

## **FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council**

### **20 July 2015 in Brussels**

The Council, starting at 9.30, will be chaired by Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

The Council will have an exchange of views on **Iran**, taking into account the outcome of the negotiations on the **Iranian nuclear issue**.

Ministers will also discuss the situation in **Libya**, following the initialling of a political agreement by the majority of stakeholders. UN Special Representative Bernardino Leon will be present for the discussion.

The Council will then debate latest events in **Tunisia** and how to step up EU support for the country, both in the socio-economic field and in the security area. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions. Over lunch, ministers will be joined by both **Tunisia Prime Minister Habib Essid** and **Foreign Minister Taïeb Baccouche**. The discussion is expected to focus on the EU's comprehensive support to Tunisia and regional aspects.

After lunch foreign ministers will exchange views on what the EU can do to revive the **Middle East peace process** and improve the situation on the ground. The Council could adopt conclusions.

The Council will discuss and is expected to adopt an **EU action plan on human rights and democracy** for 2015 to 2019 "Keeping human rights at the heart of the EU agenda.

Finally, the High Representative will update ministers on climate change and the post-2015 agenda for sustainable development and on the operation EUNAVFOR Med. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina will also be touched upon.

A Stabilisation and Association Council with **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** will take place at 18.00 (TV/photo opportunity), chaired by Slovak Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák.

#### Press conferences:

- +/-14.30 Press statements by HR/VP Mogherini and Tunisia Prime Minister Habib Essid (tbc)
- 17.00 Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council
- 20.30 Press conference after the EU-former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Stabilisation and Association Council

\* \* \*

Press conferences and public events by video streaming: <http://video.consilium.europa.eu>

Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery on: [www.eucouncil.tv](http://www.eucouncil.tv)

\* \* \*

---

<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

## Iran

Ministers will have an exchange of view on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), agreed on 14 July in Vienna. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions.

[Joint statement by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif Vienna, 14 July 2015](#) (including links to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and its annexes)

[Statement by President Donald Tusk on the agreement on Iran's nuclear programme](#)

## Libya

The Council will take stock of the recent developments in the UN-led political dialogue between Libyan parties, as the initialling of a political agreement by the majority of stakeholders brings the country one step closer towards restoring peace and stability. UN Special Representative Bernardino León will be present for the discussion.

Ministers will discuss what more the EU can do to ensure the broadest possible support and ownership of the peace plan, inter-alia to encourage the General National Congress to add its signature without delay to the political agreement.

The EU fully supports the efforts of UN Special Representative Bernardino León to secure a negotiated settlement and an end to fighting. To support the negotiation process, the EU has co-funded the UN-led talks. In addition, the EU has organised meetings of Libyan business representatives as well as local leaders to increase grassroots support for a political solution.

In March, the Council signalled the EU's readiness to contribute to the successful implementation of an agreement on a national unity government, as soon as there is an agreement on such a government and related security arrangements. Ministers will discuss how to further support the efforts towards the formation of a government of national accord.

The Council has repeatedly stated the EU's readiness to introduce , if and when necessary, restrictive measures against the spoilers of the dialogue process. Any such decisions will be taken in full coordination with the UN Special Representative. EU sanctions were amended on 6 March 2015 to allow the for the possibility of autonomous sanctions; asset freezes and travel bans can be imposed on persons and entities involved in acts that threaten the peace, stability or security of Libya, or obstruct the political transition.

The conflict in Libya has caused a large number of refugees as well as 500.000 internally displaced persons. Overall EU support to Libya stands at €50 million, with an emphasis on humanitarian aid, migration, internally displaced people and support to civil society.

[Statement of the HR/VP Federica Mogherini on the political settlement in Libya, 12 July 2015](#)

[Council conclusions on Libya, 16 March 2015](#)

[EU Relations with Libya](#)

## Tunisia

The Council will discuss the latest events in Tunisia, namely the terrorist attack in Sousse on 26 June, coming after the Bardo attack on 18 March. Ministers will debate how to step up EU support for the country, in the political, socio-economic and security fields, including the fight against terrorism. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions.

Tunisia is facing three main challenges: a security issue, posed by both external and internal threats; a difficult socio-economic situation, notably for the youth; and the need to consolidate a still young and fragile democracy.

