

Background brief*Brussels, 9 October 2026*

Foreign Affairs Council

12 October 2026, Luxembourg

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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: +/- 16:45

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Main agenda topics:

The October Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) will start with an exchange of views on **current affairs**, with a focus on Georgia.

The Council will then move on to discussing the **security impact on an enlarged Union**.

The following ministerial discussion will be on **Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and escalating hybrid campaign** targeting the EU and its Member States. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, **Andrii Sybiha**, will address EU ministers in person, ahead of the EU27 discussion.

The meeting will conclude with an exchange of views on the situation in the **Middle East**.

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Related events:

The Council meeting will be preceded by an informal breakfast during which ministers will address the EU's efforts to counter foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) and recent strategic communication campaigns.

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[Foreign Affairs Council, 12 October 2026 – meeting page](#)

[High quality photo and video material of the event](#)

[Press conferences, doorsteps and other public events in video streaming](#)

Security impact on an enlarged Union

Ministers will exchange views on the **security impact on an enlarged Union**.

The ministerial discussion is expected to explore opportunities and challenges of enlargement for EU security, including how candidate countries and potential candidates can contribute to strengthening EU security and defence. Ministers are expected to focus on the areas of foreign, security and defence cooperation to be prioritised, and how the accession process can further support regional stability, normalisation and good neighbourly relations. The exchange will feed into broader discussions around EU enlargement, ahead of the October European Council strategic discussion on the matter.

[EU enlargement \(background information\)](#)

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and escalating hybrid campaign targeting the EU and Member States

Over a working lunch, EU foreign affairs ministers will hold a formal discussion on **Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and escalating hybrid campaign targeting the EU and Member States**, following an initial address by Minister **Sybiha**, who will be present in person and give an overview of the situation on the ground and Ukraine's most urgent needs.

The EU-only discussion will focus on the **EU's response to Russia's increasing hybrid actions targeting EU territory and escalating air attacks against Ukraine**, including the dual-track approach of sustained support for Ukraine and continued pressure on Russia.

Ministers are expected to stress the importance of maintaining and increasing military, financial and humanitarian support to Ukraine. Following the political agreement reached on the **mobilisation of €6.6 billion under the EPF** and the revision and extension of **EUMAM Ukraine's** mandate, ministers will discuss its swift implementation, as well as further contributions at both EU and bilateral level.

Concerning pressure on Russia, the Council is expected to adopt – among others – the largest package of listings to date, comprising close to 1,600 individuals and entities linked to Russia's military-industrial complex, as well as listings targeting individuals involved in the illegal elections for the Russian State Duma held in occupied parts of Ukraine. The discussion will likely also cover measures to address Russia's shadow fleet.

Further elements of discussion will concern Russia's and Belarus' **political instrumentalisation of sport and cultural events** as well as actions to counter Russia's destruction and looting of **Ukrainian cultural heritage**, and concrete actions that the EU can take to counter this.

In its conclusions of 19 June 2026, the European Council reaffirmed its continued firm and unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The European Union will continue to provide, in coordination with like-minded partners and allies, comprehensive political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people. It also restated the EU's determination to further increase pressure on Russia and continue weakening Russia's war economy so that it stops its brutal war of aggression and engages in meaningful negotiations towards peace.

[European Council conclusions, 19 June 2026](#)

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

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

Situation in the Middle East

The session on the situation in the Middle East is expected to focus on the recent developments in the **Gulf** and **Iran**, as well as the situation in **Israel/Palestine**.

The Council will take stock of the situation in **the Gulf and wider region**, focusing on continued threats to **freedom of navigation**. In this context, ministers will raise the disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab-el Mandab Strait, their impact on trade and energy, as well as possible EU actions to contribute to re-establishing freedom of navigation, including via Operation ASPIDES and deepening cooperation with maritime security actions in the region. Ministers may further touch upon the impact on Yemen and the Horn of Africa. The discussion takes place ahead of the upcoming EU-Gulf Cooperation Council summit (24 October 2026).

On **Israel/Palestine**, ahead of the Israeli elections on 28 October and the Palestinian legislative elections planned for 28 November, Ministers will be updated on the situation on the ground, including EU support to the Palestinian electoral process.

The Council is also expected to establish a non-executive CSDP support mission in Lebanon (**EUSM Lebanon**).

[European Council conclusions, 19 June 2026](#)

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

[EU sanctions against Iran \(background information\)](#)

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

[EU humanitarian support for Palestinians \(background information\)](#)

Current affairs

Under current affairs, the Council will discuss the situation in **Georgia**, following up on the April FAC discussion on the South Caucasus, where ministers expressed concerns over the country's democratic backsliding.

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

Any other business and other decisions

Under 'any other business', the Netherlands will raise the issue of the EU's restrictive measures on **transnational organised crime**.

France will refer to Algeria.

Belgium and the Netherlands will brief ministers on the International Criminal Court.

Cyprus will update ministers on the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 10 July by Türkiye and the so-called, internationally non-recognised "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus".

The Council will also formally establish the programme for agile and rapid defence innovation (**AGILE**), following the political agreement reached with the European Parliament on 15 July 2026.

[Programme for agile and rapid defence innovation: Council and Parliament reach political agreement \(press release, 15 July 2026\)](#)

Related events

Informal breakfast

The FAC meeting will be preceded by an informal exchange of views among EU ministers on strengthening the EU's approach to **foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI)** and on **strategic communication campaigns**. The exchange will take place in the context of the growing scale and speed of hostile FIMI operations by Russia and other actors targeting the EU and its partners.

[Disinformation and democratic resilience \(background information\)](#)