



Foreign Affairs Council

21 February 2022

The Foreign Affairs Council, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, **Josep Borrell**, will start at **8.30**.

Over breakfast, EU foreign affairs ministers will hold an informal exchange with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister **Dmytro Kuleba**.

The Council will then discuss the latest developments in Russia's military build-up around Ukraine and will hold a discussion on the **European security situation**. The situation in Belarus may also be addressed.

The Foreign Affairs Council will then exchange views on **EU climate diplomacy**, and is due to approve conclusions on the matter.

Ministers will then move to the latest developments in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, and discuss the political developments there, including the secessionist moves by Republika Srpska and the boycott of State institutions, as well as the ongoing talks on constitutional and electoral reform.

Under **current affairs**, the Council will be informed about the situation in **Mali**.

The Council meeting will finish with a **cyber exercise** organised by the High Representative, together with the French Presidency of the Council of EU.

In the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council, the 26th EU-GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Joint Council and Ministerial meeting will be held from 13:30 to 15:30.

Doorstep High Representative: +/- 7h40

Doorstep EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial meeting: as of 12.40

Press conference: +/- 18.00 in hybrid format

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[Foreign Affairs Council - meeting page](#)

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

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

Informal breakfast with Minister Kuleba

During an informal working breakfast, EU Foreign Affairs Ministers will have an opportunity to exchange views with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. The exchange is expected to focus on the security situation in and around Ukraine and on EU support for Ukraine's resilience.

European security situation

The Foreign Affairs Council will start with a discussion on the European security situation as a consequence of the Russian military build-up. The discussion will build on the outcome of the informal meeting of the members of the European Council on 17 February, and on the Council conclusions adopted on 24 January.

The security situation in and around Ukraine has escalated in recent months as a result of Russia's unusual mobilisation of military troops and equipment. Military manoeuvres are accompanied by heightened rhetoric by Russian senior officials and a spike in information manipulation campaigns.

Ministers are expected to be updated about the tense situation and the mixed signals coming from Moscow. Recent announcements of a partial pullback of Russian troops have not been confirmed, while new cyberattacks against Ukraine have taken place. At the same time, the recent move by the Russian State Duma appealing to President Putin to recognise the two breakaway regions in eastern Ukraine is an issue of concern and could seriously endanger the Minsk Process.

EU ministers are also expected to touch on the numerous high-level visits to Moscow and Kyiv and on EU outreach to third countries, the ongoing preparatory work on sanctions, and the coordination of diplomatic presence and EU operational capability in Ukraine.

- [European security situation: notions of 'spheres of influence' have no place in the 21st century, press release, 24 January 2022](#)
- [Informal meeting of the members of the European Council, 17 February 2022](#)
- [EU restrictive measures in response to the crisis in Ukraine \(background information\)](#)
- [EU relations with Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

Climate diplomacy

The Foreign Affairs Council will hold an exchange of views on climate diplomacy, with a view to finding ways to optimise the use of EU joint resources, networks, expertise, and existing partnerships around the globe, to ensure an effective joint EU Climate Diplomacy focussing on specific EU actions to be prioritised in 2022. The Foreign Affairs Council is due to approve conclusions on the matter.

Climate change is a central topic for EU foreign affairs ministers. Effective EU Climate Diplomacy requires tailor-made outreach, in particular to the world's largest emitters, and close cooperation between the High Representative, the Commission and member states, in a Team Europe, effort-sharing spirit.

Since 2010, EU Climate Diplomacy has been playing an increasingly important role in positioning the EU internationally, with a bold and ambitious narrative in the global climate agenda that is underpinned by ambitious EU policies and targets. The 2021 Council conclusions on Climate and Energy Diplomacy recognise that the coherent pursuit of external policy goals is crucial for the EU's efforts to address the climate emergency with the urgency it requires, as also expressed in the EU's Green Deal.

The COP26 outcomes, including the 'Glasgow Climate Pact' underline an increased collective sense of an urgent to intensify climate action. However, while Glasgow has enabled significant progress, urgent, substantial work is still called for to implement the COP-26 outcomes on the ground.

Implementation remains the keyword, referring to the real, measurable efforts that countries and companies will be making in order to meet their promises.

The EU and its member states will join forces to intensify their diplomatic outreach and dialogue on climate, create incentives for more climate and environmental action and increase cooperation with third countries and regions to persuade them to step up their climate actions and green ambitions, also in relation to themes that are interlinked such as biodiversity, oceans and forestry.

