU can help to create the conditions for an eventual resumption of meaningful negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians.
