



FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

19 June 2017 (Luxembourg)

The Council, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, will start at 9.00. It will first take stock of the implementation of the **EU Global Strategy** and adopt conclusions on maritime security.

Foreign ministers will then discuss **EU-NATO cooperation**, on the basis of a joint report by the High Representative and the Secretary-General of NATO. The Council will adopt conclusions on progress in EU-NATO cooperation.

The Council will hold a debate on **counter-terrorism** and adopt conclusions that build on the conclusions adopted on 9 February 2015.

Foreign Ministers will have a discussion on the external aspects of **migration**, in preparation for the European Council of 22-23 June. One year after the launch of the partnership framework, foreign ministers will take stock of the progress made, on the basis of the 4th progress report by the High representative and the Commission of 13 June.

The Council will also discuss **Iraq** and adopt conclusions.

Over lunch, foreign ministers will discuss the **Gulf crisis**.

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions without debate on the United States Administration's decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement; a framework for a joint EU diplomatic response to malicious cyber activities ("cyber diplomacy toolbox"); the Africa-EU partnership; Mali and the Sahel; the EU strategy for Central Asia; civil society in external relations; and on the Court of Auditors' special report on 'EU Assistance to Tunisia'.

The Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting will take place after the Council, in preparation for the Eastern Partnership Summit scheduled for 24 November in Brussels.

Press opportunities:

- +/- 8.45 (tbc) Doorstep statement by High Representative Federica Mogherini
- +/- 14.30 Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council
- +/- 18.00 (tbc) Doorstep following the Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting

[Press conferences and public events by video streaming](#)

[Video coverage in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

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

Implementation of the EU Global Strategy

The Council will have a discussion on the implementation of the EU Global Strategy, almost one year after its presentation to the European Council.

The discussion is expected to cover all of the **five priority areas** for work on the implementation of the EU Global Strategy, which includes:

- security and defence,
- building resilience and an integrated approach to conflicts and crises,
- strengthening the nexus between internal and external policies,
- updating existing or preparing new regional and thematic strategies and
- stepping up public diplomacy efforts.

In its conclusions on the EU Global Strategy of 17 October 2016, the Council put the emphasis for the first year of implementation on the security of the Union, the resilience of states and societies in the East and South, and an integrated approach to conflicts and crises.

At recent Foreign Affairs Council meetings, the focus has been on **security and defence**, an area in which progress has been achieved at a very fast pace. Council conclusions on implementing the Global Strategy in the area of security and defence were adopted on 18 May.

At the forthcoming Foreign Affairs Council, ministers may focus on **resilience**, reviewing the proposals made in the joint communication on resilience by the High Representative and the Commission on 7 June 2017. The communication aims at moving towards a more structural, long-term approach to vulnerabilities, with an emphasis on better anticipation of pressures and shocks affecting the ability of states to maintain their core functions, or that can undermine societal cohesion. They may also share their views on the definition of an **EU integrated approach to external conflicts and crises**.

As one of the strands of work in implementing the EU Global Strategy, the Council is due to adopt **conclusions on global maritime security**. In the conclusions, the Council is expected to highlight the role of the EU as a **global maritime security provider** in promoting maritime multilateralism and the rule of law at sea. It is due to encourage the continuous implementation of the EU maritime security strategy and its accompanying action plan.

The High Representative presented the EU global strategy "Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe" to the European Council on 28 June. The strategy is intended to guide EU foreign and security policy in the years to come. The European Council welcomed the presentation and invited the High Representative, the Commission and the Council to take the work forward. The Council adopted conclusions on the EU Global Strategy on 17 October 2016.

[Joint communication on "A Strategic approach to resilience in the EU's external action" by the High Representative and the Commission of 7 June 2017 - press release](#)

[Security and defence cooperation \(timeline\)](#)

[Council conclusions on the EU Global Strategy of 17 October 2016](#)

[EU Global Strategy on foreign and security policy \(website\)](#)

EU-NATO Cooperation

Foreign ministers will discuss **EU-NATO cooperation**, following up on the discussions held by defence ministers at their Council meeting of 18 May. The discussion will be fed by a joint progress report by the High Representative/Vice President/Head of Agency and the Secretary-General of NATO. NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller will be present for this discussion. The Council will adopt **conclusions on the report**, welcoming progress made in the implementation of the common set of proposals and calling for further steps in the same direction.

The report highlights the width and depth of the EU-NATO relationship and outlines the key results obtained so far in the implementation of the common set of proposals, that is the 42 actions endorsed by the respective Councils of both organisations in December 2016. The report underlines the progress made in the 7 areas identified in the 2016 Joint Declaration, and achieved, for instance on countering hybrid threats, on cyber defence, on defence capabilities, or on the defence industry and research. Cooperation and coordination in the Mediterranean Sea between EUNAVFOR Operation Sophia and NATO Operation Sea Guardian has also been advanced.

