



Foreign Affairs Council

18 March 2024

The Foreign Affairs Council, chaired by **Josep Borrell**, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, will meet in Brussels on 18 March 2024 at **10.30**.

At the beginning of the meeting, EU Foreign Affairs Ministers will hold an informal exchange of views via VTC with the United States Secretary of State **Antony Blinken**.

The Council will then discuss the **Russian aggression against Ukraine**, following an informal exchange of views with Ukraine's Minister for Foreign Affairs **Dmytro Kuleba**, who will join via VTC.

The Council will then exchange views on **Belarus**, followed by a discussion on the **situation in the Middle East**.

Under current affairs, the Council will touch on **Armenia and Azerbaijan, Niger and Haiti**.

The Council is expected to adopt the Decision on the **Ukraine Assistance Fund** under the European Peace Facility as well as Conclusions on **Green Diplomacy**.

Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 10:15

Press conference on FAC: +/- 18:00

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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 of views with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken

Ministers will have an informal exchange of views with **US Secretary of State Antony Blinken**, via videoconference, with a focus on the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East. Other topics to be touched upon could be, *inter alia*, the approach towards China and the Indo-Pacific.

Russian aggression against Ukraine

The Foreign Affairs Council will discuss the Russian aggression against Ukraine against the background of a complex situation on the battleground.

Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs **Dmytro Kuleba** will address the Council via videoconference to update Ministers on the situation on the ground, Ukraine's military needs and the EU support.

In the ensuing EU internal discussion, ministers are expected to exchange on the **military support to Ukraine**, including through the Ukraine Assistance Fund within the European Peace Facility (EPF) - which is foreseen to be adopted by the Council at the same meeting -, bilateral initiatives, as well as longer-term security commitments.

The Council will also discuss the wider issue of **restrictive measures**, including the possible use of windfall profits emanating from immobilised Russian assets. EU Envoy for the implementation of sanctions, David O'Sullivan, is expected to provide an update on the EU's efforts to tackle sanctions circumvention.

Other aspects to be raised could include the aftermath of Russian presidential elections as well as the state-of-play around the Ukraine's Peace Formula .

- [Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: EU individual sanctions over territorial integrity prolonged for a further six months, 12 March 2024](#)
- [EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

Belarus

The Foreign Affairs Council will exchange views on the **priorities of EU** policy vis-à-vis Belarus in the short and medium term, and **what more the EU can do** to react to the human rights situation and support Belarusian civil society and democratic opposition. Ministers will also exchange views on Belarus' complicity in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

At the last February FAC, the Council approved conclusions reaffirming its unwavering support for the Belarusian people's quest for a free, democratic, sovereign, and independent Belarus as part of a peaceful and prosperous Europe. The Council expressed its continued and deep concern about the deteriorating human rights situation in the country and condemned the continued support provided by the Belarusian regime to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The EU has imposed seven packages of restrictive measures in response to the internal repression, the instrumentalisation of migrants, and Belarus' support of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. On 26 February 2024, the restrictive measures against Belarus were prolonged for another year. Belarus also remains subject to targeted economic sanctions.

On 29 June 2023, the High Representative launched a new consultative group with Belarusian democratic forces and civil society in order to provide a structured platform for dialogue and discuss further actions.

- [Council conclusions on Belarus, 19 February 2024](#)
- [Belarus: High Representative Josep Borrell launches a new Consultative Group with democratic forces and civil society, 29 June 2023](#)
- [EU relations with Belarus, background information](#)

Situation in the Middle East

The Foreign Affairs Council will discuss the situation in the Middle East, ahead of the European Council later that week.

The exchange of views is expected to focus on the ever-worsening **humanitarian situation** in the Gaza strip and ways to urgently upscale **humanitarian assistance** to the Palestinian people, including the role of **UNRWA**.

Ministers are also expected to discuss the **regional dimension**, including on avoiding further escalation in the West Bank, Lebanon and the Red Sea. Furthermore, the High Representative is expected to provide an initial assessment of EUNAVFOR ASPIDES.

Lastly, the Council will discuss how to take forward the **political process**, including through the organisation of a preparatory peace conference when conditions allow, and plans towards the two-state solution.

- [Foreign Affairs Council, 19 February 2024](#)
- [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

Under current affairs, the High Representative is expected to refer to **Armenia/Azerbaijan**, with focus also on the normalisation process and the EU's overall support to Armenia's resilience.

The High Representative will then update the Council on developments in **Niger** and in **Haiti**.

- [Niger: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the EU, 12 August 2023](#)
- [Haiti: Statement by the Spokesperson on the political and security situation \(EEAS website\)](#)

Council Conclusions

The Council is expected to approve conclusions on **Green Diplomacy**.