Ministers will exchange views on possible strengthened EU support in the area of security and counter-terrorism support; but also in the areas of trade, development assistance, macro-financial assistance, agriculture, migration and mobility and research and innovation.

Tunisia already benefits from significant EU bilateral cooperation funds: a bilateral envelope of more than EUR 100 million yearly since 2011, as well as the "more for more" funds (over EUR 70 million in 2015 under the Umbrella programme). In 2015, the EU expects to commit EUR 116,8 million to support the security sector, economic development, the sector of culture and decentralisation. The security sector reform programme, amounting to EUR 23 million should start to be implemented before the end of the year. It will cover institutional reform, including the training of security agents, integrated border management and support to intelligence services, in particular in context of counter-terrorism.

Over lunch, ministers will be joined by Prime Minister Essid and Foreign Minister Baccouche. This will be an opportunity for Ministers to reiterate their support to Tunisia.

[EU relations with the Republic of Tunisia](#)

## Middle East peace process

The Council will discuss the situation in the Middle East and prospects for the peace process. The Council could adopt conclusions.

The EU supports a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that should lead to an independent, contiguous and viable Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace and security. A comprehensive peace should fulfil the legitimate aspirations of both parties, including those of Israelis for security and those of Palestinians for statehood.

The EU has a strategic interest in ensuring an end to the conflict and is willing to actively contribute to a negotiated solution of all final status issues. The EU High Representative has declared her readiness to personally engage in order to facilitate further progress. EU Special Representative Fernando Gentilini will be present for the discussion.

[Council conclusions on the Middle East peace process, 17 November 2014](#)

## Human rights and democracy action plan

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on a new EU action plan on human rights and democracy for 2015-2019 "Keeping human rights at the heart of the EU agenda". The Council will thereby reaffirm the EU's commitment to promote and protect human rights and to support democracy worldwide.

The new action plan aims to reinforce the implementation of the EU's human rights policy with a special emphasis on ownership by local institutions, mechanisms and civil society actors and on support to human rights defenders. The action plan brings a renewed commitment to the mainstreaming of human rights into all the EU's activities and policies, including in development co-operation, migration and asylum, counterterrorism as well as trade and investment.

The action plan identifies five strategic areas of actions: boosting ownership of local actors; addressing human rights challenges; ensuring a comprehensive human rights approach to conflicts and crises; fostering better coherence and consistency; and ensuring a more effective human rights and democracy support policy.

The first action plan on human rights and democracy was adopted in 2012. The Council is due to recognise that since then, the EU has made considerable progress in improving the impact and coherence of its actions on human rights and democracy. The EU has further developed guidelines on key human rights issues, enhanced the effectiveness of bilateral human rights and democracy work, successfully promoted action at the multilateral level, and improved the mainstreaming of human rights across the EU's external action.

The Council also welcomes the important work of the EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis, who greatly contributes to the effectiveness, coherence and visibility of EU human rights policy. Mr. Lambrinidis will be present for the discussion.

[EU action plan on human rights and democracy for 2015-2019 "Keeping human rights at the heart of the EU agenda"](#)

[Protection and promotion of human rights](#)

## **EUNAVFOR Med**

The High Representative will update ministers on the progress made by EUNAVFOR Med, the EU naval operation to disrupt the business model of human smugglers in the Mediterranean. The mission was launched by the Council on 22 June.

The first phase of the operation has operationally started and focuses on surveillance and assessment of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean.

[EU NAVFOR Med](#)

[Council launches EU naval operation to disrupt human smugglers and traffickers in the Mediterranean](#)

[Finding solutions to migratory pressures](#)

## **Climate change/ Post-2015 agenda for sustainable development**

The Council will touch upon climate change and the post-2015 development agenda, the new framework for the international community's efforts towards poverty eradication and sustainable development. It will be a useful opportunity to take stock of the state of play, following the 3rd UN Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa (13-16 July) and ahead of the UN summit on post-2015 in New York (25-27 September) and the UN climate conference in Paris (30 November-11 December).

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on climate diplomacy.