The 7 areas identified in the Joint Declaration President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the Secretary General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg:

- boosting common ability to counter **hybrid threats**;
- broadening and adapting **operational cooperation** including at sea, and on migration
- expanding coordination on **cyber security and defence**;
- developing coherent, complementary and interoperable **defence capabilities** of EU Member States and NATO Allies, as well as multilateral projects;
- facilitating a stronger **defence industry** and greater **defence research** and industrial cooperation within Europe and across the Atlantic;
- stepping up **coordination on exercises** and
- building the defence and security capacity and fostering the resilience of **partners**.

EU-NATO cooperation is an integral part of the EU's broader ongoing work to strengthen common security and defence. At a time of unprecedented security challenges at regional and global level, strengthening cooperation between the two organisations is essential.

In its conclusions of 6 December 2016, the Council highlighted that the Joint Declaration gives new impetus and substance to EU-NATO cooperation in several areas, and that the implementation of the Joint Declaration is a key political priority for the EU.

[EU cooperation on security and defence](#)

[EU-NATO cooperation - Factsheet](#)

[EU-NATO cooperation: Council adopt conclusions to implement Joint Declaration](#)

["Taking EU-NATO cooperation to a new level" - Joint op-ed by President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg](#)

Counter-terrorism

The Council will debate the external aspects of counter-terrorism, a timely discussion in the light of the recent attacks in the EU and beyond. It will adopt **conclusions on EU external action on counter-terrorism**.

The foreign affairs ministers' discussion follows the joint debate between home affairs ministers and defence ministers held on 18 May, whose focus was on improving cooperation and information exchange between military and law enforcement structures and the need to enhance cooperation between Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) actors.

The Council is expected to reiterate its **strong and unequivocal condemnation of terrorism** in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever and for whatever purpose. Noting that terrorism constitutes **one of the most serious threats to international peace and security** and that the EU has a vital interest in continuing to work with partners at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels in countering this diverse threat, the Council will address in its conclusions:

- **Counter-terrorism structures**, to reinforce the EU's capacity to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation, including in EU delegations through counter-terrorism / security experts;
- **Internal-external nexus**, to ensure greater coherence between internal and external actions in the field of security, strengthening the role of JHA agencies with regard to third countries, and noting that with the addition of the fight against terrorism to the Feira missions through the Council conclusions of May 2017, CSDP missions and operations have a stronger role in combating terrorism;
- **Strengthened cooperation** with the Middle-East and North Africa, Western Balkans, Turkey, Sahel and the Horn of Africa, through enhanced political dialogue, more counter-terrorism projects and financial support for counter-terrorism and countering and preventing violent extremism, and reinforced strategic communications, in particular through StratComms Task Force South;
- **Strengthened international cooperation**, in particular with key strategic partners, such as the United States, Australia, Canada and the Schengen partners as well as regional and multilateral bodies, in particular the United Nations, NATO, the Global Counter-terrorism Forum, Interpol and the Global Coalition against Da'esh.
- **Strengthening the EU response in key thematic areas**, such as preventing and countering violent extremism, the need to effectively address online recruitment and radicalisation, the acute challenge of foreign terrorist fighters, in particular the issue of returnees, aviation security, firearms trafficking, the issue of terrorist financing and money laundering and the links between serious and organised crime and terrorism.

The Council last adopted conclusions on counter-terrorism on 9 February 2015, in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attacks (January 2015), and these remain the cornerstone of the EU's external engagement on counter-terrorism. Since then, the EU's work in this area has considerably intensified. On Monday 19 June, foreign ministers will provide further guidance to strengthen even more cooperation in this field, including through the Council conclusions.

[Council conclusions on counter-terrorism of 9 February 2015](#)

[EU fight against terrorism \(background information\)](#)

Migration

EU foreign ministers will have a discussion on the external aspects of **migration**, in preparation for the European Council of 22-23 June. One year after the launch of the partnership framework, foreign ministers will take stock of the progress made regarding the EU's comprehensive approach to effectively manage the external aspects of migration in key countries of origin and transit, on the basis of the 4th progress report by the High Representative and the Commission on 13 June.

The report shows that the partnership has stimulated partner countries in Africa to **better tackle irregular migration and to fight smuggling networks**. Joint efforts have helped increase assisted voluntary returns of stranded migrants, and supported job creation and social projects. Increased efforts have also taken place along the Central Mediterranean migration route since the adoption of the Joint Communication on the Central Mediterranean Route and the Malta Declaration. This has led to a more efficient cooperation with partner countries and international partners such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Better coordination between the EU and member states has increased the EU leverage on partners. However, it should be further stepped up to improve delivery, notably on reducing the irregular arrivals of migrants to the EU and enhancing cooperation between the EU and partner countries to ensure returns and readmission.

