

FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council **20 April 2015 in Luxembourg**

The Council will start at 10.00, chaired by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini.

The Council will begin with a strategic and comprehensive debate on **EU relations with Latin America and the Caribbean**. Ministers will then discuss the situation in **Libya**, including options for further EU action.

Over lunch, ministers will take stock of the situation in **Yemen**. The High Representative will brief ministers about recent developments with regard to the **Iranian nuclear programme** negotiations, facilitated by the EU.

In the afternoon session, the Council will be briefed about the **EU strategic review**.

An **Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting** will bring together EU foreign ministers with their counterparts from the Eastern partner countries as of 16.00 (family photo at 15.50). A dinner for the foreign ministers of the Eastern partners will follow, hosted by the High Representative.

The **EU-Chile Association Council** will take place on 21 April at 9.30 in Brussels, chaired by High Representative Federica Mogherini (TV/photo opportunity at 9.30). The Chilean delegation will be led by Foreign Minister Heraldo Muñoz.

<u>Press conferences:</u>	20 April at +/- 15.30	Foreign Affairs Council
	21 April at +/- 11.00	EU-Chile Association Council

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Press conferences and public events by video streaming: <http://video.consilium.europa.eu>
Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery on: www.eucouncil.tv

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

Latin America and the Caribbean

The Council will hold an in-depth discussion on strengthening EU relations with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), on political relations, economic cooperation and partnership on global issues.

This strategic debate will also guide preparations for the EU-CELAC summit, to take place on 10-11 June in Brussels under the theme "Shaping our common future: working for prosperous, cohesive and sustainable societies for our citizens".

Political relations

Latin America and the Caribbean has been a region of stability in the last decade, making important progress in eradicating poverty, promoting democratisation and resolving conflicts peacefully. The region is becoming more influential and taking on a more active role in multilateral affairs, including the negotiations on climate change and the post-2015 development agenda. The upcoming EU-CELAC summit will be an opportunity to re-invigorate the EU's relationship with the region and reaffirm its strategic nature.

Ministers will be invited to discuss what the EU can do to ensure continued engagement at multiple levels with the LAC region. In addition, they will be encouraged to exchange views on the possible regional impact of some key current processes, such as the development of the EU-Cuba relations, the Colombia peace talks and developments in Venezuela.

Economic cooperation

Commercial ties between the EU and the Latin American and Caribbean countries have doubled in the past decade. The EU continues to be the leading foreign investor in CELAC countries as well as their second trade partner. Preferential trade agreements are in place with 26 out of the 33 CELAC states. These cover roughly half the trade with the EU and make LAC a region that is very integrated with Europe.

In addition, the EU remains a strong cooperation partner of the region, with a budget of approximately €3 billion. Through economic growth, certain states in the region have become middle income countries and therefore "graduated" from bilateral EU development cooperation. At the same time, challenges remain to sustain and diversify economic growth, to promote sustainable and inclusive development and reduce inequalities. Ministers will discuss ways to consolidate the EU's economic presence in the LAC region.

Partnership on global issues

The 33 countries of the LAC region are influential in multilateral fora and traditionally considered among the most like-minded actors with the EU. They share many global concerns with Europe, including climate change, development cooperation, supporting non-proliferation and combatting human trafficking and illicit drugs. Ministers will be invited to share their observations on how the EU-LAC relationship can be mobilised for partnerships on the key issues of the global and multilateral agenda.

More information on the [EU-CELAC summit](#)

Libya

The Council will take stock of the UN-led political dialogue between Libyan parties, which has resumed in Morocco. It will also discuss options for further EU support to Libya, once a government of national unity and related security arrangements are in place.

The EU fully supports the efforts of UN Special Representative Bernardino León to secure a negotiated settlement and an end to fighting. To support the negotiation process, the EU has co-funded the UN-led talks. In addition, the EU has organised meetings of Libyan business representatives as well as local leaders to increase grassroots support for a political solution.

For the EU, the conflict cannot be solved by military action. Only a political solution can provide a sustainable way forward and contribute to peace and stability in Libya. The EU has also strongly condemned the ongoing violence, the human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed in Libya.

In March, the Council signalled the EU's readiness to contribute to the successful implementation of an agreement on a national unity government, as soon as there was an agreement on such a government and related security arrangements. It invited the High Representative to present proposals, including on possible CSDP activities in support of the security arrangements, in close coordination with other actors, and a wider set of policy options. Ministers will now discuss these possible measures.

The Council has repeatedly stated the EU's readiness to introduce, as soon as necessary, restrictive measures against the spoilers of the dialogue process in line with related UN Security Council resolutions. Any such decisions will be taken in full coordination with the UN Special Representative. EU sanctions have been amended on 6 March 2015 to pave the way for that: asset freezes and travel bans can be imposed on persons and entities involved in acts that threaten the peace, stability or security of Libya, or obstruct the political transition.

