



Foreign Affairs Council 7 December 2020

The Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) meeting will be chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep **Borrell**, starting at **9.30**.

Under current affairs, the Council will take stock of the latest international developments. These should include the situation in **Georgia** following the recent parliamentary elections, the legislative elections in **Venezuela** on 6 December, developments concerning **Turkey** ahead of the European Council of 10-11 December, and **human rights** to mark International Human Rights Day on 10 December. Under any other business, ministers will also discuss the implementation of the Council conclusions on **Hong Kong** adopted in July.

As main agenda item, ministers will then have an exchange of views on **transatlantic relations**, identifying the future priorities for strategic partnership and cooperation between the EU and US.

Over lunch the Council will hold a debate on **strategic autonomy** whereby ministers will exchange views on how to increase EU's resilience.

Press conference: at the end of the meeting +/- 14.30 in a virtual format

[Foreign Affairs Council 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 meeting 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 be updated on the state-of-play of the situation between the majority and opposition parties following the recent parliamentary elections in **Georgia**.

Second, the High Representative (HR) is also due to brief ministers on the legislative elections scheduled for 6 December 2020 in **Venezuela**. The HR will refer to the next steps towards the country after an electoral process that has not been free, fair or democratic.

Then the Council will be updated on the latest developments surrounding **Turkey** ahead of the European Council on 10-11 December, which will revert to the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean and relations with Turkey, in line with the European Council Conclusions of October 2020.

It is also expected that **human rights** will be addressed few days ahead of the International Human Rights Day on 10 December, and in relation to the due adoption of the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime.

- [Georgia: Statement by the Spokesperson on the Parliamentary elections, 1 November 2020](#)
- [Venezuela: the Council's response to the crisis](#)
- [European Council conclusions on external relations, 1 October 2020](#)
- [Sanctions and Human Rights: towards a European framework to address human rights violations and abuses worldwide, 19 October 2020](#)
- [Council approves conclusions on the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024](#)

Transatlantic Relations

Following an initial exchange of views held during the video conference of foreign affairs ministers on 19 November, the Council will discuss how to reinvigorate the strategic partnership with the United States and engage with the new administration taking office in January 2021.

Ministers will be called to identify a set of priorities for transatlantic cooperation in foreign policy, security and defence, including on re-engagement on multilateralism, human rights and democracy.

- [Video conference of foreign affairs ministers, 19 November 2020](#)
- [Joint Communication: A new EU-US agenda for global change](#)

Strategic autonomy

The strategic agenda 2019-2024 adopted by the European Council in June 2019 stressed that “in a world of increasing uncertainty, complexity and change, the EU needs to pursue a strategic course of action and increase its capacity to act autonomously to safeguard its interests, uphold its values and way of life, and help shape the global future”.

Against this background, the Council will have an exchange of views on how to enhance and operationalise the EU's strategic autonomy.

Taking a foreign and security policy perspective, ministers will look at the main issues for the EU to address over the next few years and discuss the policy initiatives and partnerships, as well as instruments and capabilities (the political, financial and security assets) needed to be reviewed to strengthen EU's global role and capacity to act.

Ministers will be invited in particular to identify concrete political initiatives and projects that can help strengthen the foreign and security dimension and the impact of the EU globally.

- [‘Strategic autonomy for Europe - the aim of our generation’ - speech by President Charles Michel to the Bruegel think tank, 28 September 2020](#)
- [Multilateralism and European Strategic Autonomy in a \(post\)-Covid world, 15 November 2020](#)
- [A new strategic agenda 2019-2024, 20 June 2019](#)
- [Europe's moment: Repair and prepare for the next generation, 27 May 2020](#)
- [European Council conclusions, 1-2 October 2020](#)

Other business

Hong Kong

As a follow up to the Council conclusions of 28 July 2020, ministers will review the implementation of the National Security Law imposed on Hong Kong on 30 June 2020, its effects on rights and freedoms and the business environment, as well as the EU response.

[Hong Kong: Council expresses grave concern over national security law](#), press release 28 July 2020

[Hong Kong: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the disqualification of Members of the Hong Kong Legislative Council](#), 12 November 2020