[Partnership Framework on Migration: Commission reports on results and lessons learnt one year on, press release of 13 June 2017](#)

[Finding solution to migratory pressure](#)

Iraq

Foreign ministers will discuss the situation in Iraq, focussing on the latest developments, in particular in **Mosul** and Nineveh province, and on the future stabilisation of the country. The Council will adopt conclusions on Iraq.

In its conclusions, the Council is expected to highly commend the Iraqi Government of Prime Minister al-Abadi and the Iraqi security forces for the significant advances they have made in the military campaign against Da'esh over the past months. It is also due to reiterate its steadfast support for **Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity**.

The Council will emphasise the importance of an **inclusive process of reconciliation** both at national and local level and the need to make tangible progress on political reforms to enable full national reconciliation.

The EU is set to express its highest concern about the **humanitarian situation**. The EU remains fully engaged through its humanitarian assistance, with € 159 million in 2016 and EUR 42 million in 2017 so far for humanitarian support to populations most affected by the conflict.

[Council conclusions on the EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the Da'esh threat of 25 May 2016](#)

[Delegation of the EU to Iraq](#)

[EU humanitarian assistance to Iraq \(ECHO factsheet\)](#)

Gulf crisis

Over lunch, foreign ministers will discuss the **current diplomatic crisis** in the Gulf region, taking stock of most recent developments and ongoing mediation efforts.

[Remarks by the High Representative Federica Mogherini following her meeting with the Foreign Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, 9 June 2017](#)

Other items

The Council is expected to adopt without debate a number of conclusions and decisions.

Climate change - Paris Agreement

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on **the United States Administration's decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement**. The Council is expected to **deeply regret** this unilateral decision and to welcome the numerous strong statements of **commitment** to the Paris Agreement from countries ranging from major economies to small island states.

The conclusions will be adopted by the Council (Foreign Affairs). Environment ministers will discuss this matter in public session the same day.

[Paris Agreement on climate change](#)

Framework for a joint EU diplomatic response to malicious cyber activities ("cyber diplomacy toolbox")

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on a framework for a joint EU diplomatic response to malicious cyber activities - the cyber diplomacy toolbox. The conclusions set out the political intention to **strengthen the EU's diplomatic response to malicious cyber activities**.

The framework for a joint EU diplomatic response is part of the **EU's approach to cyber diplomacy**, which contributes to conflict prevention, the mitigation of cybersecurity threats and greater stability in international relations. The framework is expected to encourage cooperation, facilitate mitigation of immediate and long-term threats, and influence the behaviour of potential aggressors in the long term.

The EU diplomatic response to malicious cyber activities will make full use of **measures within the Common Foreign and Security Policy**, including, if necessary, restrictive measures. A joint EU response to malicious cyber activities would be **proportionate** to the scope, scale, duration, intensity, complexity, sophistication and impact of the cyber activity.

[Read the full text of the Council conclusions to be adopted on Monday 19 June](#)

[Council conclusions on cyber diplomacy of 11 February 2015](#)

Africa - EU partnership

Following the debate held by foreign ministers on 15 May, the Council is expected to adopt conclusions on a **renewed impetus for the Africa-EU partnership**. The conclusions are expected to state that the EU has a genuine strategic interest in deepening and strengthening its longstanding partnership with Africa. The Council is due to welcome the adoption of the joint communication by the High Representative and the Commission for a renewed impetus of the Africa-EU partnership.

The conclusions prepare the Africa-EU Summit to take place in November, whose theme is "Investing in youth", which has become a key priority for Europe as well as for Africa, in a context of African demographic trends creating major challenges in terms of economic development and job creation, security, political participation and migration.

[Joint communication for a renewed impetus for the Africa-EU partnership](#) (including links to the document and press material: press release, factsheets, Q&A)

[EU-Africa relations](#)

Mali and the Sahel

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on Mali and the Sahel, recalling its a **strong integrated approach towards achieving stabilisation of the region**, by deploying the full range of relevant instruments in the field of diplomacy, long-term development cooperation, support to human rights, stabilisation efforts, resilience building, humanitarian assistance, migration management and security, including CSDP missions.

The Council is set to reiterate its full support to the implementation of the **Malian Peace and Reconciliation Agreement**, with full involvement of civil society, women and youth, as the only way to restore peace and security in the country. The High Representative's participation on 5 June 2017 to the *Comité de suivi de l'accord de paix* (CSA) in Bamako confirms the strong commitment of the EU to the agreement.

The Council is also expected to adopt a decision to support **regionalisation of CSDP missions in the Sahel region** (EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUTM Mali) to support cross-border cooperation in the Sahel. The Council decision will allow for the establishment of a regional coordination cell within EUCAP Sahel Mali, including internal security and defence experts in G5 Sahel countries.

