



Foreign Affairs Council

Luxembourg, 23 October 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 **8.30**.*

*The Council will discuss the **situation in Israel and in the region**, following Hamas' brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks against Israel and the events unfolding in Gaza, the **Russian aggression against Ukraine**, focusing on EU's security commitments, and the developments concerning **Armenia and Azerbaijan**.*

*Under **current affairs** the Council will touch on, amongst others, **China**, the **situation in Serbia and Kosovo*** and the **Sahel**.*

*EU ministers will then attend the **19th EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting** with Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.*

Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 8.15

Press conference on FAC: +/- 17.00 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.

Situation in Israel and in the region

The Foreign Affairs Council will have a discussion on the situation in Israel and in the region, building on the informal video conference of foreign affairs ministers of 10 October, and the video conference of the members of the European Council on 17 October.

Ministers are expected to focus their exchange on:

- EU's **international engagement**
- engaging with regional actors to **avoid spill-over**
- **protecting EU citizens** and providing consular assistance
- addressing the **humanitarian situation** in Gaza
- reaffirming EU's long-term commitment to the **Middle East Peace Process**

The Commission will inform ministers on **the provision of humanitarian assistance** and on the ongoing review process of EU development assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

- [Video conference of the members of the European Council, 17 October 2023](#)
- [Statement of the Members of the European Council on the situation in the Middle East, 15 October 2023](#)
- [Informal video conference of foreign affairs ministers, 10 October 2023](#)
- [Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the attacks against Israel, 7 October 2023](#)

Russian aggression against Ukraine

The Foreign Affairs Council will discuss the Russian aggression against Ukraine, focusing on EU's **security commitments**.

At the European Council of 29 June 2023, EU leaders concluded that the EU and its member states would swiftly consider the modalities to contribute, together with partners, to the future security commitments to Ukraine. Since then, EU's security commitments were discussed at the Gymnich in Toledo on 31 August and at the informal meeting of EU Foreign Ministers in Kyiv on 2 October.

In line with the 12 July G7 joint declaration of support for Ukraine, signed by the EU, and Ukraine's own aspirations, the security commitments will cover security and defence, as well as economic stability, resilience, reconstruction, and financial and reform support.

At the October Foreign Affairs Council, ministers will discuss the concrete elements of such EU commitments with a focus on **security and defence aspects**, in particular on sustained provision of military equipment and training, ways to strengthen the EU defence industry, enhanced cooperation on resilience as well as civil and de-mining support.

The ministerial discussion will take place in an ever more complicated geopolitical context against the background of the ongoing Ukrainian counteroffensive, continuing Russian strikes against civilians and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, and Israel's military response to Hamas attacks.

In the European Council conclusions of 29-30 June 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 European Union will continue to provide strong financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes.

- [Ukraine: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell after the EU Foreign Ministers meeting in Kyiv, 2 October 2023 EEAS website](#)
- [Informal meeting of EU Foreign Affairs Ministers: Press remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell, 19 September 2023 EEAS website](#)
- [European Council conclusions, 29-30 June 2023](#)
- [EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, background information](#)

Armenia and Azerbaijan

The Foreign Affairs Council will hold a discussion on Armenia and Azerbaijan, following Azerbaijan's military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh on 19-20 September 2023, and the subsequent displacement of over 100,000 Karabakh Armenians.

The upcoming ministerial discussion will focus on how the EU can **enhance its support to Armenia and its resilience**, how to increase the EU's leverage and identify positive incentives and on how the EU can further **support the normalisation process in the region**.

The EU has remained committed at the highest level to the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, on the basis of the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inviolability of borders.

The President of the European Council Michel, the French President Macron and German Chancellor Scholz met with the Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan on 5 October in the margins of the European Political Community Summit in Granada.

On the same day the Commission announced a set of measures to support Armenia, including a €10.45 million humanitarian package, and €15 million in budget support in addition to technical assistance and the support under the EU Economic Investment Plan (up to 2.6 billion in investments) and under the EU4Peace programme.

President Michel continues close engagement with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan to continue the normalisation process.

- [Statement by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of Armenia, President Michel of the European Council, President Macron of France and Chancellor Scholz of Germany, 5 October 2023](#)
- [Press remarks by President Charles Michel following trilateral meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia, 15 July 2023](#)

Current Affairs

The Foreign Affairs Council will discuss 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 debrief ministers on his recent visit to **China** and on the EU-China Strategic Dialogue that the High Representative co-chaired with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

The Council will then touch on the **situation in Serbia and Kosovo***, following the violent incidents that took place on 24 September in the north of Kosovo*. The EU is united in asking both sides to urgently contribute to de-escalation and return to the implementation of their binding outstanding commitments under the EU-facilitated Dialogue.

Ministers will also briefly exchange views on **the Sahel**, following their discussion at the informal meeting of EU Foreign Affairs Ministers held in the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York on 19 September. On that occasion ministers recognised that the coup in Niger - together with the unconstitutional changes of government occurred in Mali, Chad, Guinea, and Burkina Faso in the past three years - requires the EU to rethink its approach in the Sahel. There is also a discussion foreseen at the European Council on 26-27 October..

- [Niger: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the EU, 12 August 2023](#)
- [Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the situation in Niger, 28 July 2023](#)
- [Kosovo: Statement by the High Representative Josep Borrell on the attack against Kosovo Police, 24 September 2023 EEAS website](#)
- [Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on expectations from Serbia and Kosovo*, 19 September 2023](#)
- [China: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell after concluding his visit to the country, EEAS website](#)
- [European Council conclusions on China, 30 June 2023](#)

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

In the margins of the Council meeting

19th EU-Central Asia ministerial meeting

After the end of the formal Foreign Affairs Council, EU Foreign Ministers will attend the 19th EU-Central Asia ministerial meeting with Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The meeting will start at 13.30 (until 16.00) and be chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell. The Commission will be represented by Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen.

The ministerial meeting will convey a strong message of EU commitment to the region and the importance to continue and deepen cooperation with this region, especially in light of the current geopolitical context, with security challenges increasingly affecting the European continent, Central Asia and the world.

Ministers will discuss opportunities for stepping up EU engagement in Central Asia in areas of mutual interest, such as support to reforms and economic development, trade and investment, support to new dynamics in regional cooperation, the promotion of sustainable connectivity, and of security and resilience as well as people-to-people contacts. Taking place ahead of the first ever Global Gateway Forum (25-26 October), this Ministerial meeting will take stock of the regional Team Europe Initiatives on digital connectivity, and on water, energy and climate change, and provide an opportunity to discuss concrete projects in preparation of the EU Investors Forum (29-30 January 2024).

The ministerial meeting will also provide an opportunity to assess the recent significant developments in the region, in particular domestic reform processes and the new momentum in regional cooperation.

A joint communiqué on the ministerial meeting will be published after the meeting.

- [EU-Central Asia relations: factsheet, EEAS website](#)
- [The EU and the countries of Central Asia held their 10th High-level Political and Security Dialogue, EEAS website 13 June 2023](#)

20th meeting of the EU - Kazakhstan Cooperation Council, 23 October 2023
