

Background brief

Brussels, 27 January 2026

Foreign Affairs Council

29 January 2026, Brussels

PRESS

EN

Chair: Kaja Kallas, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Starting time: 10:30

Media opportunities:

- Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 7:30
- Press conference on FAC: +/- 17:00

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Main agenda topics:

The January Foreign Affairs Council will start with an exchange of views with the **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine**, Andrii Sybiha, who will participate via VTC. The Council will then have an internal discussion on **Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine**.

Over lunch, EU ministers will exchange views with the **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**, Volker Türk.

During the afternoon session, the Council will discuss the situation in the **Middle East** and in the **Great Lakes Region**, respectively.

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Related events:

Ahead of the Foreign Affairs Council, on the morning of 29 January, EU foreign affairs ministers will have an informal discussion on the **outlook for 2026**.

Directly after the Foreign Affairs Council, the EU will hold its **15th Association Council with Morocco**.

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[Foreign Affairs Council 29 January 2026 – meeting page](#)

[High quality photo and video material of the event](#)

[Press conferences, doorsteps and other public events in video streaming](#)

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

The discussion on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine will be preceded by a statement by the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Andrii Sybiha**, who will join the meeting via VTC to provide an overview of the situation on the ground and Ukraine's most urgent priorities.

The ensuing EU27 discussion will first touch on Russia's massive attacks on Ukraine's **energy** infrastructure and the need for providing Ukraine with energy support.

It will then focus on the **US-led peace negotiations**. At the European Council on 18 December 2025, 25 EU leaders welcomed the ongoing diplomatic efforts to put an end to the war in Ukraine and urged Russia to agree to a full, unconditional and immediate ceasefire, to which Ukraine continues to be committed, and to engage in meaningful negotiations towards a just and lasting peace.

The High Representative will then focus the discussions on **EU security guarantees and support for Ukraine**, in line with efforts by the Coalition of the Willing.

Concerning **financial support to Ukraine**, the Council will touch on the €90 billion loan for the years 2026-2027, following the discussions held at the December 2025 European Council and the presentation of the relevant legislative proposals by the European Commission on 14 January.

Furthermore, EU Foreign Ministers will exchange on ways to **further increase pressure on Russia**, notably through restrictive measures. This part of the debate will cover work towards the next package of **restrictive measures against the Russian Federation**.

[European Council, 18 December 2025, Ukraine](#)

[Commission presents a financial support package for Ukraine for 2026–2027* \(Commission website, 14 January 2025\)](#)

[Paris Declaration - 'Robust Security Guarantees for a Solid and Lasting Peace in Ukraine' \(6 January 2026\)](#)

[Russia's war against Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

[EU military support for Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

[EU solidarity with Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

Lunch with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Over a working lunch, EU foreign affairs ministers will have an informal exchange of views with the **UN Commissioner for Human Rights**, Volker Türk. Discussions will revolve around the global state of human rights.

[Human rights \(background information\)](#)

Situation in the Middle East

The Foreign Affairs Council will exchange views on the **situation in the Middle East**.

First EU foreign ministers will touch on the situation in **Iran**, in light of the recent wave of **violent repression of dissent** and **arbitrary detention of demonstrators** by the Iranian regime. They will touch on all implications, including the regional and nuclear dimensions. A new comprehensive package of restrictive measures is expected to be adopted under the human rights and the drones and missiles regimes (support to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine).

Then EU foreign ministers are expected to discuss the EU contribution to the implementation of the **Comprehensive Plan to end the Gaza Conflict** in light of the US announcement of 14 January on the launch of **the second phase** of the plan. Ministers will discuss the EU approach and involvement to the governance structures: the Founding Executive Board and the Executive Board for Gaza, which will oversee the work of the Palestinian National Committee for Administration of Gaza. On 22 January 2026, EU leaders raised serious doubts about a number of elements in the charter of the Board of Peace related to its scope, its governance and its compatibility with the UN Charter. They expressed readiness to work together with the US on the implementation of the comprehensive Peace Plan for Gaza, with a Board of Peace carrying out its mission as a transitional administration, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2803.

Concerning **Syria**, EU Foreign Ministers are expected to discuss the latest developments in the country, including the recent eruption of violence in the North-East.

[Oral conclusions drawn by President António Costa following the informal meeting of the members of the European Council of 22 January 2026](#)

[European Council conclusions, 18 December 2025](#)

[Israel/Palestine: statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the Comprehensive Plan to end the Gaza Conflict, 10 October 2025](#)

[EU position on the situation in the Middle East \(background information\)](#)

[EU humanitarian support for Palestinians \(background information\)](#)

[Syria: Council approves conclusions \(23 June 2025\)](#)

[EU relations with Syria \(background information\)](#)

[Iran: statement by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the situation in the country \(press release, 9 January 2026\)](#)

[Iran: statement by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the arrest and detention of human rights defenders \(press release, 30 December 2025\)](#)

[EU sanctions against Iran \(background information\)](#)

Situation in the Great Lakes Region

The Foreign Affairs Council will exchange views on **the situation in the Great Lakes Region**, with a focus on the **escalation of violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo** (DRC) at the end of 2025. Following up on discussions at the December Foreign Affairs Council, EU ministers are expected to discuss ways in which the EU can actively support a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Discussions also will likely consider EU actions to address the further deterioration of the **humanitarian situation and to foster regional integration**.

The EU has continued its outreach towards all parties, including through the High Representative's calls to the Foreign Ministers of Burundi, DRC and Rwanda. The Special Representative to the Great Lakes Region, Johan Borgstam, also visited the region.

In 2025, the EU allocated €112 million in humanitarian aid to the DRC, including additional emergency funding in response to the deteriorating situation in the east and epidemic outbreaks.

[Midterm report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo \(UN website\)](#)

[A renewed EU Great Lakes strategy: Council approves conclusions \(20 February 2023\)](#)

[EU-Africa relations \(background information\)](#)

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Related events

Outlook 2026

In the morning of 29 January 2026, EU ministers will hold an informal discussion on the **outlook for 2026**.

EU-Morocco Association Council

On 29 January 2026, the High Representative will be chairing the 15th **EU-Morocco Association Council**, starting at 18:00.

[EU-Morocco Association Council](#)

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