



Foreign Affairs Council

16 December 2024

The Foreign Affairs Council, chaired for the first time by the new EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, **Kaja Kallas**, will take place in Brussels starting at **10.00**.

After a short intervention via videoconference by the **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine**, Andrii Sybiha, the Council will discuss the latest developments related to the **Russian aggression against Ukraine**. The discussions will focus on additional military support, sanctions against Russia and EU additional support to Ukraine to raise the cost of aggression by Russia.

The Council will then exchange views on the situation in **Georgia**, following the announcement by the Georgian Dream that the country's EU accession process would be suspended, and the widespread intimidation, political persecution, reported torture and ill-treatment of citizens.

In the afternoon, ministers are expected to discuss the situation in the **Middle East**, in particular in view of the fall of Assad's criminal regime and the latest developments in **Syria**, as well as **Belarus** under current affairs.

The Council is expected to approve Council conclusions on **reinforcing external-internal connections in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism** and on **Stepping up Team Europe's support to global food security and nutrition**.

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Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 8.15

Press conference on FAC: +/- 16.45

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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 first discuss the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Andrii Sybiha**, will join at the beginning of the meeting via videoconference to provide updates on the latest developments on the ground and Ukraine's current priorities.

In the ensuing EU27 discussion, ministers will discuss how to step up **EU military support to meet Ukraine's most pressing needs** and will touch on the need to put even further pressure on Russia and its supporters, in particular through additional restrictive measures. Ministers will also exchange views on ways for the EU to be involved in any **future peace process** concerning Ukraine. The High Representative is expected to call for progress on support for Ukraine under the **European Peace Facility** and the EU Military Assistance Mission (**EUMAM Ukraine**). Ministers are also expected to discuss how to support and integrate **Ukraine's defence industrial base** with the EU's.

The Council is expected to adopt a **15th package** of restrictive measures in view of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, a first set of listings under the regime on **Russia's destabilising activities**, and additional restrictive measures in view of **Belarus' involvement in Russia's war** of aggression against Ukraine.

In its conclusions of October 2024, the European Council reconfirmed the EU's unwavering commitment to providing continued political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes and as intensely as needed. The European Council called for rapid stepping up of military support and acceleration in its delivery, in particular air defence systems, ammunition and missiles, which are urgently needed to protect Ukraine's population and critical energy infrastructures, and strongly condemned third countries' continued support for Russia's war of aggression and urged them to cease all assistance.

- [Council approves second payment of close to €4.1 billion under the Ukraine Facility, 9 December 2024](#)
- [European Council conclusions, 17 October 2024](#)
- [EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

Georgia

The Foreign Affairs Council will exchange views on recent developments in Georgia, and their impact on the Georgian people and Georgia's European path. The discussion follows the 28 November announcement by the government of its intention to **suspend the country's EU accession** process until 2028, the subsequent **mass protests**, and the increasing acts of violence against protestors, the media, and the political opposition.

In a joint statement, High Representative Kallas and Commissioner for Enlargement Kos expressed regret over Georgian Dream's decision not to pursue the opening of EU accession negotiations and rejecting EU financial support until 2028. They noted that the announcement marked a shift from the policies of all previous Georgian governments and the European aspirations of the vast majority of the Georgian people, as enshrined in the constitution of Georgia.

Against this background, the Council will discuss the possible **EU response**, taking into account EU interests and values, but also the need to support the people of Georgia, including the civil society and the media.

In its conclusions of October 2024, the European Council reaffirmed the EU's readiness to support the Georgian people on their European path. At the same time, it reiterated its serious concern regarding the course of action taken by the Georgian government, which runs counter to the values and principles upon which the EU is founded. The European Council also recalled that such a course of action jeopardises Georgia's European path, and de facto halts the accession process.

- [Statement by the High Representative / Vice-President of the Commission Kaja Kallas and Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos on Georgia \(European Commission website\)](#)
- [European Council conclusions, 17 October 2024](#)
- [Georgia \(background information\)](#)

Situation in the Middle East, including Syria

The Foreign Affairs Council will first discuss the latest developments in **Syria**, assessing the situation, reflecting on how the EU can help revive the political process in the spirit of the UN Security Council Resolution 2254, and calling for the protection of civilians. Ministers are expected to confirm their support for the efforts of the United Nations, and the unity, stability and territorial integrity of Syria.

The Council will then discuss options to support the ceasefire and enhance the prospects for further sustainable de-escalation in **Lebanon**, a symmetrical implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, and the strengthening of state institutions, particularly the Lebanese armed forces.

Lastly, Ministers will exchange views on how to support a solution to the **Middle East crisis**. The discussion will focus on how to take forward work with the parties and in the region to restart dialogue and to achieve a ceasefire, the release of all hostages and the delivery of sufficient humanitarian aid to Gaza, as well as ultimately the two-state solution. In this context the High Representative is expected to underline the need to hold an Association Council with Israel and the first ever High-Level Dialogue with the Palestinian Authority as soon as possible.

In its conclusions of 17 October, the European Council reiterated its call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the unconditional release of all hostages, the urgent improvement of access and sustained distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale throughout Gaza, and an enduring end to hostilities, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2735. It called on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint, put an end to all hostilities immediately and fully abide by international law, including international humanitarian law. The European Union also reiterated its unwaveringly committed to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace based on the two-state solution and its support to the Palestinian Authority to help address its most pressing needs and support its reform agenda.

- [Syria: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the fall of the Assad regime, 9 December 2024](#)
- [Israel/Lebanon: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the ceasefire agreement, 28 November 2024](#)
- [European Council conclusions, 17 October 2024](#)
- [EU position on the situation in the Middle East \(background information\)](#)
- [EU humanitarian support for Palestinians \(background information\)](#)

Current affairs

Under current affairs, the High Representative will refer to **Belarus** ahead of the so-called presidential election scheduled for 26 January 2025.

The High Representative is expected to emphasise the EU's steadfast support for the Belarusian people's pursuit of a free, democratic, sovereign and independent Belarus as part of a peaceful and prosperous Europe. The EU follows a dual approach of exercising pressure on the regime, including by adopting restrictive measures, while supporting the Belarusian people and civil society in the context of ongoing and serious human rights violations in the country.

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

Council conclusions

The Council is due to approve conclusions on

- reinforcing external-internal connections in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism
- stepping up Team Europe's support to global food security and nutrition
- the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
- priorities for EU-Council of Europe Cooperation 2025-2026

In the margins of the Council meeting

The High Representative will host an informal breakfast meeting to discuss working methods.