

FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council in Brussels 15 August 2014

The Council will start at 12.00, presided by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton.

The Council will discuss developments in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood (Ukraine) and its Southern neighbourhood (notably Iraq- the Council is also expected to discuss the situation in Gaza and Libya). The Ministers will also discuss Ebola.

The Council is expected to adopt Conclusions on Iraq, MEPP (the situation in Gaza), Libya and Ukraine.

Press conferences:

Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council - 15 August, +/- 18.00

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*Press conferences and public events by video streaming: video.consilium.europa.eu.
Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4): tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu.
Photographic library for photos in high resolution: www.consilium.europa.eu/photo.
Livestream of arrivals and press conference on EbS: ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs*

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

Southern neighbourhood

The Council will discuss the rapidly deteriorating situation in Iraq. The EU has strongly condemned the latest attacks by the so called "Islamic State" (IS) and other armed groups, and was appalled by the rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation with hundreds of thousands civilians, mainly from minorities, fleeing the areas of conflict as a result of persecution and violation of basic human rights.

The EU and its Member States are already providing urgent humanitarian aid to the civilian population, together with other international partners, directly and through UN agencies and non-governmental organisations. They underlined the need for urgent and increased international coordinated humanitarian support, as well as the necessity to access the increasing number of people forced to flee the conflict. In that context, the European Commission announced last Tuesday that it would be increasing its humanitarian aid to Iraq by an additional €5 million in response to the growing needs, bringing the overall funding for Iraq up to €17 million in 2014. [Read more about this here.](#)

The EU welcomed the efforts by the US and partners to stop the ISIL/ISIS advance and facilitate access for humanitarian support. They also welcomed the nomination of a Prime Minister designate and expressed continued support for the constitutional process, underlining the importance of a political solution to the current crisis and the urgent formation of an inclusive Government.

At a PSC meeting earlier this week, EU Member States noted the urgent request by the Kurdish regional authorities to certain Member States for military support and underlined the need to consider this request in close coordination with the Iraqi authorities, as required by the arms embargo and the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, while stressing the importance of coordination with international partners. EEAS services are consulting with neighbouring countries of Iraq and partners in order to develop options for further EU action.

The Council is also expected to address the Middle East Peace Process, in particular the situation in the Gaza Strip. The EU welcomed the announcement of a further extension of the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and commends all efforts, particularly those of Egypt, to reach an agreement that can be extended into a lasting ceasefire.

The European Union stands ready to contribute to a comprehensive and sustainable solution meeting the security, welfare and prosperity needs of Palestinians and Israelis alike. At the invitation of Member States and based on the outcome of the Cairo talks, the EEAS is developing options for robust comprehensive EU action following a ceasefire.

Ministers may also discuss the deterioration of the security situation in Libya. The EU is deeply concerned by reports of escalating violence in Tripoli and Benghazi and indiscriminate attacks that harm civilians and their property. The EU has consistently urged all parties to actively cooperate with UNSMIL, and encourages the Council of Representatives to carry out its tasks in a spirit of inclusiveness, moderation and in the interest of the country.

Further reference Southern neighbourhood:

On Gaza:

[Joint statement by the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, and the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso in the name of the European Union on the situation in Gaza](#)

[Statement by the Spokesperson on the first meeting of the Libyan Council of Representatives](#)

On Iraq:

[EU increases humanitarian aid](#)

[Statement by the Spokesperson of the EU High Representative on the nomination of Mr Haider Al Abadi as Prime Minister designate of Iraq](#)

[Statement by the EU High Representative on the deterioration of the situation in Iraq](#)

Eastern neighbourhood (Ukraine)

The Council will exchange views on the situation in Ukraine.

The EU's overall goal is to bring a solution to the crisis in Ukraine based on the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, as well as strict adherence to international standards. The signature of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement on 27 June is a milestone: stronger political and economic ties will bring greater stability, prosperity to the European continent.

The EU calls on Russia to engage in a meaningful dialogue with Ukraine instead of isolating itself further diplomatically and economically. Europe stands ready to facilitate such a dialogue and supports all multilateral initiatives towards that aim. EU's meeting with Ukraine, US and Russia of 17 April in Geneva and joint statement remain a basis for meaningful dialogue and de-escalation, stabilisation of the situation in and around Ukraine.

The European Union regrets the announcement by the Russian Federation of measures which will target imports of food and agricultural products. The EU notes that the legislation concerned provides no justification whatsoever of the legal bases of such measures. The European Union's restrictive measures are directly linked with the illegal annexation of Crimea and destabilisation of Ukraine. At a PSC meeting earlier this week, EU Member States were briefed about European Commission [President Barroso's phone calls with President Poroshenko and President Putin on the situation in Ukraine](#), had a preliminary discussion about the impact of the Russian retaliation to EU sanctions and its legality, and emphasized the need to share with third countries the EU assessment of the situation in this regard.

The EU is following with concern developments related to the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. It considers in particular essential to address this situation in full respect of independence, neutrality and impartiality and with the clear consent of Ukrainian authorities, to further mobilize the international community in this regard, to support the capacity of Ukrainian administration in the delivery of humanitarian aid and to coordinate the relevant Member States' interventions. In that context, The European Commission announced it would provide additional funding of €2.5 million to assist the most vulnerable people affected by the continuing fighting in Eastern Ukraine. [Read more about this here](#).

For more details, see the [factsheet on EU-Ukraine relations \(updated 30 July\)](#) and [EU-Ukraine FAQ \(12 June\)](#).