

## **FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL**

### **6 March 2020 - Zagreb, Croatia**

The extraordinary session of the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep **Borrell**, will take place in Zagreb starting at **9.15**.

The Council will have an exchange of views on recent developments in **Syria**, focusing specifically on the ongoing renewed fighting in and around **Idlib**. The Council will discuss how to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis and de-escalate tensions in the region, with a view to paving the way for a political solution. Ministers may also touch on the related situation at the Greek-Turkish border and at other points of the **EU's external border**.

#### Press opportunities:

- +/- 08.15 Doorstep by High Representative Josep Borrell
- +/- 08.30 Meeting of the Heads of Delegations with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, Andrej Plenković: Welcoming remarks open to the media
- +/- 12.30 Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council meeting

[Foreign Affairs Council meeting page](#)

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

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

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

## Syria/Turkey - Exchange of views

Foreign affairs ministers will meet in Zagreb to address the evolving situation in Syria and Turkey. They will be informed about the latest developments in Idlib, the renewed fighting and its consequences on the EU's external borders. They will also be debriefed about the recent visit of the High Representative to Ankara.

The Council will then discuss how to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis and de-escalate tensions in the region, with a view to paving the way for a political solution.

During his visit in Ankara, the High Representative highlighted that Turkey and the European Union have a common interest to end the conflict in Syria and work hand in hand to address the common challenges. The humanitarian consequences of military escalations are extremely grave and humanitarian access needs to be urgently granted. In light of this, a recent meeting of the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, and the High Representative Borrell with President Erdoğan, focused on how to promote de-escalation in Syria. On that occasion the EU representatives also asked not to encourage further movement of refugees and migrants towards the European Union borders.

In his statement of 1 March 2020, the High Representative called for an immediate de-escalation in Syria and a lasting ceasefire, deplored the loss of lives, and offered EU support to mitigate the consequences of the crisis. He underlined the need to ensure humanitarian access, including to the most remote areas where the most vulnerable people are, and restated EU's support for Greece and Bulgaria in addressing the unfolding situation.

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the EU has mobilised the political and humanitarian tools at its disposal in support of the Syrian people, remaining one of the main supporters of the UN-led efforts to reach a political solution and the main humanitarian donor for Syrians, with over €16.9 billion mobilised collectively with EU member states in humanitarian, development, economic and stabilisation assistance. Moreover, on 4 March 2020 the EU announced [further €170 million](#) euros in humanitarian aid to continue assisting the most vulnerable people in Syria, including €60 million to address the humanitarian crisis in north-west Syria.

Most recently both the Foreign Affairs Council and the European Council adopted conclusions on north-east Syria and Turkey, respectively.

[Press release on meeting between President Charles Michel and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan \(4 March 2020\)](#)

[Turkey: Remarks by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell following his visit in Turkey \(EEAS, 4 March 2020\)](#)

[Syria: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell \(EEAS, 1 March 2020\)](#)

[Statement by the President of the European Council on the situation in Syria and Turkey \(press release, 29 February 2020\)](#)

[European Council conclusions of 18 October 2019](#)

[Council conclusions of 14 October 2019](#)