

Foreign Affairs Council (Development), 4 May 2023

The Foreign Affairs Council, in its development configuration, will take place in Brussels starting at 10.30. The meeting will be chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell.

The Council will hold an informal exchange with the Secretary-General of UNCTAD Rebeca Grynspan Mayufis focussing on the global consequences of the **Russian aggression against Ukraine**, including on the prospects of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. .

Over a working lunch, the Council will exchange views on the **reform of multilateral development banks** and how MDBs can better adapt to address global challenges while keeping their focus on supporting the least developed countries.

Under current affairs, the High Representative will refer to EU support to Ukraine with a focus on financial and reconstruction needs. The High Representative will also raise **Sudan** in light of recent developments. Ministers are likely to raise additional items, including **Afghanistan**.

Under any other business, Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen will update ministers on **Global Gateway** in view of the **EU-CELAC** Summit in July. The High Representative will raise the signing of the **Post-Cotonou Agreement**. Ministers are likely to raise additional items, including the humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa.

The Council meeting will be preceded (9:00-10:00) by an informal exchange of views over breakfast with Werner Hoyer, President of the **European Investment Bank (EIB)**.

Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 10.15

Press conference: not foreseen.

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[Foreign Affairs Council \(Development\) - meeting page](#)

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

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

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

Informal exchange of views with SG Grynspan on the global consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine

The Foreign Affairs Council (Development) will have an exchange with **Rebeca Grynspan Mayufis, Secretary-General of UNCTAD** to discuss the global consequences of the **Russian aggression against Ukraine**.

The discussion will focus on how the EU and the UN can take actions to respond to the interconnected food, energy and financing crises and give a renewed boost to the 2030 Agenda.

The Secretary-General is expected to inform about the work of the UN Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance and the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

The world is facing a **global food crisis** that is affecting hundreds of millions of vulnerable people in developing countries. This crisis was initially triggered by climate change, conflicts, and COVID-19 consequences, but has been significantly aggravated by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The European Union is **at the forefront of global efforts** in supporting its partners in coping with food insecurity and mitigating the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The **Solidarity Lanes** allowed for alternative routes to export Ukrainian grain and secured the delivery of **32 million tonnes** to the customers in need, which is more than what the Black Sea Grain deal has unlocked so far (29 million tonnes).

The EU is delivering on the comprehensive **Team Europe response to global food insecurity**, adopted in June 2022. The EU and its MS are providing around 18 EUR billion for the period 2021-24 to support vulnerable populations and countries of which 7 billion were disbursed in 2022 alone. [EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

Reform of the Multilateral Development Banks

Ministers will discuss the reform of the **Multilateral Development Banks** following-up to the discussion held at the informal meeting of EU Development Ministers 8-9 March in Stockholm and in coordination with the financing track. Commissioner Gentiloni will join the discussion.

Partner countries struggle to find the fiscal space to invest in the green transition, health and education, climate adaptation and resilience. MDB reform is one of the key levers at our disposal this year.

The discussion will include proposed actions and common principles for the reform of MDBs to prepare a coherent position that the EU and its Member States can promote in international fora.

MDBs sit at the crossroads of finance, development and the climate/biodiversity/pollution crisis, and they are a key tool of effective multilateralism. They therefore have a natural role in addressing transboundary challenges and preserving Global Public Goods, together with their traditional mission of poverty reduction and shared prosperity.

The World Bank Group (WBG), as the world's largest channel of development funding, has been taking the lead on MDB reform with the launch of the Evolution Roadmap in December 2022 on evolving its mission and optimising its operational and financial model. Important progress was achieved in the run-up to the WBG-IMF Spring Meetings this April, and with plans to endorse a finalised WBG Evolution Roadmap by their Annual Meetings in October 2023.

MDBs represent an important channel of EU development assistance and they have a key role to play in the roll-out of the Global Gateway and Team Europe Initiatives. EU Member States hold over 25% of the voting power in the various branches of the World Bank Group (WBG). The need to reinforce this EU partnership with MDBs has increased with the numerous crises the world has been facing, as underlined by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at the 23 March European Council.

Current affairs

Under current affairs, the High Representative will refer to EU support to Ukraine with a focus on financial and reconstruction needs, also in view of the **Ukraine** Recovery Conference in London on 21-22 June.

The High Representative will also raise **Sudan** in light of recent developments.

The European Union (EU) and its Member States strongly condemned the ongoing fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, which threatens the safety and security of the people of Sudan as well as the unity and stability of the country. The outbreak of hostilities undermines efforts to restore the transition towards a civilian-led democratic government. It also risks regional destabilisation.

Ministers might also touch upon **Afghanistan** in light of the recent developments, including the ban for Afghan women to work for UN agencies.

[Statement by the HR on Sudan](#)

Any other business

Under any other business, Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen will update Ministers on **Global Gateway** investments in view of the EU-CELAC Summit on 17-18 July. The CELAC investment agenda is still under preparation and will be presented to MS at the WP Relex Horizontal Questions on 12 May.

The methodology that the Commission has used is based on joint ownership by CELAC, an important role for the private sector and flexibility. The political priorities on the CELAC side are for a “fair and just” recovery from the pandemic and sustainable economic development. The climate and green transition are key EU, who will also highlight raw materials, digital as well as education and social projects.

The High Representative will also raise the signing of the **Post-Cotonou agreement** and encourage Member States to swiftly find agreement.

Ministers might also touch upon an International donor conference on the humanitarian **crisis in the Horn of Africa**, which will be go-organised by Italy, the UK, the US and Qatar in New York on 24 May. The objective of the event is to raise awareness on the magnitude of the crisis and gather financial to address the most urgent needs as well as the root causes of the crisis.

Breakfast with EIB

Before the Council formally starts there will be an informal exchange of views over breakfast with Werner Hoyer, President of the **European Investment Bank (EIB)**.

Ministers will focus on the achievements and perspectives of EIB Global operations outside the EU and their contribution to development. The discussion will also touch on the EIB cooperation with other Team Europe players and on the role of the Board Advisory Group of EIB Global, which advises the EIB Board of Directors on the operations outside the EU.

Council Conclusions

The Foreign Affairs Council (Development) is due to approve Conclusions on **Corruption** as an obstacle to Development.
