



**Foreign Affairs Council,
Brussels, 22 January 2024**

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 **9.00**.

The Council will discuss the **Russian aggression against Ukraine**, after an informal exchange of views with the **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine** Dmytro Kuleba who will attend the beginning of that item via VTC.

The Council will then continue with the **situation in the Middle East**, including informal exchanges with the **Israeli** Minister of Foreign Affairs Israel Katz, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of **Saudi Arabia** - Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud -, **Jordan** - Ayman Safadi -, and **Egypt** - Sameh Shoukry-, as well as the Secretary General of the **League of Arab States** Ahmed Aboul Gheit, and the Foreign Affairs Minister of the **Palestinian Authority** Riyad al-Maliki.

Under current affairs, the Council will discuss **Azerbaijan and Armenia**.

The Council meeting will be preceded by an informal exchange with the **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt**, Sameh Shoukry.

Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 7.45

Press conference on FAC: +/- 18.00 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 discuss the Russian aggression against Ukraine, after an intervention by Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs **Dmytro Kuleba** via VTC at the beginning of that item.

As in previous Council meetings, ministers are expected to focus on **the EU security commitments** and **military support** to Ukraine. Other aspects likely to be touched on by ministers include: accountability, Russian immobilised assets, restrictive measures, as well as the Ukraine Peace Formula.

Last December, the European Council took the historic decision to open accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova, and to grant candidate status to Georgia. On that occasion, EU Heads of State and Government reiterated their resolute condemnation of Russia's war and their unwavering solidarity with Ukraine and its people. The European Council was also informed by the High Representative about ongoing work regarding the EU's security commitments to Ukraine and invited him to take work forward with member states in the Council.

[European Council conclusions, 14 and 15 December 2023](#)
[EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

Situation in the Middle East

The Foreign Affairs Council will continue discussing the situation in the Middle East, following the December European Council and Foreign Affairs Council meetings.

Ministers will have **informal exchanges** with: the Israeli Foreign Minister **Israel Katz**, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia - **Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud**, Jordan - **Ayman Safadi**, and Egypt – **Sameh Shoukry**, and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States **Ahmed Aboul Gheit**, as well as the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Palestinian Authority **Riyad al-Maliki**. A formal exchange in EU 27 format will follow.

Topics for discussion will include: the **humanitarian situation** in the Gaza Strip and the need for unhindered humanitarian assistance, a renewed call for the **release of hostages** and the full implementation of UN resolutions, the situation in the **West Bank** and **risks of regional escalation**, including in the Red Sea. Ministers will also reflect on the “**day after**”, a possible peace plan and peace conference and the need for concrete steps to revive the **two-state solution**, including through continued support for the Palestinian Authority.

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.

In line with this, at the December 2023 Foreign Affairs Council the High Representative proposed a set of elements to guide EU action:

- no forced displacement of the civilian population of Gaza, nor occupation of the strip by Israel
- continued action against Hamas, including through restrictive measures

- work towards imposing restrictive measures against extremist settlers in the West Bank, following the example of the United States
- effective use of EU CSDP missions on the ground – EUPOL COPPS and EUBAM Rafah.

[Foreign Affairs Council, 11 December 2023](#)

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

[Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on humanitarian pauses in Gaza, 12 November 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 touch on **Azerbaijan and Armenia** in light of recent developments. He will touch on the need to enhance efforts on the normalisation process and on the ongoing work on strengthening EU-Armenia relations.

After Azerbaijan's military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh on 19-20 September 2023, the European Council on 26-27 October 2023 underlined its continued support for advancing a sustainable and lasting peace between the two countries, and expressed its support for the Brussels normalisation process. At the November 2023 Foreign Affairs Council, ministers agreed on stepping up EU support to Armenia by strengthening the EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA) and exploring options to provide non-lethal support to Armenia under the European Peace Facility as well as for a visa liberalisation dialogue.

In December 2023, EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs held an informal exchange of views with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia **Ararat Mirzoyan** and discussed how to strengthen EU-Armenia relations, EU support to Armenia and the prospects for Armenia-Azerbaijan normalisation.

[Foreign Affairs Council, 11 December 2023](#)

[Foreign Affairs Council, 13 November 2023](#)

Council conclusions

The Council is expected to approve conclusions on **EU priorities in UN Human Rights Fora in 2024**.

In the margins of the Council meeting

Informal exchange with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt

EU Foreign Affairs Ministers will hold an informal exchange of views with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt Sameh Shoukry to discuss EU-Egypt relations.

The EU-Egypt Association Council is scheduled for 23 January 2024 in Brussels.

[EU-Egypt Association Council, 23 January 2024](#)
