



Foreign Affairs Council

Brussels, 18 July 2022

The Foreign Affairs Council, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, **Josep Borrell**, will take place in Brussels starting at **9.30**.

The Council will first discuss **the Russian aggression against Ukraine**, with a short intervention via video teleconference of Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dmytro Kuleba.

Ministers will then have a discussion on **EU-Latin America and the Caribbean relations** before discussing the **Digital Diplomacy** over lunch.

Under **Current Affairs**, ministers will exchange on the possibility of resuming the Association Council with Israel, foreign information manipulation and interference, the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The High Representative will also inform ministers about the upcoming ministerial meeting between the EU and the League of Arab States and the situation in Sri Lanka and Tunisia.

Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 8.40

Press conference on FAC: +/- 16.00 in a hybrid format

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[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](#)

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

Russian aggression against Ukraine

The Foreign Affairs Council will continue the discussion on the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

At the beginning of the meeting, ministers will be joined via videoconference by Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dmytro Kuleba, who will update them on the situation on the ground and Ukraine's current priorities.

The discussion will then focus on selected work strands of the EU's support for Ukraine, covering possible further EU military assistance and work on sanctions, including strengthening implementation and preventing circumvention. Furthermore, ministers will follow up on their previous discussion on the Action Plan on the geopolitical consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on third countries. The discussion will cover aspects related to food security and the ongoing UN-led efforts to enable the export of grains from Ukraine via the Black Sea route, which has been blocked since the end of February due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Ministers will then discuss the issue of accountability for war crimes and human rights violations, in the aftermath of the Ukraine Accountability Conference, which took place in the Hague on 14 July 2022.

The meeting will be the first after the European Council's decision in June to grant Ukraine the status of candidate country. Ministers could refer to Ukraine's ongoing reform agenda.

Since the illegal Russian recognition of the non-government controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine as independent entities, and following the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, the EU has imposed various packages of restrictive measures, in close coordination with partners and allies. The sixth and latest was adopted on 3 June 2022.

The EU resolutely condemns Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and Russia's indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure.

It urges Russia to immediately stop its indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and to immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. International humanitarian law, including on the treatment of prisoners of war, must be respected. Ukrainians, notably children, who have been forcibly removed to Russia, must be immediately allowed to return safely. Russia, Belarus and all those responsible for war crimes and the other most serious crimes will be held accountable for their actions, in accordance with international law.

The EU firmly stands with Ukraine and will continue to provide strong support for Ukraine's overall economic, military, social and financial resilience, including humanitarian aid.

- [Ukraine Accountability Conference, The Hague, 14 July 2022](#)
- [European Council conclusions, 23-24 June 2022](#)
- [Russia's aggression against Ukraine: EU adopts sixth package of sanctions, 3 June 2022](#)
- [EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

EU-Latin America and the Caribbean relations

The Foreign Affairs Council will exchange views on relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

LAC is a region of strategic importance for the EU and the bi-regional partnership rests on a solid foundation of shared values, like-mindedness and cooperation. The consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine have made it more urgent than ever for the EU to deepen its engagement with the region and recast in light of the new geopolitical reality, with a view to strengthening the EU's position as a reliable partner for the region in the decades to come.

To prepare for such a qualitative leap of EU-LAC relations, ministers will discuss a forward-looking, substantive and positive agenda, by

- stepping -up high-level engagement and be more visible
- strengthening and complete the network of trade and association agreements
- building political alliances around priority areas, such as: green transitions, digital transformation, sustainable and inclusive economy, human development and internal security, fight against transnational and organised crime
- promoting peace, democracy and human rights, as well as humanitarian assistance

LAC encompasses 33 countries, two strategic partners (Mexico and Brazil), three G20 countries (Argentina, Mexico and Brazil, with the latter set to hold the G20 presidency in 2024), and four OECD members. LAC is an economic partner and market of growing importance. In 2021, EU-LAC trade returned to pre-pandemic levels (+4.7% compared to 2019). The EU has association, trade or political and cooperation agreements with 27 of the 33 countries, one of the densest networks in the world.

LAC and the EU are staunch supporters of multilateralism and together represent one third of the UN. The region has demonstrated its like-mindedness in UN fora with an overwhelming majority of its countries condemning Russia's aggression against Ukraine, standing up for international law and a rules-based multilateral order.

LAC countries are indispensable partners for the green and digital transitions. LAC leaders have committed themselves to this agenda and are already working with the EU to achieve these objectives including at the multilateral level.

LAC is also a region that can help the EU secure supplies of energy, food and raw materials. It has vast oil and gas reserves and enormous potential to produce competitive low-carbon hydrogen. Chile has the largest lithium reserves worldwide.

