

Background brief*Brussels, 17 April 2026*

Foreign Affairs Council

21 April 2026, Luxembourg

PRESS**EN**

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

Starting time: 10:15

Media opportunities:

- Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 9:45
- Press conference on FAC: +/- 17:00

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Main agenda topics:

The April 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 discuss **Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine**.

EU foreign affairs ministers will then informally exchange views with the **President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic**, Nawaf Salam.

Over a working lunch, the Council will discuss the situation in the **Middle East** in light of the most recent developments in Iran and the wider region.

Finally, the Council will hold discussions on **South Caucasus** and **Sudan**.

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[Foreign Affairs Council 21 April 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

Following the discussions held at the Foreign Affairs Council on 16 March, the European Council on 19 March and the informal meeting of EU Foreign Affairs Ministers in Kyiv on 31 March, the Council will discuss **Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine**. The discussion will be preceded by an intervention by VTC by the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Andrii Sybiha**, who will give an overview of the situation on the ground and Ukraine's most urgent needs.

The ensuing EU27 discussion will firstly focus on **intensifying pressure on Russia** in a comprehensive manner, including through additional sanctions, outreach in international fora, and actions targeting the shadow fleet.

The second focus of the discussions will be **supporting Ukraine's resilience and preparedness**. The Council is also expected to exchange views on the fourth pillar of the security guarantees – “Shared stability” – complementing the military, civilian security and defence industry ones. In this context the High Representative is expected to steer the discussion towards concrete activities that would improve long-term stability, including through: defence reform, enhanced cyber/hybrid support as well as demining efforts. Special focus will be on support to Ukraine's war veterans, in follow up to the informal meeting in Kyiv.

[Joint Statement on the occasion of the informal meeting of EU Foreign Ministers \(31 March 2026 - EEAS website\)](#)

[European Council, 19 March 2026, Ukraine](#)

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

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

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

Situation in the Middle East

The session will start with an informal exchange with the President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic, **Nawaf Salam**, on the latest developments in Lebanon and the agreement on cessation of hostilities with Israel.

EU ministers will then move on to discuss the **situation in the Middle East**. Leaders will focus on the situation in **Iran** and the **Gulf countries** and take stock of the regional spill-over in **Lebanon**. The High Representative will debrief the Council on her visit to the region, and ministers will touch upon diplomatic efforts for de-escalation, freedom of navigation in the Straits of Hormuz, as well as support to the Gulf countries.

The Council will then discuss how to best support the transition in **Syria** in preparation of the first EU-Syria High-level political dialogue planned for 11 May.

Lastly, the Council will exchange views on **Israel/Palestine**. The Council will take stock of the implementation of the **Comprehensive Plan to end the Gaza Conflict** (UNSC Resolution 2803 of 17 November 2025) and will elaborate on EU support to the peace process, in the light of the 20 April meeting of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the **Two-State Solution**. The situation in the **West Bank** and EU engagement through **CSDP missions** will also be raised.

[Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the ceasefire agreed by the United States and Iran \(9 April 2026\)](#)

[European Council conclusions 19 March 2026](#)

[Timeline - Iran and the Middle East \(background information\)](#)

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

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

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

South Caucasus

EU ministers will exchange views on EU relations with **South Caucasus**, developments in the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process and the EU's support to it.

Concerning **Armenia**, the FAC is expected to touch on the EU-Armenia relations ahead of the first Summit -that will take place on 5 May, i.e. a month ahead of the country's parliamentary elections on 7 June. Furthermore, the Council is expected to adopt a decision establishing a new civilian CSDP mission in Armenia alongside the on-going EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA). The aim of the new mission is to enhance Armenia's democratic resilience.

The Council will also discuss EU relations with **Azerbaijan**. Ministers will elaborate in particular on the parameters for possible EU reengagement with the country, taking into account the outcome of the visit of the President of the European Council to Baku on 11 March.

Lastly, the Council will discuss developments in **Georgia** and EU pressure in the context of the current democratic backsliding.

[First ever EU-Armenia summit to take place on 4 and 5 May 2026 \(26 March 2026\)](#)

[Joint press statement following the 6th meeting of the EU-Armenia Partnership Council \(3 December 2026\)](#)

[Armenia \(background information\)](#)

[Joint press statement by President of the European Council, António Costa, and President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev \(11 March 2026\)](#)

[Azerbaijan \(background information\)](#)

[Georgia \(background information\)](#)

Sudan

More than three years after the start of the war on 15 April 2023, the Council will exchange views on **Sudan**, where fighting continues between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and their respective affiliated militias amidst unprecedented violations, a catastrophic humanitarian situation, and the largest displacement crisis worldwide.

The discussion will take place in the aftermath of the **3rd International Sudan Conference**, which took place on 15 April 2026 in Berlin, and was co-hosted by the EU together with France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States and the African Union.

At the FAC, ministers will discuss how the EU can help end the conflict in Sudan in line with the Council conclusions approved at the October FAC. The EU stands ready to continue exerting **pressure on both belligerents**.

[Co-Host Communiqué - International Sudan Conference Berlin \(15 April 2026 - Federal Foreign Office\)](#)

[EU and Member States pledge over €811 million in response to crisis in Sudan - European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations \(15 April 2026 – European Commission\)](#)

[Sudan: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union \(20 November 2025\)](#)

[Sudan: Council approves conclusions on the ongoing conflict \(20 October 2025\)](#)

[Sudan \(background information\)](#)

Any other business and other decisions

During the Council meeting Latvia -supported by various member states- will raise the issue of the participation of Russia in Venice Biennale 2026. Lithuania will inform the Council about the recent decision of the Belarus Supreme Court to label the European Humanities University (EHU) an "extremist organisation". The Belgian minister will debrief the Council on his mission to the Western Balkans.

The Council is expected to approve conclusions on **Energy and Climate Diplomacy**.

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