



Foreign Affairs Council (Defence)

12 November 2019

The Foreign Affairs Council (Defence), chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, will start at 10.00. Defence ministers will have a **discussion on security and defence issues**, with a particular focus on PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) and on coherence among EU defence initiatives.

Defence ministers will then have an exchange of views on **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations**. They will assess the current state of deployment as well as possible challenges and areas of improvement.

Over lunch, defence ministers will exchange views on **EU-NATO cooperation** with the newly appointed NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoana. It will be an opportunity for him to brief EU defence ministers on the state of play of preparations for the NATO Leaders' Meeting that will take place on 3-4 December, in London.

The Council is expected to adopt a number of decisions and conclusions without debate, including a Council decision adopting 13 new PESCO projects, as well as the 2019 report by the Head of the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the 2020 Council guidelines for the EDA's work in 2020.

Before the Council meeting, the **EDA steering board meeting** will meet at 8h30. The discussion will focus on the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). The steering board is expected to adopt the EDA 2020 budget and staff establishment plan and the EDA three-year planning framework 2020-2022.

See also: background note on the Foreign Affairs Council (foreign ministers, 11 November)

Press opportunities:

+/- 14.45 Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council

[Council meeting page](#)

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

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

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

Security and Defence issues

Defence ministers will start with a forward-looking strategic discussion on security and defence issues. They may review the work that has been achieved and future priorities on security and defence cooperation and reflect on further ways for the EU to enhance its capacity to act as a security provider, its strategic autonomy and its ability to cooperate with partners.

The discussion is expected to focus particularly on PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) and on the coherence among EU defence initiatives (Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, PESCO and the European Defence Fund). The Council is also expected to adopt a decision launching thirteen new PESCO projects.

PESCO

The Council adopted a decision establishing PESCO on 11 December 2017. PESCO enables participating member states to work more closely together in the area of security and defence. This permanent framework for defence cooperation allows willing and able member states to develop jointly defence capabilities, invest in shared projects, and enhance the operational readiness and contribution of their armed forces.

The 25 member states participating in PESCO are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

The Council agreed on 17 initial projects on 11 December 2017 and formally adopted them on 6 March 2018. The Council adopted 17 additional projects on 11 November 2018. The projects cover areas such as training, capability development and operational readiness on land, at sea and in the air, as well as cyber-defence.

Coherence

Welcoming the 2019 High Representative/Head of the Agency Report on interactions, linkages and coherence among EU defence initiatives, the Council, in its June conclusions, called for continuous efforts to further increase synergies, consistency and mutual reinforcement, with a view to strengthening defence cooperation.

Efforts aimed at delivering the capabilities needed to help the EU achieve its Level of Ambition in security and defence continue in a number of priority areas. These efforts include: using the refined guidance on the EU Capability Development Priorities as continuous common reference; facilitating coherent sequencing of processes; enhancing coordination between EU actors supporting the EU defence initiatives; embedding EU tools and processes in national planning; and strengthening the link between capability development and CSDP operational engagement.

In this context, the Council will review progress and pave the way for the second report on coherence due in May 2020. It will provide further guidance on improving links and synergies between relevant EU defence initiatives.

[EU cooperation on security and defence \(background information\)](#)

[Factsheet on permanent Structured Cooperation \(PESCO\) \(EEAS\)](#)

CSDP missions and operations

Defence ministers will discuss CSDP missions and operations. The session is expected to provide an opportunity for a *tour d'horizon* of the current CSDP deployments, reflecting on achievements, challenges and areas for further improvement. In this context, the importance of the EU's engagement in the Sahel could be underlined, as well as the relevance of the naval operations and the ongoing work on the coordinated maritime presences.

There are currently 16 missions and operations, both military (6) and civilian (10).

The EU has 3 military executive operations, EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia (in the Central Mediterranean), EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta (in the Indian Ocean), and EUFOR Althea (in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

The EU has 3 military training missions, EUTM Somalia, EUTM Mali and EUTM RCA (Central African Republic). The Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) has responsibility for the operational planning and conduct of the three training missions since its establishment in June 2017 within the EU Military Staff of the EEAS.