[EU Delegation to Mali](#)

[EUCAP Sahel Mali](#)

EU strategy for Central Asia

10 years after the adoption of the first Central Asia strategy, the Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the EU strategy for the region. The Council is set to emphasise that Central Asian countries have become **significant partners of the EU** and to welcome the **progress achieved** under partnerships with the EU. The Council is also due to reaffirm the EU's commitment to develop stronger relations and highlight the need to **strengthen dialogue and cooperation on human rights, education, sustainability** as well as on tackling emerging **security challenges** faced by the Central Asian countries.

EU-Central Asia relations are developed under the EU strategy for Central Asia signed in 2007 and reviewed in 2015. The Council will invite the High Representative and the Commission to come forward with a proposal for a new Strategy by the end of 2019 in accordance with the EU Global Strategy.

[EU relations with Central Asia \(EEAS webpage\)](#)

Civil society in external relations

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on engagement with **civil society in external relations**. The Council is set to recognise the many different roles that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play as promoters of democracy, and as defenders of rights holders, the rule of law, social justice and human rights. The conclusions are due to underline the crucial importance of CSOs for the successful implementation of the EU Global Strategy and the 2030 Agenda, including in the realisation of the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs).

At a time when the space for civil society is shrinking in an increasing number of countries, the Council is expected to reaffirm the EU's opposition to any unjustified restrictions on freedom of association, expression and peaceful assembly that hinder the work of CSOs. The conclusions underline the EU's commitment to play an important role **in promoting stronger positions on civic freedoms and against any reduction in the space for civil society to act**.

Sanctions in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol

The Council is due to renew the restrictive measures in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia for one year, that is, until 23 June 2018.

The measures apply to EU persons and EU-based companies. They are limited to the territory of Crimea and Sevastopol. The sanctions include **prohibitions** on:

- **imports of products** originating in Crimea or Sevastopol into the EU;
- **investment** in Crimea or Sevastopol, meaning that no Europeans nor EU-based companies can buy real estate or entities in Crimea, finance Crimean companies or supply related services;
- **tourism services** in Crimea or Sevastopol, in particular, European cruise ships cannot call at ports in the Crimean peninsula, except in case of emergency;
- **exports of certain goods and technologies** to Crimean companies or for use in Crimea in the **transport, telecommunications and energy sectors** and related to the prospection, exploration and production of **oil, gas and mineral resources**. Technical assistance, brokering, construction or engineering services related to infrastructure in these sectors must not be provided either.

As stated in the declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on 17 March 2017, the EU continues to **condemn the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol** by the Russian Federation and remains committed to fully implementing its non-recognition policy.

[EU restrictive measures in response to the crisis in Ukraine](#)

[Declaration by the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU on Crimea of 17 March](#)

In the margins

Eastern partnership ministerial meeting

The meeting will be chaired by High Representative Federica Mogherini with the participation of EU Commissioner Johannes Hahn. It will bring together EU foreign ministers and their counterparts in the six Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) to exchange views on the EaP summit to be held in November 2017 in Brussels.

The summit will be the opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved since the last summit in Riga in 2015, focusing on the tangible benefits delivered to the citizens of the six partners countries. The summit should also provide further guidance for strengthening cooperation in the four priority areas of engagement agreed in Riga: **a stronger governance**, to strengthen institutions and good governance; **a stronger society**, to increase mobility and people-to-people contacts; **a stronger economy**, to boost economic development and take advantage of market opportunities; **a stronger connectivity**, enhancing interconnections, notably in the areas of transport and energy.

A joint staff working document by the EEAS and the European Commission "Eastern Partnership - Focusing on key priorities and deliverables" identifying 20 deliverables for 2020 in these four areas was first presented in December 2016 and revised this month. In parallel, a more efficient and effective EaP multilateral structure is under discussion to better align it with the four policy priorities.

At the Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 15 May 2017, EU ministers exchanged views on the Eastern Partnership. They reiterated the crucial importance of the Eastern Partnership for the European Union, highlighting their unity in supporting the region and each individual EaP country in a tailored way. They also stressed their determination to deliver concrete results for the benefit of citizens, both in the EU and in the EaP countries.

In this context, they welcomed progress on visa liberalisation for Georgia and Ukraine and underlined the importance of the implementation of Association Agreements/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (AA/DCFTAs) and of reforms.

Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova signed association agreements with the EU, including deep and comprehensive free trade areas (DCFTAs) in 2014.

[Foreign Affairs Council, 15 May 2017](#)

[Council conclusions on review of the European Neighbourhood Policy \(14 November 2016\)](#)

[Joint staff working document: Eastern Partnership - Focusing on key priorities and deliverables](#)

[The Eastern Partnership summit](#)
