

Background brief*Brussels, 10 July 2026*

Foreign Affairs Council

13 July 2026, Brussels

PRESS**EN****Chair:** Kaja Kallas, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**Starting time:** 9:15**Media opportunities:**

- Doorstep of the High Representative: +/- 7:30
- Press conference on FAC: +/- 16:00

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Main agenda topics:

The July Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) will be preceded by an informal breakfast with Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrii **Sybiha** and representatives of two Ukrainian human rights organisations, on humanitarian aspects and civilian detainees in Ukraine.

EU foreign affairs ministers will then discuss **Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine**. Minister **Sybiha** will address EU ministers, ahead of the EU27 discussion.

The Council will then have a discussion on the situation in the **Middle East**.

The meeting will conclude with an exchange of view on the **Black Sea**.

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Related events:

Over lunch, the FAC will pause and EU foreign affairs ministers will be joined by their counterparts of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries for the third **EU-GCC High-Level Forum on Regional Security and Cooperation**.

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[Foreign Affairs Council, 13 July 2026 – meeting page](#)[High quality photo and video material of the event](#)[Press conferences, doorsteps and other public events in video streaming](#)

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

Before the beginning of the July FAC meeting, EU foreign affairs ministers will hold an **informal exchange over breakfast** with Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrii **Sybiha**, as well as the representatives of two Ukrainian human rights organisations. The discussion will focus on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and, specifically, on **Ukrainian civilian detainees**.

The Council will then have a formal discussion on **Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine**, following an initial address by Minister **Sybiha**, who will give an overview of the situation on the ground and Ukraine's most urgent needs.

The ensuing discussions among EU ministers will then follow the EU's established dual-track approach of sustained support for Ukraine and continued pressure on Russia. As regards support, ministers are likely to focus primarily on **Ukraine's energy preparedness** ahead of next winter, including urgent air defence support, funding needs, support for the protection and repair of critical energy infrastructure, and longer-term efforts to strengthen the resilience of Ukraine's energy system.

Concerning pressure on Russia, the Council will discuss further measures to **counter Russia's shadow fleet**, including further sanctions, boarding operations, exchange of good practices, enhanced outreach to partner countries and Strategic Communication.

Furthermore, the FAC is expected to adopt **new thematic listings related to several sanctions' regimes**.

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**.

Following the signature of the **US-Iran memorandum of understanding** on 17 June, the Council will take stock of the situation in Iran and the wider region, and the state of the freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. Ministers will raise the importance of maintaining **active outreach to and close coordination with partner countries** in the Gulf, also in view of the **EU-GCC high-level forum** on regional security and cooperation that will be taking place in the margins of the FAC.

On **Israel/Palestine**, following up on the European Council conclusions of 19 June, the Council will also take stock of the further deteriorating situation the West Bank regarding the illegal settlements, and discuss options as put forward by the Commission. Ministers will also address the involvement of the **CSDP missions** in the region, namely EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS.

[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 \(background information\)](#)

Black Sea

Ministers will discuss the Black Sea strategy and the state of play of its implementation, in the light of the first implementation report by the European Commission and the EEAS.

The **strategic approach to the Black Sea**, launched in May 2025 and endorsed by the European Council in June 2025, sets out a renewed framework for EU engagement in the region, centred on security, connectivity and competitiveness, and environmental resilience.

Ministers are expected to discuss concrete proposals for the way forward, with particular attention to the operationalisation of the proposed **Black Sea Maritime Security Hub**, as well as progress on connectivity and resilience initiatives, transfer of know-how between the Baltic Sea and Black Sea basins, and engagement with regional partners.

[The European Union's strategic approach to the Black Sea region](#)

[Co-Chairs Conclusions on Strengthening Cross-Regional Security and Connectivity \(20 October 2025\)](#)

Current affairs

Under current affairs, the Council will discuss the **EU-UN relations**, in view of the UN General Assembly high-level week on 22-28 September. In this context, the Council is expected to approve **conclusions on the EU's priorities at the 81st session of the UN General Assembly**.

[EU cooperation with the United Nations \(background information\)](#)

Ministers will also be informed on the current state of play in the appointment of the High Representative for **Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

Any other business and other decisions

Under any other business, on the request of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland and The Netherlands, Commissioner Lahbib will debrief the Council on the humanitarian situation in Sudan.

The Council will adopt a European Peace Facility (EPF) Assistance Measure for the Republic of Moldova of €120 million over 60 months, to finance a mid-range air defence system for the benefit of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova.

The Council will launch the EU Partnership Mission in Armenia (EUPM Armenia) under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to enhance the country's resilience and its ability to address hybrid threats.

Related events

EU-GCC High Level Forum

Over lunch, EU ministers will be joined by their counterparts from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states for the third **EU-GCC High-Level Forum on Regional Security and Cooperation**. The Secretary-General of the GCC, H. E. Jasem Mohamed AlBudaiwi, and the EU Special Representative for the Gulf Region, Luigi Di Maio, will also participate in the meeting.

Taking place two years after the first meeting, the Forum will focus on **regional security and cooperation**, in the light of the current developments in the region and beyond, ahead of the second EU-GCC summit which is scheduled take place later in the year.

[EU-GCC relations \(EEAS\)](#)

[EU trade relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council \(infographic\)](#)