



Brussels, 4 December 2009

BACKGROUND¹
FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL
Tuesday 8 December in Brussels

*The Council will start on Tuesday at 9.00. It will discuss the situation in the **Western Balkans**, the **Middle East** peace process, and **Iran**.*

*Foreign ministers and EU High Representative Catherine Ashton will hold a working dinner on Monday 7 December, starting at 19.30, to discuss the role of the **EU as a global actor**.*

A presidency press conference will be held at the end of the Council: on Tuesday at +/- 13.00.

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Meetings in the margins of the Council:

Monday, 7 December at 10.00 :

- EU-Morocco Association Council, *to be followed by a press conference (+/- 11.00).*

Tuesday, 8 December at 15.30 :

- Ministerial meeting with the countries of the EU's Eastern Partnership, *to be followed by a press conference (+/- 17.00).*

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Press conferences and public events can be followed by video streaming:

<http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>

Video coverage of the event will be available for preview and download in broadcast quality (MPEG4) on <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office

Western Balkans

The Council will discuss the situation in the Western Balkans, in particular Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

The discussion will focus on the mandate and future of the EU's operation in BiH, EUFOR Althea.

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on this issue.

Middle East

The Council will discuss the situation in the Middle East, and in particular the current impasse in the peace process.

It is expected to call for an urgent resumption of negotiations that would lead to a two-state solution.

It is expected to reconfirm its support for efforts by the United States to resume negotiations on all final status issues.

The Council will debate the recent decision of the Israeli government on a partial and temporary settlement freeze as a first step.

In view of recent incidents, it will also discuss the situation in East Jerusalem and Gaza.

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on these issues.

Iran

The Council will discuss Iran, in particular the nuclear dossier, the situation regarding human rights and the EU's relations with Iran.

Other issues

The Council is expected to agree on conclusions on Iraq, the Horn of Africa, climate change and security, human rights and democratisation in third countries, EU guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law, and Latin America.
