



Video conference of the defence ministers

20 November 2020

The EU defence ministers will hold a video conference, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep **Borrell**, starting at **10.00**.

EU defence ministers will be briefed on **current affairs** by the High Representative and will then exchange views on the **Strategic Compass** and the **PESCO strategic review 2020**.

The video conference of EU defence ministers will be preceded by a video conference of the EDA Steering Board at ministerial level.

Press conference: +/- 14.00 in virtual format

[Defence ministers video conference meeting page](#)

[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 Council press office.

Current affairs

The High Representative will refer to developments on **Libya** and on **Operation IRINI**, in particular in the context of the ceasefire signed on 23 October 2020 in Geneva under UN auspices.

The High Representative will also refer to the **situation in Mali** and the resumption of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) civilian and military activities on the ground.

The High Representative is also expected to refer to the current state of the **Military Planning and Conduct Capability** (MPCC) and its planned review. The MPCC is now the Headquarters for the EU training missions (EUTM) in Mali, Somalia and the Central African Republic.

The High Representative will also provide information on the state of play regarding the **European Peace Facility** (EPF). At the special meeting of the European Council in July 2020, EU leaders decided that the financial ceiling for the Facility for the period 2021-2027 will be EUR 5 billion, to enable the financing of operational actions under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) that have military or defence implications.

- [Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the announcement of a Ceasefire Agreement in Libya](#), 25 October 2020
- [Operation IRINI](#) (website)
- [EUTM Mali](#), [EUCAP Sahel Mali](#), [EU Delegation in Mali](#)
- [Military Planning and Conduct Capability](#) (MPCC)
- [European Peace Facility](#) (Factsheet)

Strategic Compass: from threat analysis to the compass

Defence ministers will discuss the Strategic Compass, following their initial exchanges at their informal meetings on 3 March 2020 in Zagreb and on 6 August 2020 in Berlin.

The Strategic Compass aims to give the EU a **common strategic direction in the area of security and defence** and should enhance the implementation of the EU's level of ambition in this field.

As an initial step, the EU's very first **threat analysis** was conducted and finalised in early November. The exercise was conducted by the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity, which brings together the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) and the Intelligence Directorate of the EU Military Staff. It was based on input provided by civilian and military intelligence services of EU member states. The threat analysis helps build a common way of understanding and thus contributes to a **common European security and defence culture**.

EU defence ministers will discuss the **evolving security situation** and the impact on Europe, and the possible need to **enhance existing policies and instruments** and perhaps **initiate new ones**. This could include an assessment on how the demand for CSDP missions and operations could evolve, how the EU could better identify, prevent and respond to threats including cyber and hybrid threats, how the needs and requirements driving the development of civilian and military capabilities could be affected, and in what areas the EU should seek closer cooperation with other international organisations, regional bodies and third countries.

Work on the Strategic Compass is planned to be taken forward together with member states throughout 2021. In line with the above areas of concern, it is expected to be structured around four main clusters: crisis management, resilience, capability development and partnerships.

The Strategic Compass is scheduled for adoption by the Council in the first half of 2022.

PESCO Strategic Review

Defence ministers will also discuss the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and give their views and guidance on the next phase (2021-2025).

Ahead of the video conference of defence ministers, the Council is expected to **approve conclusions on the PESCO Strategic Review 2020 via a written procedure.**

The review highlights that within the institutional and legal framework of PESCO, the participating member states are taking forward their fulfilment of the **20 more binding commitments** they have made to each other, including by demonstrating a positive trend in defence expenditure. Out of the current **47 collaborative projects** that have been launched, 12 have already delivered concrete results or achieved their initial operational capability. A total of 26 PESCO projects are expected to deliver concrete results or to reach full operational capability before the end of 2025.

The Council is expected to underline the need to fulfil the more binding commitments by 2025 and to acknowledge the importance of **achieving concrete outputs and tangible deliverables** by the end of the next PESCO phase in terms of the overall aim, policy goals, incentives and projects.

The Council is also expected to reaffirm key objectives such as those related to defence investment, more systematic use of EU defence tools in national planning processes, and the need to enhance EU's operational effectiveness and to develop the necessary capabilities. It will also highlight the importance of giving PESCO more visibility at the political level and increasing the degree of transparency between member states as regards the ways in which they are fulfilling their commitments, notably in the operational domain.

The Council is also set to highlight the important role played by **financial instruments** in awarding EU funding to PESCO projects as well as that of the supporting coordination mechanisms - like the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) - which together promote a more efficient and effective use of resources when developing EU defence capabilities.

Launched in December 2017, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) represents a step-change in defence cooperation within the European Union. PESCO is a framework which allows willing and able EU Member States to jointly develop defence capabilities, invest in shared projects, and enhance the operational readiness and contribution of their armed forces.

To date 25 EU Member States have undertaken binding commitments that form the basis of PESCO. There are currently 47 collaborative projects in various areas, covering training facilities, land formation systems, maritime and air systems, cyber, and enabling of joint multiple services or space projects.

The 25 member states participating in PESCO are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. On 5 November 2020, the Council adopted a decision setting out the general conditions under which non-EU countries could exceptionally be invited to participate in individual PESCO projects.

- [PESCO factsheet](#)
- [PESCO website](#)
- [EU cooperation on security and defence \(policy page\)](#)

Other issues

Ahead of the Council

EDA Steering Board meeting

Ministers of defence will meet in the European Defence Agency (EDA) Steering Board under the chairmanship of Josep Borrell in his capacity as Head of the Agency.

Ministers will discuss the final report presented by the Agency on the outcome of the first Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). The report draws, for the first time, a comprehensive picture of the European capability landscape (based on member states' national defence planning and spending programmes) and identifies cooperation opportunities for joint capability development and research projects. As one of the new EU defence initiatives launched in 2017, the CARD is designed to serve as a pathfinder for new collaborative programmes and to lead over time to more synergies and increased coherence between member states' defence planning, spending and capability development, through cooperation.

Ministers are also expected to approve the Agency's 2021 general budget, reflecting the continuous high demands on the Agency to support member states with the implementation of EU defence initiatives such as CARD, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF).

Ministers will also approve the EDA's Three-Year Planning Framework 2021-2023 which provides an overview of the nature, scope and expected impact of the Agency's activities in support of overarching policy objectives and the added value for member states.

The EDA is an intergovernmental agency that falls under the authority of the Council of the EU, to which it reports and from which it receives guidelines.

[European Defence Agency](#)
