

Background brief*Brussels, 25 September 2026*

Foreign Affairs Council (Defence)

28 September 2026, Brussels

PRESS**EN****Chair:** Kaja Kallas, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**Starting time:** 10:00**Media opportunities:**

- Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 8:00
- Press conference on FAC: +/- 12:30

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Main agenda topics:

The Foreign Affairs Council with EU defence ministers will start with a discussion on **EU support to Ukraine**. This will include an exchange of views with the Minister of Defence of Ukraine, Yevhenii **Khmara**, at the beginning of the session via VTC.

Under current affairs, the Council will touch upon **Russia's escalating hybrid campaign**, the latest developments in the **Middle East** and their implications for European defence and security, as well as the upcoming revision of the **Defence Procurement Directive**.

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Related events:

Prior to the Council meeting, defence ministers will meet in the framework of the **EDA Steering Board**.

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[Foreign Affairs Council \(Defence\), 28 September 2026 – meeting page](#)[Press conferences, doorsteps and other public events in video streaming](#)[High quality photo and video material of the event](#)

EU support to Ukraine

The Council will discuss **EU support to Ukraine**, beginning with an address by the Ukrainian Minister of Defence, Yevhenii **Khmara**. The Minister will brief the Council on the latest developments on the ground and Ukraine's urgent battlefield needs.

The ministerial discussion is then expected to focus on EU support to Ukraine, with a particular focus on **air defence**, including in the context of the **Ukraine Support Loan**, the **European Peace Facility**, **EUMAM Ukraine** and measures to counter the Russian **shadow fleet**.

[Russia's war against Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

[EU military support for Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

[EU solidarity with Ukraine \(background information\)](#)

Current affairs

Russia's escalating hybrid campaign

The High Representative is expected to update the Council on Russia's intensifying hybrid campaign against the EU and its member states, which, among other goals, aims to undermine European unity and support for Ukraine.

Situation in the Middle East

The Council will address the latest developments in the Middle East. In this context, the High Representative will focus on strengthening Operation ASPIDES, given its key role in safeguarding the freedom of navigation against the backdrop of a resurgence in Houthi attacks against commercial shipping and their seizure of positions on the Bab-el-Mandeb strait.

[Lebanon \(background information\)](#)

[Timeline - Iran and the Middle East \(background information\)](#)

[EU position on the situation in the Middle East \(background information\)](#)

Defence procurement

The FAC Defence will provide the opportunity of an update on the Commission tabling a legislative proposal to revise the Defence Procurement Directive in the coming months.

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Related events

European Defence Agency Steering Board

EU Ministers of Defence will meet in the European Defence Agency (EDA) Steering Board under the chairwomanship of High Representative Kaja Kallas, in her capacity as Head of the Agency.

In line with the agreed phased approach to strengthening EDA, Ministers will be invited to approve the second step of the process, including EDA's new organisational structure.

Following the tasking by the European Council in October 2025, EDA will also present the first Annual Defence Readiness Report to Ministers for discussion and subsequent transmission to the European Council.

[European Defence Agency website](#)