



Foreign Affairs Council **12 July 2021**

The Foreign Affairs Council, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, **Josep Borrell**, will start at **9h30**.

Ministers are due to approve conclusions on a **Globally Connected Europe** and will exchange views on **geopolitics of new digital technologies**, **Ethiopia** and the **Strategic Compass**.

Under **current affairs**, the Council will be informed about, or discuss: **Afghanistan**, **Lebanon**, the **video conference between** the Chinese State Councillor / Foreign Minister **Wang Yi** and the **EU High Representative** on 8 July, as well as the visit of some EU Foreign Affairs Ministers on behalf of the High Representative to **South Caucasus**.

Over a working lunch, ministers will have the opportunity to informally exchange views with the Israeli Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Alternate Prime Minister, **Yair Lapid**.

Press conference: +/- 17h00 in a [hybrid format](#)

* * *

[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.

Council conclusions and decisions

The Foreign Affairs Council will start with a discussion on conclusions on a **Globally Connected Europe**, with a view to their approval. The draft conclusions highlight the importance of ensuring a geostrategic approach to connectivity in order to advance the EU's economic, foreign and development policy and security interests, and promote EU values globally.

The Council is also due to approve conclusions on the **EU's priorities at the United Nations during the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly** (September 2021 – September 2022).

The Council is expected to adopt a **Decision establishing a European Union Training Mission in Mozambique (EUTM Mozambique)** to support the capacity building of selected Mozambican units. The aim is to help the national Armed Forces ensure safety and security in Cabo Delgado, in compliance with human rights law and international humanitarian law.

The geopolitics of new digital technology

Foreign affairs ministers will exchange views on the geopolitical implications of the new digital technologies and their interactions with EU foreign and security policy.

The adoption of digital technology has rapidly accelerated during the pandemic. It is increasingly shaping geopolitics and taking a central role in the global power competition between different models. Emerging technologies, in particular, have become both an object and a driver of geopolitical competition and cooperation, including in the security environment.

The Council will discuss the role that the EU can play globally to shape a world where technology works in support of more prosperous and inclusive societies, including open and competitive markets to promote its approach of digitalisation based on open societies, economic and social empowerment of people, the rule of law, and fundamental rights and freedoms.

Ministers will be invited in particular to consider the possible key tenets of the EU's external digital policy. In addition, they will be asked to examine the key opportunities and challenges faced by the EU in the context of global technological competition and cooperation. They will also consider how the EU can best position itself vis-à-vis like-minded and other partners in promoting its values, rules, and standards for new technologies in a context of systemic rivalry over digital governance.

- [A digital future for Europe, policy page](#)
- [Council conclusions on digital diplomacy, press release 17 November 2020](#)
- [Communication on: '2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade', European Commission](#)

Strategic Compass

The Council will hold a broad discussion on all four baskets of the Strategic Compass (crisis management, resilience, partnerships and capabilities).

Ministers are expected to focus on the following aspects: the need to increase the effectiveness and flexibility of the EU's operational engagement and enhance the readiness of member states' forces; the issue of resilience in the security and defence domain, in particular in relation to hybrid threats and issues relating to the global commons; cooperation with partners, international organisations and third countries; and the capabilities needed to act upon EU objectives as well as meet the challenges related to emerging and disruptive technologies.

The Strategic Compass is currently one of the most important and ambitious projects in the field of EU security and defence. With its finalisation due by March 2022, member states will provide clear political-strategic guidance on what they want the EU to be able to achieve in this area in the next 5 to 10 years.

By contributing to a common vision of the EU's common goals and objectives, the Strategic Compass should give new impetus to the implementation of the EU Level of Ambition in security and defence, as agreed by the Council in November 2016.

- [Foreign Affairs Council \(Defence\), press release 6 May 2021](#)
- [Security and defence: EU to move forward on common security and defence, press release 10 May 2021](#)
- [Towards a Strategic Compass, EEAS factsheet](#)

Ethiopia

The Foreign Affairs Council will exchange views on the situation in Ethiopia after the elections held on 21 June 2021, and against the background of the worsening conflict in the Tigray region, which is already in its eighth month.

Approximately 91% of the population of Tigray, about 5.2 million people, are considered to be in need of emergency assistance. There are an estimated 2 million displaced people, including about 70,000 Ethiopian refugees in Sudan. Moreover, since the beginning of the conflict, there have been numerous documented and credible reports of serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights.

Discussions are expected to focus on the humanitarian and political situation in Tigray, but also on the regional context in relation to the GERD and heightened tensions with Sudan on the Ethiopian-Sudan border.

Further to the European Council conclusions of 24-25 June, and the latest developments, ministers will be invited to agree on a common approach to the conflict focusing on: humanitarian access and respect of international humanitarian law, which is non-negotiable and applies to all parties; the consolidation of the unilateral ceasefire; the full withdrawal of foreign forces; investigations into human rights violations; and the need to support the launch of a reconciliation process and a national dialogue.

- [European Council conclusions, 24-25 June 2021](#)
- [EU-Ethiopia relations: the EU Council conclusions stress the strategic partnership and the EU's deep concerns about the situation in the Tigray region, press release 11 March 2021](#)

Current affairs

The Foreign Affairs Council will then have a discussion on current affairs during which ministers will be able to exchange views on recent events and on fast-moving developments in external relations.

The High Representative will inform ministers about the situation in **Afghanistan** in the context of the withdrawal of US and NATO troops. The discussion will cover: a possible role for the EU in creating the conditions for a successful peace process; the situation in relation to fundamental human rights, particularly in the context of the increase in ethnically-motivated targeted attacks.

Ministers will also be informed about the latest developments in **Lebanon**, and related discussions in the Council preparatory bodies.

The High Representative will provide information on his meeting by **video conference with the Chinese State Councillor / Foreign Minister, Wang Yi** on 8 July.

The Council will then be debriefed on the visit of the ministers of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Austria and Romania to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. On behalf of the High Representative, the three ministers conveyed messages about the EU's commitment to: being an active player in promoting conflict resolution in the region; developing bilateral relationships while supporting both regional cooperation in the South Caucasus and connectivity; guaranteeing the inclusivity and flexibility of the Eastern Partnership policy framework.

- [Council adopts conclusions on the Afghanistan peace process and future EU support for peace and development in the country, press release 29 May 2020](#)
- [Eastern Partnership, policy page](#)
- [Lebanon: Council approves conclusions, press release 7 December 2020](#)
- [South Caucasus: visit of Foreign Affairs Ministers of Austria, Lithuania and Romania mandated by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell, EEAS website](#)
- [Why we need more EU engagement in the South Caucasus, EEAS website](#)

Working lunch

During an informal working lunch, Foreign Affairs ministers will have an opportunity to exchange views with the **Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister and Alternate Prime Minister, Yair Lapid**. The exchange will focus on bilateral relation, regional issues of common interest and issues related to the Middle East Peace Process.
