

Foreign Affairs Council

12 October 2020

The Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) meeting, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep **Borrell**, will start at **9.00** in **Luxemburg**.

Under **current affairs**, foreign affairs ministers will review a number of recent developments and upcoming events, including: the **Nagorno-Karabakh** military escalation, the situation in the **Kyrgyz Republic**, the **EU-Ukraine Summit**, **Venezuela**, and **Mozambique**. The High Representative will also have the opportunity to inform ministers about the **EU Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024**.

The Council will then be briefed about developments in the **Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue** by EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkans regional issues, Miroslav Lajčák.

The Council will also discuss the evolving situation in **Belarus** and follow up on the four strands of action agreed at EU level.

Next, the Council will have a comprehensive discussion on **EU relations with Russia** within the framework of the five guiding principles, taking into account recent developments regarding the human rights situation in the country – in particular the poisoning of Alexei Navalny, Russia's role in the shared neighbourhood, ongoing disinformation campaigns and other aspects of the domestic situation. Building on the exchange of views during the Gymnich meeting in August, ministers will further discuss ways to strengthen the implementation of the five guiding principles in a balanced way.

The Council will then have a forward-looking discussion on EU relations with **Latin America and the Caribbean**, following the July 2020 Foreign Affairs Council which focused on the impact of COVID-19 on the region. Ministers will consider concrete steps to scale up EU's high-level political engagement with the region to reflect its strategic importance and potential.

Over a working lunch, ministers will engage in a discussion on **multilateralism**, with the aim of providing guidance on how the EU can best reinvigorate the multilateral system with the UN at its heart.

Press conference: +/- 15.30 in a virtual format

[Foreign Affairs Council meeting page](#)

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

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

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

Current affairs

The Foreign Affairs Council will start with a discussion on **current affairs**, during which ministers will have the opportunity to be updated on a number of recent developments on the international agenda.

First, Ministers will be updated about the escalating military confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan over **Nagorno-Karabakh**. In this context, the High Representative will report on the EU's engagement in support of the settlement process.

The High Representative will also report on the situation in **Kyrgyzstan**. The political troubles that followed the parliamentary elections of 4 October and the subsequent annulment of their results are a matter of concern to the EU, which has called for all the political forces involved to settle their disagreement in a peaceful way and organise new elections in cooperation with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Ministers will assess developments in the country.

The High Representative will also touch on **Mozambique**, and specifically the continuously deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in the Cabo Delgado province.

He will also report on **the EU-Ukraine Summit** which took place on 6 October 2020, as well as on efforts to support a democratic and peaceful solution to the political impasse in **Venezuela**, ahead of the legislative elections scheduled for 6 December.

Under this point, the High Representative is also expected to refer to progress made in the discussions on the **EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024**, and to the Joint Proposal from the High Representative and the Commission for a Recommendation of the Council to the European Council.

- [Special European Council, 1-2 October 2020](#)
- [Belarus \(background information\)](#)
- [Mozambique: Council adopts conclusions \(press release, 22 April 2020\)](#)
- [EU-Ukraine Summit, 6 October 2020](#)
- [Venezuela: the Council's response to the crisis \(background information\)](#)
- [EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 \(background information\)](#)
- [Joint proposal from the High Representative and the Commission for a Recommendation of the Council to the European Council](#)

Belarus

The Council will discuss the evolving situation in Belarus and follow up on the four strands of action agreed at EU level, including support to Belarusian society.

Ministers will adopt new Council conclusions on Belarus which will guide the finalisation of the in-depth review of EU-Belarus relations.

Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue

The High Representative and the EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other regional Western Balkans issues, **Miroslav Lajčák**, will update the Council on the latest developments and challenges in the dialogue.

- [Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue \(EEAS joint statement, 7 September 2020\)](#)
- [Statement by the HRVP ahead of the last high-level Dialogue meeting \(7 September 2020\)](#)
- [Statement by the EUSR after the last high-level Dialogue meeting \(7 September 2020\)](#)

Russia

Following the discussion held at the informal meeting of EU foreign ministers (Gymnich) on 27 August 2020, the Council will hold a comprehensive discussion on the state of relations between the **European Union and Russia**, in the framework of the **five guiding principles**.

The discussion will take into account a number of recent developments, including the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, the deteriorating human rights situation in the country, continued disinformation activities from pro-Kremlin sources and other aspects of the domestic situation, as well as Russia's role in the shared neighbourhood, including with regard to the evolving situation in Belarus.

The aim of the exchange of views is to officially reaffirm and strengthen the implementation of the five guiding principles policy in a balanced way, as well as to discuss possibilities for engagement on key areas of common EU interest and on global priorities such as international security, climate change and the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

- [Russia: Declaration of the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the poisoning of Alexei Navalny \(3 September 2020\)](#)

Latin America and the Caribbean

Ministers will engage in a strategic discussion on relations with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), building on the July FAC which addressed the dire impact that COVID-19 is having on the region and the EU's response.

They will address ways to relaunch high-level EU political engagement with the region, helping LAC countries to make a green, digital and socially inclusive recovery, and aiming to work more closely together with those countries at the multilateral level on specific issues.

They will discuss important upcoming events such as the planned EU-LAC ministerial meeting in December, relations with strategic partners Brazil and Mexico, and prospects for concluding the pending trade and association agreements with a view to strengthening and focusing attention on the EU's strategic partnership with the LAC region.

- [Foreign Affairs Council - Main Results, 13 July 2020](#)

Other issues

The Council will be informed about issues relating to the Indo-Pacific region. It is due to adopt conclusions on Bosnia and Herzegovina/Operation EUFOR Althea, and on Belarus.

Working Lunch – Multilateralism

Ministers will have a strategic discussion on multilateralism. The objective will be giving guidance on how the EU can best contribute to reinvigorating the multilateral system with the UN at its heart, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
