

FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Monday 18 July in Brussels

The Council, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, will be preceded by an informal breakfast of EU Foreign ministers with **US Secretary of State John Kerry**.

The Council will then start with a discussion on **Latin America**, including amongst others the future relations with Cuba, the peace process in Colombia, Argentina, and the situation on Venezuela. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on Venezuela.

Foreign Affairs ministers will then discuss **China**, on the basis of the joint communication by the High Representative and the European Commission "Elements for a new EU strategy on China", and taking into account the outcome of the EU-China Summit held on 12 July in Beijing.

Ministers will take stock of the **situation on migration** and EU actions and priorities in this regard. The discussion will in particular serve to prepare the UN high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants in New York on 19 September.

The Council will discuss how to give effective follow-up to the **Global Strategy**, following the presentation by the High Representative at the European Council on 28 June.

In the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council, an intergovernmental conference (IGC) with Serbia and the **EU-Gulf Cooperation Council Joint Council and ministerial meeting** will take place.

Press opportunities on Monday 20 June:

+/- 07.30 (tbc)	Doorstep statement by High Representative Federica Mogherini
+/- 10.15	Press conference (upon specific accreditation) High Representative Federica Mogherini - US Secretary of State John Kerry
+/- 16.30	Press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council
+/- 17.50	Press conference following the IGC with Serbia
+/- 18.15	Family photo of the EU-GCC Joint Council and ministerial meeting
+/- 20.15	Press conference following the EU-GCC Joint Council and ministerial meeting

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[Press conferences and public events by video streaming](#)
[Video coverage in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

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

Latin America and the Caribbean

The Council will start with a discussion on EU relations with **Latin America** and the Caribbean, including future relations with Cuba, the peace process in Colombia and the situation in Venezuela. The Council may adopt conclusions on Venezuela. The discussion will prepare the EU-CELAC Foreign ministers meeting that will take place in the Dominican Republic on 25-26 October.

Relations at regional level

Latin America and the Caribbean is a region of overall stability and has made **important progress** in eradicating poverty, promoting democratisation and resolving conflicts peacefully over the past decade. Over the recent year, the EU has engaged in a process of deepening relations with individual Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries, but also with **the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States - CELAC**. The EU-CELAC summit, which took place in Brussels on 10-11 June 2015, adopted two declarations and a revised EU-CELAC action plan setting objectives for cooperation for the two years to come. It was also then decided that Foreign ministers would meet to take stock of the bi-regional partnership and reflect on its future.

The Council will prepare this meeting, which is expected in particular to provide guidance on **further cooperation on bi-regional and global issues**, in areas such as migration, citizen security and gender, on fostering **jobs and growth**, as well as on how to open the partnership to the **involvement of other stakeholders** such as businesses and civil society.

The Council will discuss ways of intensifying the **bi-regional political dialogue**, notably with a view to fostering cooperation on **the rule of law to combat corruption and violence**; and to **strengthening the alliance on global issues**. The 33 countries of the LAC region are influential in multilateral fora. They share many global concerns with Europe, including climate change, development cooperation, supporting non-proliferation and combatting human trafficking and illicit drugs. The EU has good cooperation with CELAC countries in multilateral frameworks, as was demonstrated recently in the context of the Paris negotiations on climate change, in the preparation of the 2016 special session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on drugs and on the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Ministers will be invited to discuss how the EU-LAC relationship can be mobilised further for partnerships on key issues of the global and multilateral agenda, in view of the next UNGA - including the high level plenary on refugees and migrants on 19 September - and the Habitat III conference on urban development in Quito on 17-20 October.

After a decade of growth, the **economic and social indicators** for LAC are less positive, with a trend to economic slowdown for most LAC countries. Inequalities remain amongst highest in the world.

In this context, given their expected economic and social benefits, the finalisation of **ongoing trade negotiations** and engaging in modernisation where appropriate are crucial. The EU continues to be the leading foreign investor in CELAC countries as well as their second trade partner. Commercial ties between the EU and the LAC countries have doubled in the past decade. Preferential trade agreements are in place with 26 out of the 33 CELAC states.

In addition, the EU remains a **strong cooperation partner of the region**, with a budget of approximately €3.5 billion for the period 2014-2020. EU-LAC cooperation has been ongoing for a long time in sectors like Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), vocational training, investments in infrastructure, as well as research and innovation. The EU also contributes to developing the digital market and infrastructure in LAC. Certain states in the region have become middle and even (Chile and Uruguay) high income countries and therefore "graduated" from bilateral EU development cooperation. At the same time, challenges remain to re-start economic growth, to promote sustainable and inclusive development and reduce inequalities. The EU is keen to find alternative ways of cooperating with these countries.

[EU-CELAC summit, Brussels, 10-11/06/2015](#)

Cuba

Ministers are expected to touch upon **future EU-Cuba relations**. On 11 March 2016, the EU initialled a Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA), the first ever bilateral agreement between the EU and Cuba. The EU has also already established a human rights dialogue with Cuba. Ministers may provide guidance on next steps in the relationship, with a possible objective of signing of the PCDA in the coming months, and repealing the EU's 1996 common position on Cuba.