On 19 January, the Council discussed the climate diplomacy action plan for 2015. It sets out planned contacts with third countries to prepare the Paris climate conference in December 2015. The meeting is aimed at agreeing an international legally binding agreement to keep global warming below 2°C. Ministers supported the proposed EU outreach and the coordination of efforts between the EU and its member states.

The Council is expected to state that climate change is a decisive global challenge which, if not urgently managed, will put at risk not only the environment but also world economic prosperity, development and, more broadly, stability and security.

The Council is due to recall that Paris climate conference needs to deliver an agreement that is robust, inclusive, dynamic and ambitious, with strong rules and transparency to ensure trust between the parties.

## **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

Commissioner Hahn will report on the agreement reached in Skopje for a solution of the political crisis.

[Statement by Commissioner Hahn and MEPs Vajgl, Howitt and Kukan: Agreement in Skopje to overcome political crisis](#)

[The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia](#)

[Council conclusions on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 23 June 2015](#)

## Other items

The Council is expected to take a number of decisions without discussion ("A-items"):

### Energy diplomacy

Following the debate held on 22 June, the Council is expected to adopt conclusions on energy diplomacy.

EU foreign policy can support the realisation of the EU's Energy Union. The Energy Union sets out to increase the EU's energy security while reducing the EU's carbon footprint and making the EU a leader in renewable energy.

Foreign policy plays a significant role in meeting these objectives, given that energy and geopolitics are closely linked.

The Council is set to endorse an action plan with concrete EU foreign policy measures to support the implementation of the Energy Union. It has four objectives:

- Strengthen the strategic guidance through regular high-level engagement.
- Establish and further develop energy cooperation and dialogues with increasingly important producing, transit states, countries of the neighbourhood as well as key global and regional strategic partners and interlocutors.
- Support efforts to enhance the global energy architecture and multilateral initiatives.
- Strengthen common messages and energy diplomacy capacities.

See:

[Energy Union: secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy for Europe](#)

[European Council conclusions of 19-20 March 2015](#)

Commission communication "[A framework strategy for a resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy](#)", 25 February 2015

### Migration

The Council could adopt conclusions on the external aspects of migration policy, as a broad foreign and security policy approach is essential to strengthen cooperation with countries of origin and transit in both addressing root causes of irregular migration and managing migratory flows.

[Finding solutions to migratory pressures](#)

### Mali

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on Mali. It is due to welcome the Mali Peace Agreement signed on 20 June by all parties and to recognise the agreement as an important milestone on the road to peace and stability in Mali and the wider Sahel Region/ The Council is expected to underline that the first step, however, must be an absolute and durable respect of the current ceasefire agreement and to reaffirm the EU's readiness to support the implementation of the peace agreement, through all means at its disposal.

The Council will take note that the situation on the ground remains fragile as shown by the recent attacks on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) forces. In this context the Council will underline the importance of bringing the perpetrators to justice, stressing that all parties must ensure the protection of civilians, including UN personnel and humanitarian workers.

## **Central African Republic**

The Council is due to adopt conclusions on the Central African Republic, welcoming the efforts accomplished over the last months by the transition authorities. The Council is expected to recognise the contribution to the country stabilisation of all international troops present on the ground. The Council will welcome the progress made over the last weeks in the preparation of the elections but will also underline the need for quick progress on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration and security sector reform processes.

## **Afghanistan**

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on Afghanistan and endorse the first annual report of the EU Afghanistan strategy 2014-16.

## **Pakistan**

The Council is due to adopt conclusions on Pakistan and to endorse the 2015 implementation report on the EU-Pakistan 5-year Engagement Plan.

## **In the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council**

### **EU- the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

The 12th **Stabilisation and Association Council** with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will take place in the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council on 20 July at 18.00.

The Foreign Minister of Slovakia, Miroslav Lajčák, representing the country holding the rotating Presidency of the Council in 2016, will chair the meeting on behalf of the High Representative.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement entered into force in 2004 and is at the core of the relationship between the EU and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia until the country's accession to the EU, as the country obtained EU candidate status in December 2005. The Stabilisation and Association agreement provides the contractual framework within which the EU and the country co-operate and take stock of developments in their relationship.

[The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia](#)