At the same time, the region needs the EU's help to address the consequences of the war. LAC is emerging from the COVID19 pandemic with more debt, less fiscal space and higher inflation. Growth projections for 2022 are down to 1.8%. Poverty rate is up to 33.7%, and 94.2 million people will be at risk of food insecurity by year's end.

Digital diplomacy

The Foreign Affairs Council will have a strategic discussion on the elements of a proactive and cohesive EU digital diplomacy, with the aim to promote the EU's digital governance model, defend the EU's interests and values, ensure coherence between internal and external policies, and leverage the European digital agenda as a vehicle for influence in global discussions on technological and digital issues.

The Council is also expected to approve conclusions on the matter.

The EU has faced many external challenges in the development of its Digital Single Market. These ranged from the opposition of certain platforms to the need to find compromises with otherwise like-minded partners, while defining a specifically European approach to tech regulation. However overall, the international context has been broadly supportive, with a growing number of third countries seeking to engage with the EU on digital governance and taking inspiration from the EU in developing their own digital policies and regulations, and multilateral fora providing an opportunity for the EU to successfully promote its approach to managing the digital transformation.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has shown the dangers deriving from the misuse of digital technologies by foreign actors – including information manipulation operations, state-sponsored cyberattacks and regional internet shutdowns – to the EU's and its allies' democratic processes, economic development and security. The EU's close cooperation with its partners to address disinformation and to mitigate the risks and impacts of cyber-attacks has been instrumental to improving shared security in the current geopolitical context. Beyond the immediate and coordinated response to these threats in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine, the development and international promotion of a common framework for a safe and secure digital sector and greater cyber resilience, together with EU's partners, is more important than ever.

Recent events confirm that the progress made in developing the Digital Single Market needs to be matched by the development of an EU Digital Diplomacy, whose priorities need to be coherent with the EU's overall external action.

The future lines of action of the EU Digital Diplomacy could be:

- promoting the EU regulatory model, as well as the value of the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles and the Declaration for the Future of the Internet as guidance for building a human-centred, secure, inclusive, and open digital environment in Europe and beyond
- prioritising EU engagement with selected partners and build coalitions around specific digital issues, for example digital standardisation
- strengthening EU coordination in the UN, the OECD, the G7 and other multilateral bodies
- enhancing the capacity of the EU and its member states to address the geopolitical challenge of digital technologies.

Over the past year, the EU has taken significant steps along the "Path to the Digital Decade". The Data Governance Act and the proposed Data Act aim to boost the use of data as a driver for innovation and growth, while the Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act are setting the global pace in regulating platforms. The Standardisation strategy strengthens the ability of the EU to remain a global standard-setter, the European Chips Act will see the EU strengthen its position in the global semiconductor value chain, and the Space package includes a proposal for building an EU space-based global secure communication system. The Artificial Intelligence Act has

proposed the first-ever legal framework on AI, which addresses the risks of AI and positions Europe to play a leading role globally.

- [Foreign Affairs Council of 12 July 2021 \(Discussion on Geopolitics of new digital technologies\)](#)

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 Council will exchange on the opportunity of resuming an **Association Council with Israel**.

The High Representative will also revert to the issue of **foreign information manipulation and interference**, on which the Council is due to approve conclusions. This will allow the Council to send a clear political message that the EU will step up efforts to fight foreign information manipulation and interference, including disinformation.

The Council will then exchange on the deterioration of the situation in the eastern part of the **Democratic Republic of Congo** marked by increased attacks on civilians and confrontations between the Congolese military (FARDC) and rebel groups.

The High Representative will also refer to the upcoming ministerial meeting between the **EU and the League of Arab States**, which will take place in the coming months.

Lastly, the High Representative will inform ministers about the latest developments in **Sri Lanka** where the island's economic and political crisis has led to the resignation pledge by President Rajapaksa, and the declaration by the government of the state of emergency.

Similarly, ministers will take stock of the political and economic situation in **Tunisia** in the run-up to the constitutional referendum planned for 25 July 2022.

- [Sri Lanka: Statement by the Spokesperson on the latest developments, 10 July 2022 EEAS website](#)
- [Sri Lanka: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the latest developments, 10 May 2022](#)
- [Tunisia: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union, 11 July 2022](#)

Council conclusions

The Council is expected to approve conclusions on:

- **EU Digital Diplomacy**
- **foreign information manipulation and interference**
- **EU priorities at the 77th United Nations General Assembly** and
- the **2022 Annual report on EU Development Aid Targets**.

In the margins of the Council meeting:

18th meeting of the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council, 19 July 2022

- [Agenda highlights](#)
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