



Foreign Affairs Council

27 January 2025

The January Foreign Affairs Council will start at 10.00 in Brussels, and be chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, **Kaja Kallas**.

After a short intervention via videoconference by the **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine**, Andrii Sybiha, the Council will discuss the latest developments related to the **Russian aggression against Ukraine**.

Over a working lunch, EU ministers will then exchange views on **EU-US relations**.

In the afternoon, ministers are expected to discuss the situation in the **Middle East**, following the ceasefire agreement in **Gaza**, including the latest developments in **Syria**, **Israel and Palestine** and in **Lebanon**.

The Council will then be informed about current affairs, notably the situation in **Moldova** and **Georgia**.

The Council is expected to approve Council conclusions on **EU priorities in UN human rights fora in 2025**.

In the margins:

On the eve of the Foreign Affairs Council, the High Representative will host an informal dinner with **Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya**, leader of the Belarus democratic opposition, and EU Foreign Ministers.

Before the beginning of the Council meeting on 27 January, the High Representative will host an informal breakfast with EU Foreign Ministers on **hybrid threats**.

* * *

Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 8.15

Press conference on FAC: +/- 17.00

* * *

[Foreign Affairs Council - meeting page](#)

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

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

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

Russian aggression against Ukraine

The Foreign Affairs Council will first discuss the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Andrii Sybiha**, will join at the beginning of the meeting via videoconference to provide updates on the latest developments on the ground and Ukraine's current priorities.

In the ensuing EU27 discussion, ministers will discuss how to step up **EU military support to Ukraine** covering different areas such as ammunition, air defence or training and equipping forces. Another focus of the ministerial discussion will be how to **increase pressure on Russia** including through sanctions, concerning which work on a 16th sanctions package is ongoing. Furthermore, ministers will exchange on **accountability efforts**, including the final work in the Core Group on the Special Tribunal for crimes of aggression.

In its conclusions of December 2024, the European Council reconfirmed the EU's unwavering commitment to providing continued political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes and as intensely as needed. Russia must not prevail.

The European Council also reaffirmed its support for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the principles of the UN Charter and international law, in line with the key principles and objectives of Ukraine's Peace Formula. To this end, the European Union and its member states will maintain their intensive global outreach efforts and will participate in the discussions affecting Europe's security.

- [Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: EU adopts 15th package of restrictive measures, 16 December 2024](#)
- [European Council conclusions, 19 December 2024](#)
- [EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine \(background information\)](#)
- [EU solidarity with Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

EU-US relations

This will be the first Foreign Affairs Council following the inauguration of President Trump.

The ministerial discussion will aim to forge a common understanding among member states on transatlantic relations: identify challenges, agree on priorities, map opportunities for a positive agenda and coordinate engagement.

At the Foreign Affairs Council in November, member states agreed on the need to build close and positive relations with the incoming US administration. At the time, the focus was on the need to work together on foreign and security policy priorities and to maintain positive trade and economic relations.

- [EU-US relations \(background information\)](#)

Situation in the Middle East

Following the fall of Assad's criminal regime in Syria, the European Council conclusions of December 2024 stressed the historic opportunity to reunite and rebuild the country and underlined the importance of an inclusive and Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, in line with the core principles of UN Security Council Resolution 2254. The European Council invited the Commission and the High Representative to submit to the Council options for measures to support Syria.

Against this background, the Foreign Affairs Council will exchange views on EU support to **Syria** and the possible easing of the EU's sanctions framework.

Ministers will discuss the latest developments in **Gaza**, in light of the ceasefire announced on 15 January.

In a statement of the High Representative on behalf of the EU dated 18 January, the EU warmly welcomed the ceasefire agreement in Gaza, which will allow the phased release of the hostages - ending their terrible ordeal that has lasted for more than 15 months – end hostilities and ease the humanitarian suffering in Gaza. The EU is committed to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace based on the two-state solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security. We will contribute to this objective through support to the Palestinian Authority to help it address its most pressing needs and support the reform agenda, and engagement with Israel and international partners in order to revive the political process.

The High Representative is expected to inform ministers of the preparations for an **Association Council with Israel** and the first ever **High-Level Dialogue with the Palestinian Authority**.

As to **Lebanon**, the Council is expected to discuss EU support for the Lebanese Armed Forces and the institutions, with a view to consolidating the ceasefire agreed in November 2024. Ministers will also take stock of the outcome of presidential elections on 9 January and may touch on a possible reactivation of the EU-Lebanon Partnership.

- [Israel/Palestine: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the EU welcoming the ceasefire and hostage deal in Gaza, 18 January 2025](#)
- [European Council conclusions, 19 December 2024](#)
- [EU position on the situation in the Middle East \(background information\)](#)
- [EU humanitarian support for Palestinians \(background information\)](#)

Current affairs

Under current affairs, the High Representative will refer to Georgia and Moldova.

Concerning **Georgia**, ministers will follow up on the previous meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council, and focus on options for an EU response to the deepening political crisis, the further deterioration of the democracy, rule of law and human rights situation, and Georgia's shift away from its Euro-Atlantic integration. At the December Foreign Affairs Council, ministers expressed their will to continue supporting the Georgian people, including by redirecting funding from the authorities towards the civil society and independent media.

In its conclusions of 17 December 2024, the European Council reiterated its serious concerns regarding the course of action taken by the Georgian government, which runs counter to the values and principles upon which the European Union is founded. It strongly condemned the violence against peaceful protesters, politicians and media representatives, and underlined the EU's readiness to support the Georgian people's European aspirations, and the country's path towards accession should the Georgian authorities reverse their present course of action.

As regards **Moldova**, ministers will refer to the need for sustained, tangible and visible EU support for the country, as it grapples with the consequences of the expiry of the transit of Russian gas through Ukraine since the end of 2024.

In its conclusions of 17 December 2024, the European Council commended the authorities of the Republic of Moldova for the successful conduct of the presidential elections and of the referendum on enshrining EU accession in the Constitution and invited the Commission to look urgently into further ways to provide assistance to the Republic of Moldova in strengthening its energy security.

- [Moldova \(background information\)](#)
- [Georgia \(background information\)](#)
- [European Council conclusions, 19 December 2024](#)

Council conclusions

The Council is due to approve conclusions on **EU priorities in UN human rights fora in 2025**.

In the margins of the Council meeting

On the eve of the Foreign Affairs Council, the High Representative will host an informal dinner with **Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya**, leader of the **Belarus** democratic opposition, and EU Foreign Ministers. On that day, Belarus is holding its presidential election, which the EU expects to be neither free nor fair. The informal dinner will be a first opportunity to assess developments in the country, consider ways to support to the Belarusian people, and continue to exert pressure on the Belarusian authorities.

Before the beginning of the Council meeting on 27 January, the High Representative will host an informal breakfast with EU Foreign Ministers on **hybrid threats**, against the backdrop of the many recent incidents affecting the EU and Member States, including sabotage, cyber-attacks, election interference and damage of undersea cables in the Baltic Sea.

- [Belarus \(background information\)](#)
 - [Hybrid threats: Council paves the way for deploying Hybrid Rapid Response Teams \(press release, 21 May 2024\)](#)
 - [Countering hybrid threats \(EEAS website\)](#)
 - [Hybrid threats \(Commission website\)](#)
-