- [Climate goals and the EU's external policy \(background information\)](#)

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Foreign Affairs Council will exchange views on the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), including secessionist moves by Republika Srpska and the boycott of state institutions, as well as the ongoing talks on constitutional and electoral reform. Ministers will be invited to provide guidance on the way forward, including on strengthening of the political dialogue, the large toolbox at the EU's disposal for overcoming the crisis, and on restoring the functioning of the BiH state institutions.

The longer-term objective remains of keeping BiH firmly on the EU integration path and ensuring that the country can refocus fully on the EU reforms as specified in the 14 key priorities set out by the European Commission and endorsed by the Council in 2019 in response to BiH's application for EU membership.

Ministers are also expected to reaffirm their full support for Operation Althea and for the role of the EU as a security provider in the country.

Today, BiH is facing a deep political crisis. Steps taken by the leadership of Republika Srpska to undermine the competences of the state institutions are persisting. At the same time, the EU is working on a constitutional and electoral reform to remove discrimination from elections in line with rulings of the European Court of Human Rights, strengthen the integrity of elections and improve the functionality of BiH institutions. Constitutional and electoral reforms are key for the EU path of BiH, as set out in the Opinion key priorities. General elections are to be held in October 2022, and the EU expects such elections to be held in line with EU and international standards.

The main objectives of the EU in the country remain: i) ensuring a stable, viable, peaceful, and united country that cooperates peacefully with its neighbours ii) ensuring that the country is irreversibly on track towards EU membership, and iii) continuing to support progress in the Stabilisation and Association process.

- [Bosnia and Herzegovina: Council approves conclusions on EUFOR Operation Althea, 18 October 2021](#)
- [Council conclusions on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process, 14 December 2021](#)
- [BiH: High Representative Josep Borrell spoke to political leaders, EEAS](#)

Current affairs

The Foreign Affairs Council will 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 provide the Council with an update on the latest developments in **Mali**. Following the political consensus reached at the January FAC, on 4 February 2022 the Council imposed restrictive measures against five prominent members of the transition authorities responsible for actions that obstruct or undermine the successful completion of Mali's political transition. Responding to the decisions of the Malian authorities to send back the Danish contingent of Task Force Takuba (24/01) and to declare the French Ambassador to Mali persona non grata (31/01), the High Representative issued a statement on behalf of the EU on 2 February 2022 calling on the Malian authorities "to exercise restraint rather than to repeat unacceptable behaviours". On 17 February, France and the other EU member states operating alongside Operation Barkhane and within Task Force Takuba, as well as Canada, announced that the conditions are no longer met to effectively continue their current military engagement in the fight against terrorism in Mali and have therefore decided to withdraw their military resources from Malian territory.

The High Representative may then update ministers about the latest developments in the talks going on in Vienna to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

- [West Africa: declaration on behalf of the EU on the situation in Mali, 4 February 2022](#)
- [Mali: EU adopts targeted sanctions against five individuals \(press release, 4 February 2022\)](#)
- [Joint declaration on the fight against the terrorist threat and the support to peace and security in the Sahel and West Africa, 17 February 2022](#)

Cyber exercise

In view of the increasing number and the severity of cyber-attacks targeting the EU and its member states, the High Representative is organising an exercise in cooperation with the French Presidency of the Council of the EU on the EU response to a large-scale cyber-attack. The FAC discussion is the final part of a broader exercise called EU Cyber Crisis Linking Exercise on Solidarity (EU CyCLES). The main objective is to strengthen the level of preparedness of the European Union and its member states to prevent, deter and respond to large-scale cyber-attacks in a coordinated manner. It is essential to increase the EU's ability to this context, as also underlined by the European Council in its October 2021 conclusions.

- [European Council conclusions, October 2021](#)

Council conclusions

The Council is due to approve conclusions on: climate diplomacy, extending and enhancing the implementation of the Coordinated Maritime Presences (CMP) concept in the Gulf of Guinea, and on the implementation of the CMP concept in the North West Indian Ocean.

In the margins of the Council meeting:

26th EU-GCC Joint Council and ministerial meeting

The 26th EU-GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Joint Council and ministerial meeting will take place from 13:30 to 15:30, in the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council.

This forum will provide EU foreign affairs ministers and their counterparts from the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) with the opportunity to discuss effective ways forward to build a stronger, more strategic and comprehensive partnership enabling the two parties to seize the opportunities of the green and digital transitions, contribute to regional stability and global security, enhance the prosperity of both sides and develop effective coordination on humanitarian and development actions.

Ministers may also touch on areas of common interest such as: the Middle East peace process, counter-terrorism, Iran, Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Libya.

The debate will feed into the future Joint Communication on a new strategy for the Gulf region under preparation by the European External Action Service and the European Commission services.

- [Gulf Cooperation Council, European External Action Service](#)