The 10 civilian missions are: EUAM Iraq, EUAM Ukraine, EUBAM Libya, EUBAM Rafah, EUCAP Somalia, EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger, EULEX Kosovo, EUMM Georgia and EUPOL COPPS/Palestinian territories.

[Military and civilian operations and missions](#)

EU-NATO cooperation

Defence ministers will exchange views on the latest developments in EU-NATO cooperation with NATO Deputy Secretary Mircea Geoana over a working lunch. The discussion may touch on political dialogue, parallel and coordinated exercises and military mobility. It will be an opportunity for Deputy Secretary General Geoana to brief EU defence ministers on the state of play of preparations for the next NATO Leaders' Meeting to take place on 3-4 December, in London. Ministers last discussed EU-NATO cooperation with NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller during the FAC (defence) on 14 May 2019. The debate gave the opportunity to reaffirm the strong transatlantic link and the continued commitment of both organisations to work together. Ministers highlighted the importance of EU-NATO cooperation, in particular on ways to counter hybrid threats.

EU and NATO cooperate through the implementation of 74 common actions under the Warsaw Joint Declaration signed by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of NATO in 2016. The common actions cover the following areas: hybrid threats, operational cooperation including maritime issues, cyber security, defence capabilities, defence industry and research, exercises, supporting partners' capacity building as well as strengthening political dialogue between the two organisations. This cooperation also covers priority topics, such as counter-terrorism, military mobility as well as women, peace and security.

The last progress report submitted by the EU High Representative and the Secretary General of NATO in June 2019 elaborated on progress achieved in the implementation of the 74 common actions by showcasing concrete deliverables in all areas of cooperation.

[Fourth progress report on the implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by NATO and EU Councils on 6 December 2016 and 5 December 2017, 17 June 2019](#)

[Factsheet on EU-NATO cooperation \(EEAS\)](#)

[EU cooperation on security and defence](#)

Other items

The Council is expected to adopt a number of decisions and conclusions without debate, including the 2019 report of the Head of the European Defence Agency to the Council (annual report on EDA activities) and the Council guidelines for EDA's work in 2020.

Ahead of the Council

EDA Steering Board meeting

Ministers of defence will meet in the European Defence Agency (EDA) Steering Board under the chairmanship of Federica Mogherini in her capacity as Head of the Agency.

Ministers' discussion will focus on member states expectations ahead of the first Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) report which will be presented to the Steering Board in November 2020. With the first full annual CARD cycle underway since September 2019, ministers will have the opportunity to highlight their expectations and share success factors they consider important in order to reap the full potential of CARD.

Ministers are expected to approve the Agency's 2020 general budget based on a formal proposal by Federica Mogherini. The budget proposal reflects the increasing demands on the Agency as well as additional tasks resulting from new initiatives such as CARD, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF).

Ministers will also approve the EDA's Three-Year Planning Framework 2020-2022 which provides an overview of the nature, scope and expected impact of the Agency's activities in support of overarching policy objectives and the added value for member states.

In the margins of the Steering Board, a signing ceremony will take place to mark the transfer of the PESCO project CBRN Surveillance as a Service (CBRN SaaS) into the Agency's framework. The project aims to provide a rapidly deployable chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) detection and incident management capability through manned and unmanned platforms. Following a request from Austria as the project coordinator, CBRN SaaS will now be taken forward by EDA. The project, which was established under the second wave of PESCO projects in November 2018, involves four contributing member states, Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia.

This will also be the final Steering Board in ministerial composition for outgoing EDA Chief Executive Jorge Domecq whose mandate ends on 31 January 2020.

The EDA is an intergovernmental agency that falls under the authority of the Council of the EU, to which it reports and from which it receives guidelines.

[European Defence Agency](#)