[EU relations with Cuba](#)

Colombia

It is also expected that ministers will discuss the latest developments in the peace negotiations between the government and the FARC-EP taking place in Havana, that have resulted in the agreement of 23 June on a bilateral and definitive ceasefire and the end of hostilities. The High Representative will brief ministers on her visit to Colombia on 26 May at the invitation of President Santos. During her visit, she conveyed the full support of the EU to the peace process and to the implementation of the final agreement with an overall support package of € 575 million in post-conflict assistance.

[EU relations with Colombia](#)

Argentina

The High Representative will brief ministers on the visit of the President of the Argentine Republic Mr. Mauricio Macri and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, Ms Susana Mabel Malcorra in Brussels on 4 July. Argentina has been a key player at regional level, and was critical in keeping move forward relations between the EU and Mercosur, enabling the re-launch of negotiations on an EU-Mercosur agreement in May 2016.

[EU relations with Argentina](#)

Venezuela

Ministers will also touch upon the situation in Venezuela, that might entail consequences internally and for regional stability. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on Venezuela, **notably supporting the efforts by former Presidents** Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Mr. Leonel Fernández and Mr. Martín Torrijos to facilitate a **constructive and effective dialogue** between the government and the parliamentary majority in Venezuela. The EU is expected to urge all institutions and political actors to engage in this process in full respect of the democratic and constitutional framework, rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those of jailed opponents who cannot exercise their rights. The EU will also express its readiness to support the efforts of dialogue in every way possible.

[EU relations with Venezuela](#)

EU global strategy

Over lunch, EU foreign ministers will have a discussion on the **follow-up to be given to the EU global strategy on foreign and security policy**.

The High Representative presented the EU global strategy on foreign and security policy "Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe" to the European Council on 28 June. The strategy is intended to guide the EU foreign and security policy in the years to come. The European Council welcomed the presentation and invited the High Representative, the Commission and the Council to take the work forward.

[EU global strategy on foreign and security policy \(document pdf\)](#)

[EU global strategy on foreign and security policy \(website\)](#)

China

The Council will discuss China, on the basis of the joint communication by the High Representative and the European Commission "Elements for a new EU strategy on China". The discussion will take into account the outcome of the EU-China Summit held on 12 and 13 July in Beijing, on which the High Representative will debrief ministers. Ministers will share their views on how to take forward the implementation of the strategy.

For background information on EU relations with China, see the:

[Factsheet - EU-China relations](#)

On the outcome of the EU-China summit, see the web page:

[EU-China summit, Beijing, 12-13/07/2016](#)

For more general information:

[EU relations with China](#)

Migration

Ministers will take stock of recent developments related to the external aspects of migration. They will discuss EU actions and priorities in this regard. This will feed into the preparation of the EU position for the **UN summit on refugees and migrants, to take place on 19 September in New York**. It will also allow for some discussion on the follow up to the tasking set by the European Council in its June conclusions.

In these conclusions, the European Council called for a mobilisation of all EU relevant instruments and sources of funding. It highlighted the need for a partnership framework of cooperation with individual countries of origin and transit, focusing saving lives at sea, increasing returns, enabling migrants and refugees to stay closer to home and, in the long term, helping third countries' development in order to address root causes of irregular migration by using all relevant EU policies and tools in close collaboration with member states. This confirmed the approach set out by the Commission communication on **establishing a new partnership framework with third countries** of 7 June 2016. Ms Federica Mogherini was recently appointed, both in her capacity as vice-President of the Commission and as High Representative, to lead the implementation of this approach, in coordination with EU institutions and member states. The objective is to conclude the first compacts before the end of the year.

[European Council conclusions, 28 June 2016](#)

The Council discussion will also serve to prepare the upcoming summit on refugees and migration. On 19 September, the **UN General Assembly** will convene a high-level plenary meeting on **addressing large movements of refugees and migrants**. This meeting seeks to bring countries together behind a coordinated approach.

[UN high level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, 19 September 2016](#)

The EU integrated the migration issue as a **permanent component of its foreign policy** based on the EU agenda on migration. It stepped up its engagement and has strengthened its cooperation with third countries on migration, at both bilateral and multilateral levels. The joint declaration and detailed action plan adopted during the Valletta Summit on migration, which was held in November 2015 and brought together more than 60 leaders from the EU and Africa, constitutes a corner stone of this approach. The EU and its partners are now working together on the implementation of the action plan.

