



Council of the European Union

PRESS
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BACKGROUND BRIEF¹
Brussels, 21 April 2023

Foreign Affairs Council

Luxembourg, 24 April 2023

The Foreign Affairs Council, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, will take place in Luxembourg starting at 10.00.

Prior to FAC, the High Representative will host an **informal breakfast with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland in her capacity as President of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe Thórdís Kolbrún Reykfjörð Gylfadóttir and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Marija Pejčinović Burić**. This will offer an opportunity to demonstrate the EU's commitment to reinforce its political dialogue with the Council of Europe at the highest level.

The Council will discuss the **Russian aggression against Ukraine**, after a short intervention via videoconference by the **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine** Dmytro Kuleba.

During a working lunch, EU Foreign Affairs Ministers will have an informal exchange of views with the **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia**, Ilia Darchiashvili.

The Council will then have a discussion on **implementation of the EU action plan on the geopolitical consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine**: .

Under **Current Affairs**, EU Foreign Affairs ministers are expected to be briefed by the High Representative on the latest situation in **Sudan, Tunisia, the Republic of Moldova**, and **China**. Ministers may also touch on **Lebanon** and the **Middle East Peace Process**.

Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 8.30

Press conference on FAC: +/- 16.30 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.

Informal exchange with representatives of the Council of Europe

EU Foreign Affairs Ministers will have an informal breakfast meeting with Thórdís Kolbrún Reykfjörð Gylfadóttir, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland in her capacity as President of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

The informal exchange will focus on the next stages of the preparation of the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, on 16-17 May in Reykjavik. Next to a political declaration as the final outcome document, the summit is expected to focus on the issue of accountability through the establishment of a register to record and document evidence and claims of damage, loss or injury as a result of Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Foreign Affairs Council

Russian aggression against Ukraine

The Foreign Affairs Council will discuss the Russian aggression against Ukraine, after an exchange of views with Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dmytro Kuleba via videoconference at the beginning of the meeting.

Minister Kuleba is expected to update the Council on the situation on the ground, and Ukraine's current needs and priorities.

The ensuing ministerial discussion will focus on the various ongoing work strands: military support, restrictive measures, food security, accountability and Ukraine's Peace Formula.

In the European Council conclusions of 23 March 2023, the EU reiterated its resolute condemnation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a manifest violation of the UN Charter, and recalled its unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and its inherent right of self-defence against the Russian aggression.

Russia must stop its aggression and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces and proxies from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

The EU stands firmly and fully with Ukraine and will continue to provide strong political, economic, military, financial and humanitarian support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes.

- [Ammunition for Ukraine: Council agrees €1 billion support under the European Peace Facility \(press release, 13 April 2023\)](#)
- [Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: Wagner Group and RIA FAN added to the EU's sanctions list \(press release, 13 April 2023\)](#)
- [European Council conclusions, 23 March 2023](#)
- [EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

Informal exchange with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

EU Foreign Affairs Ministers will hold an informal exchange over lunch with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Ilia Darchiashvili. The exchange will be an opportunity to discuss the situation in the country as well as the EU's support to Georgia's reform path and its resilience, also in light of the country's European aspirations.

This is the first time the Foreign Minister of Georgia attends the Foreign Affairs Council since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and since the European Council recognised the European perspective of Georgia and expressed its readiness to grant the country candidate status once the 12 priorities specified in the relevant Commission's opinion have been addressed. In its regular Enlargement package of autumn 2023, the Commission will assess Georgia's state of advancement on reforms as per the EU accession criteria for the first time.

Implementation of the EU action plan on the geopolitical consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine

EU Foreign Ministers will discuss the implementation of the action plan on the geopolitical consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which was first discussed in the Foreign Affairs Council in June 2022.

In a fragmented geopolitical context, and with Russia's war against Ukraine spreading instability all around the world, the EU aims to strengthen its partnerships around the world, based on political and economic engagement and mutual cooperation. The action plan – prepared by the EEAS in close coordination with the European Commission – is intended to join forces with partners, to the benefit of our peoples and with the ultimate goal to contribute to global stability and growth. The EU will define what is needed to tackle common challenges and seize opportunities, using all instruments at its disposal.

The impacts of the global pandemic, climate change and Russia's aggression against Ukraine expose and exacerbate the vulnerabilities of many countries in the world on issues such as energy and food security. It makes this new engagement even more crucial. The EU has been a responsive and responsible partners to address the challenges faced by many of its partners around the world, and remains committed to this work.

Together with its partners, the EU wants to defend not only the global common goods, but the UN Charter and the rules-based order that protect every country's sovereignty. The action plan aims to strengthen the EU's partnerships based on a human-centric approach, across the full spectrum of the EU's relations with partners, aiming to bring tangible results through the Global Gateway and other initiatives of mutual benefit.

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 fast-moving developments in external relations.

The High Representative will touch upon the violent clashes erupted in **Sudan** since 15 April between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The EU is closely coordinating its response with regional and international partners to demand an immediate cessation

of hostilities, insisting on the need for de-escalation and a humanitarian truce to allow for the protection of civilians, as well as for the full respect of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Convention by both parties.

The Council will then exchange views on the latest developments in **Tunisia**. At the March FAC, the Council agreed on the need to continue support to the Tunisian people while also conveying clear messages to the authorities on matters of concern. Following recent worrying developments, such as the arrest of opposition leader Rached Ghannouch and a sharp increase in migration figures from Tunisia, ministers will revert to discuss Tunisia and the situation on the ground, also in view of recent and upcoming high-level visits.

The High Representative will refer to the **Republic of Moldova**, and particularly: the establishment of a new EU Common Defence and Security Policy (CSDP) civilian mission, the EU Military Partnership Mission in the Republic of Moldova. Ministers are also foreseen to reach a political agreement on a new sanctions regime to help the Republic of Moldova counter de-stabilisation attempts, and touch on the new assistance measure worth EUR 40 million to be adopted soon under the European Peace Facility to increase the resilience of the country.

Ministers will be debriefed about recent high-level contacts with **China**, and may also raise the dire situation in **Lebanon**. Lebanon was already on the FAC agenda in October and November 2022. The Council then emphasised the need to elect a President and to reach a programme agreement with the IMF. But no progress has been made on either front.

Lastly, ministers might raise the **Middle East Peace Process** and the recent escalation of violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

- [Sudan: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the latest developments \(19 April 2023\)](#)
- [Tunisie: Déclaration de la porte-parole sur les derniers développements en Tunisie \(EEAS website\)](#)
- [Foreign Affairs Council, 20 March 2023](#)
- [EU relations with the Republic of Moldova \(background information\)](#)
- [Israel/Palestine: Statement of the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the latest developments \(8 March 2023\)](#)

Council Conclusions and other decisions

The Foreign Affairs Council is due to approve Conclusions on **Ethiopia** and agree on the establishment of a new **civilian CSDP mission in the Republic of Moldova**. This mission focuses on enhancing the resilience of the security sector of the country in the areas of crisis management and hybrid threats.

In the margins of the Council meeting, the [17th EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Council](#) will be held in Luxembourg starting at 17.00h.