The conflict in Libya has caused a large number of refugees as well as 500.000 internally displaced persons. Overall EU support to Libya stands at €50 million, with emphasis on humanitarian aid, migration, internally displaced people and support to civil society.

[Council conclusions on Libya, 16 March 2015](#)

Yemen

Over lunch, ministers will exchange views on the situation in Yemen. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions and express support for UN-led efforts to resume negotiations.

The EU has urged a broad political consensus as a sustainable solution for restoring peace in Yemen and for preserving its territorial integrity.

The fighting in Yemen exacerbates the already dire situation of the population. More than 47 per cent of Yemenis live below the poverty line on less than €2 per day. Over 15 million people are estimated to be in need of some form of humanitarian assistance. The current security situation is not conducive to the distribution of supplies and is also hampering development assistance. Only recently, High Representative Mogherini and EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid Christos Stylianides called for unrestricted access to humanitarians so that they can keep delivering vital assistance to the most vulnerable people.

The EU has allocated € 25 million for humanitarian aid to Yemen in 2015.

[Statement by the High Representative on the situation in Yemen, 26 March 2015](#)

[Joint statement by the High Representative and Commissioner Stylianides on the impact of fighting in Yemen, 1 April 2015](#)

Iran

Over lunch, the High Representative will brief ministers about recent developments in the nuclear talks with Iran, facilitated by the EU.

On 2 April, representatives from the E3/EU+3 and Iran agreed on key parameters of a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, with a view to a comprehensive solution that will ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme and the comprehensive lifting of all sanctions. The text of this Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, with full technical details, will be worked out in the coming months and should be completed by 30 June.

[Joint statement by High Representative Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif, 2 April 2015](#)

Strategic review

The High Representative will brief the Council about ongoing work on the EU Strategic Review. She will update ministers about the preparation of a report to the European Council on 25/26 June, as mandated by the European Council in December 2013. A more substantial debate is expected during a joint session of foreign and defence ministers at the Foreign Affairs Council on 18 May.

Other items

The Council is expected to take a number of decisions without discussion ("A-items"):

Sahel regional action plan 2015-2020

The Council is due to adopt an action plan with EU and member states activities for implementing the EU strategy for security and development in the Sahel. The plan renews action towards the original objectives of the strategy, which remain valid. They are development, good governance and internal conflict resolution; political and diplomatic action to mobilise other actors; security and the rule of law as well as the fight against violent extremism. The plan identifies four priority domains for reinforced action: preventing radicalisation, creating opportunities for youth, migration and mobility as well as border management. The action plan comes in the wake of a review of the strategy in March 2014, which also extended its application to Burkina Faso and Chad.

The indicative budget of the 11th European Development Fund for the five Sahel countries amounts to €2.47 billion for 2014 to 2020. An important part of this could contribute to the actions identified in the plan. Other EU instruments could contribute additional resources.

[EU strategy for security and development in the Sahel](#)

[Council conclusions on the implementation of the EU strategy for security and development in the Sahel, 17 March 2014](#)

European Neighbourhood Policy

The Council is expected to approve conclusions on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, launched by a joint consultation paper on 4 March 2015. The Council will remind the importance of a special relationship with the EU's neighbours to develop an area of shared stability, security and prosperity. The revision of the neighbourhood policy ought to ensure that it provides an adequate framework for long-term relations with all neighbourhood partners, while making it more political and responsible to the diverse challenges in the neighbourhood.

Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons

The Council is due to adopt conclusions setting out the EU's position for the ninth review conference to the Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT), to take place from 27 April to 22 May in New York.

In the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council

Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting

The Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting will discuss preparations for the fourth Eastern Partnership summit that will take place in Riga on 21-22 May 2015. The summit, chaired by European Council President Donald Tusk, will bring EU Heads of State or Government together with those of Eastern partner countries.

The summit will take stock of the implementation of the three Association Agreements/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements, which were signed in June 2014 in Brussels. It is intended to develop, strengthen and differentiate relations with the six partners.

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine participate in the Eastern Partnership (EaP), launched in 2009. It sets out to promote political association and economic integration in the EU as well as multilateral dialogue and cooperation among the EaP countries. It is based on the common values of democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and freedoms and the commitment to a market economy. In 2014, the EU supported the Eastern Partnership with a budget of €730 million.

EU-Chile Association Council

The EU-Chile Association Council will review progress in strengthening bilateral relations between Chile and the EU.

The Council will deepen the cooperation between the EU and Chile by opening new policy dialogues concerning security and defence, education, energy, corporate social responsibility and SMEs. A Framework Participation Agreement facilitating Chilean participation in EU crisis management operations has also been signed and is currently in the process of being ratified.

In addition, the Association Council will launch a reflection on the possible modernisation of the EU-Chile Association Agreement. A joint working group will be established to take this forward.

The discussion will also address the economic situation in Europe and in Chile. Between 2003 and 2014, trade between the EU and Chile grew by an annual average rate of 6.6% and amounted to €16.2 billion in 2014.