[Response to migratory pressures](#)

Other items

The Council is due to take a number of decisions without discussion, including:

Afghanistan

The Council is due to adopt conclusions on Afghanistan, endorsing the second annual implementation report of the "European Union Afghanistan Strategy: 2014-16". The Council is expected to affirm in particular that the EU and member states overarching strategic goal should remain the development of Afghan institutions to safeguard progress to date and to make further progress in the development of a more effective and ultimately sustainable Afghan state. Key objectives are to promote security; reinforce democracy; encourage economic and human development ; strengthen the rule of law, including the fight against corruption, and the protection and promotion of human rights in particular the rights of women, including in the context of the peace process and continue the fight against the narcotic and drug industry.

The conclusions will also recall the expected focus of the forthcoming Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, scheduled for 4-5 October and co-chaired by the EU and the Afghan government. The conference is expected to focus notably on: progress in Afghan state and institution building through implementation of the reform agenda; international support in view of sustained funding at or near the current levels until 2020 as well as regional support for a political process towards peace and reinforced cross-border economic cooperation.

[Brussels conference on Afghanistan, 4-5 October 2016](#)

[EU relations with Afghanistan](#)

Pakistan

The Council is set to adopt conclusions on Pakistan. The EU relations with Pakistan are framed by a 5-year engagement plan adopted in 2016. The Council is expected to endorse the 2016 report on the implementation on the engagement plan, and to welcome the fact that relations with Pakistan have expanded in scope and intensity during implementation.

The Council is expected to invite the High Representative and the European Commission to initiate consultations with Pakistan on a framework for engagement beyond the EU-Pakistan 5-year engagement plan, with particular priority given to human rights, the strengthening of democracy, rule of law and governance, as well as migration including readmission.

[EU Relations with Pakistan](#)

Somalia

The Council is due to adopt conclusions on Somalia. It is expected to call for a credible and accountable electoral process, which will ensure the necessary legitimacy for the elected leadership. The Council is also expected to highlight the importance of finalising the constitutional review process, establishing effective Somali security and defence forces, strengthening rule of law and enhancing stabilisation efforts, as well as speeding up the consolidation of the administrative structure of the federal Somali state.

[EU relations with Somalia](#)

South Sudan

The Council is due to adopt conclusions on the recent outbreak of violence in South Sudan. The High Representative issued a statement on 9 July and another one jointly with Commissioners Mimica and Stylianides on 10 July condemning the violence, calling for rapid restoration of peace, protection of UN compounds and the obligation to grant unhindered humanitarian access. On 11 July, both sides agreed a ceasefire but the EU remains concerned about the situation in the country and the potential for further escalation of violence.

EU priorities at the United Nations and the 71st UNGA

The Council is due to adopt the EU priorities at the United Nations and the 71st United Nations General Assembly (September 2016 – September 2017). The coming year will be focused on consolidation and implementation of the agreements reached in the past year. These include the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, the Addis Ababa action agenda of the third international conference on financing for development and the Paris climate agreement.

The priorities are expected to mention that the EU remains committed to strengthening the United Nations and continue playing an active role at the UN in all areas of relevant activities as well as stressing the need for a truly global responsibility sharing on migration and refugees; solving crises and sustaining peace; tackling terrorism and violent extremism as some of the key challenges..

[EU at the UN General Assembly](#)

In the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council

Informal breakfast with US Secretary of State John Kerry

Foreign Affairs ministers will have a breakfast meeting with US Secretary of State John Kerry. They will discuss in particular EU-US relations, exchange views on the most pressing foreign policy issues, as well as the Obama's 'Leaders' summit on refugees to take place in New York on 20 September.

Joint Council and ministerial meeting of the EU and of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf

The 25th session of the Joint Council and ministerial meeting of the EU and of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) will be held in Brussels on 18 July 2016. The meeting will be co-chaired by Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Adel Al-Jubeir, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as GCC rotating Presidency. The GCC Secretary General Dr. Abdul Latif bin Rashed Al-Zayani, as well as ministers from EU and GCC member states will also attend the meeting.

EU and GCC Ministers will discuss the importance of further strengthening their ties in a challenging regional environment. A reinforced relationship can effectively serve as a solid and effective foundation for growth, and for sustainable regional and international stability and security. Ministers will also exchange views on priorities with regard to the situation in the region, as well as on ways to strengthen the fight against terrorism.

EU-GCC relations are based on a Cooperation Agreement concluded in 1988. The GCC is the EU's fifth largest export market with €111.6 billion of exports in 2015, growing by 15% from year to year. The EU is the GCC's largest trading partner, with trade flows totalling €155.5 billion, or 14.7% of the GCC's global trade.

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

Third meeting of the Accession Conference with Serbia at Ministerial level

The third meeting of the Accession Conference with Serbia at Ministerial level will be held on 18 July at 17.00 to open two negotiating chapters: Chapter 23 – Judiciary and fundamental rights, and Chapter 24 – Justice, freedom and security. It represents an important milestone in the accession negotiations with Serbia.

Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic Miroslav Lajčák, on behalf of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU, will lead the EU delegation, which will include Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations.

With Monday's conference, out of a total of 35 negotiating chapters, 4 chapters will now be opened for negotiations.