



Foreign Affairs Council on 11 December 2023

*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 discuss the **Russian aggression against Ukraine** - after an intervention by the **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine** Dmytro Kuleba who will attend the beginning of the FAC meeting in person -, the **situation in Israel and the region**, and the **Sahel**.*

*The Council meeting will be preceded by an informal exchange with the **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia** Ararat Mirzoyan, and followed by the **Eastern Partnership Ministerial meeting**.*

*On Sunday 10 December, the 27 EU Foreign Affairs Ministers will be invited to an informal exchange of views on **Belarus** with **Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya**.*

Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 8.00

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 hold a discussion on the situation in Israel and in the region against the background of the resumption of hostilities and their extension to Southern Gaza. The discussion will build on the October European Council, the November Foreign Affairs Council and the subsequent informal video conference of EU Foreign Affairs Ministers.

The EU principles guiding the way forward build on the position agreed by the European Council on 26-27 October 2023: compliance with international law, contributing to the stabilisation of Gaza, preserving the viability of the two-state solution, reinvigorating the Palestinian Authority, providing additional Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) assistance, and reviving the Middle East Peace Process.

A discussion at the December European Council is expected to follow.

In November's Foreign Affairs Council and the European Council conclusions of 26 and 27 October 2023, the EU condemned in the strongest possible terms Hamas for its brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks across Israel on 7 October, and emphasised Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law and international humanitarian law. The EU has stressed the need to ensure the protection of all civilians, provide and facilitate humanitarian aid, avoid regional spill-over, and to revive a political process towards a two-state solution.

On 6 November, the European Commission announced that it would increase humanitarian aid to the Gaza strip by €25 million - bringing overall humanitarian assistance to Palestinians to over €100 million. On 21 November, the Commission finalised its review of EU financial assistance for the Palestinians, which made clear that existing controls and safeguards are functioning as intended.

On 6 December, the Commission announced 6 new humanitarian airbridge flights for Gaza, bringing total supplies provided by the EU to over 1,000 tons with 30 Air Bridge flights overall planned so far.

- [Foreign Affairs Council, 13 November 2023](#)
- [Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on humanitarian pauses in Gaza, 12 November 2023](#)
- [Informal video conference of foreign affairs ministers, 20 November 2023](#)
- [European Council conclusions, 26-27 October 2023](#)
- [The Commission finalises the review of EU aid to Palestine \(European Commission website\)](#)

Russian aggression against Ukraine

The Foreign Affairs Council will discuss the Russian aggression against Ukraine, after an intervention by Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs **Dmytro Kuleba** who will join EU Foreign Ministers in person.

The ensuing ministerial discussion is expected to focus on EU's **long term security commitments** and military support. The High Representative will inform ministers about the ongoing talks with Kyiv on the matter, ahead of the December European Council.

In the European Council conclusions of 26 and 27 October 2023, the EU reiterated its resolute condemnation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a manifest violation of the UN Charter, and reaffirmed 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.

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.

- [European Council conclusions, 26-27 October 2023](#)
- [EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

The Sahel

Following the strategic discussion in the European Council of October 26-27, the Foreign Affairs Council will hold a discussion on **EU engagement and strategy** in the Sahel.

The Sahel faces the expansion of conflicts, inter-communal violence and terrorism, separatist dynamics, organised crime, democratic backsliding, military rule, restrictions of freedoms and a serious humanitarian crisis marked by forced displacement and food insecurity. These dynamics contribute to more insecurity at regional level, including risks of further spill-over to the coastal States of the Gulf of Guinea.

Ministers are expected to touch on how to engage in the Sahel, also with **like-minded and regional partners**, and through existing **international and regional structures** (including ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations) and **CSDP presence**.

Additionally, attention will be paid to the necessity of improving EU **strategic communication** in order to counter Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) and foster a **positive perception** of the EU through active public diplomacy.

- [European Council conclusions, 26-27 October 2023](#)
- [Sahel region \(EEAS\)](#)

In the margins of the Council meeting

Informal exchange with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya

Over the informal exchange of views, ministers will exchange views with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, leader of the democratic forces of Belarus. The meeting will be an opportunity to reiterate the EU's steadfast support to the people of Belarus and take stock of the work of the new Consultative Group, a platform for dialogue between the EU and Belarusian civil society launched by High Representative Borrell in June 2023.

- [European Council conclusions, 12 October 2020](#)
- [High Representative Borrell launches new Consultative Group \(background information\)](#)

Informal exchange with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia

EU Foreign Affairs Ministers will hold an informal exchange of views with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan to discuss EU-Armenia relations, EU support to Armenia and the prospects for Armenia-Azerbaijan normalisation.

- [European Council conclusions, 26-27 October 2023](#)
- [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](#)

Eastern Partnership Ministerial meeting

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) ministerial meeting will bring together EU Foreign Ministers and their counterparts from five of the six Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine), under the chairmanship of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell. EU Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi will also participate in the meeting.

Ministers will exchange views on the Eastern Partnership, take stock of its achievements and identify concrete recommendations for the future of the policy.

Ministers will also be addressed by the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

- [Eastern Partnership Foreign Affairs Ministerial meeting, 11 December 2023](#)
