

Forward look: 19 September – 4 October 2020



Overview of the main topics and events at the Council of EU and European Council.

The indicated format of each meeting (physical or virtual) are subject to change.

Foreign Affairs Council, 21 September 2020

Foreign affairs ministers will be informed about current affairs, and exchange views on Libya, Belarus, and relations between the EU and the African Union.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council, 21-22 September 2020

Ministers will advance discussions on the green architecture of the common agriculture policy (CAP) reform package, including the regulation on CAP strategic plans. They will also discuss trade related agricultural issues, based on a presentation by the European Commission.

General Affairs Council, 22 September 2020

The Council will prepare for the special European Council. Ministers will also focus on the next MFF, EU-UK relations, COVID-19 measures, and Article 7 procedures regarding Poland and Hungary.

Special European Council, 24-25 September 2020

EU leaders will meet in Brussels to discuss issues related to the single market, industrial policy and digital transformation, as well as external relations, in particular relations with Turkey and with China.

Video conference of transport ministers, 28 September 2020

Transport ministers will discuss benchmarks for a pandemic contingency plan for the European freight transport sector.

Competitiveness Council (Research and innovation),

29 September 2020

The Council will be invited to reach a general approach on the remaining outstanding issues of both the draft Horizon Europe regulation, the framework programme for research and innovation for 2021-2027, and the decision implementing Horizon Europe.

For video coverage of Council sessions and audiovisual material, please see the following Council websites:

Media advisory – General Affairs Council of 22 September 2020



Indicative programme

from 09.00

Arrivals ([live streaming](#))

+/- 09.45

Doorstep statement by Michael Roth, Minister of State for Europe at the Federal Foreign Office

+/- 10.00

Beginning of the General Affairs Council (roundtable)

Adoption of agenda / Approval of non-legislative “A” items

Preparation of the Special European Council on 24-25 September 2020

EU-UK negotiations

Covid-19 – EU-coordination

Rule of law in Poland / Article 7 (1) TEU Reasoned Proposal

Values of the Union in Hungary / Article 7 (1) TEU Reasoned

+/- 15.30

Legislative programming ([public session](#))

+/- 16.00

Multiannual Financial Framework ([public session](#))

Any other business

At the end of the meeting (+/- 16.45) – press conference in [live streaming](#).

Arrangements for the press conference

Please note that there will be no physical press conference. In order to ask questions remotely, EU accredited journalists should register using [this link](#). Those who already registered for the video conferences of European affairs ministers earlier this year, or to the press briefing ahead of the

General Affairs Council, do not need to do it again.

Deadline: Tuesday, 22 September 2020, 15.00

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants approximately half an hour after the deadline.

[Videos and photos from the event](#)

[Visit the meeting page](#)

[Visit the meeting page](#)

Romania and UK judicial authorities jointly dismantle 'loverboy' criminal network specialized in trafficking and sexually exploiting young girls



The Hague, 18 September 2020

During a Joint Action Day executed on the 9th of September 2020, judicial and law enforcement authorities in The UK and Romania have arrested 21 members of an organized criminal group specialized in trafficking young Romanian girls into the UK, Ireland and Germany for purpose of sexual exploitation.

The criminal group was active since 2009 and had a well-established hierarchical structure. Using the so-called 'loverboy'-method, the OCG members targeted young Romanian girls from vulnerable backgrounds. The victims (including minors) were seduced by the offenders with false promises of sentimental partnerships, and a future luxury lifestyle. In reality, the victims were instead lured into prostitution and sexually exploited in Romania (until the minor teenagers turned 18), after which they were transported (by use of counterfeit ID documents) and sexually exploited in The UK, Ireland and Germany. In order to conceal and launder the profits from their criminal activity, the members of the group purchased luxury assets, registering it under third parties' name.

Eurojust has facilitated an integrated approach to this cross-border investigation since February 2019, including judicial cooperation endeavors to create a Joint Investigation Team, which was awarded almost EUR 22.000 in Eurojust funding. The JIT made it possible to streamline the exchange of evidence, accelerate and intensify the investigation and carefully prepare and coordinate the Action Day's execution, during which 32 house searches

were conducted (23 in Romania and 9 in the UK). Numerous victims were recovered and provided with support and assistance, and the searches also resulted in seizures of a weapon and of multiple valuable assets including five luxury cars, real-estate properties and important amounts of money.

✖ Daniela **Buruiana**, National Member of Eurojust for Romania, said: “Cross border THB investigations have never been an easy task for prosecutors and police officers. Close cooperation and coordination between the competent authorities in different jurisdictions and the use of the support tools available at EU level are essential in conducting successful THB investigations. This is another good example of excellent joint work across different authorities and agencies. I am glad that Eurojust has been involved and provided assistance and support since the very beginning. Congratulations to all the actors which contributed to the success of this operation.”

Background: Eurojust cases addressing Trafficking in Human Beings

The number of cases at Eurojust related to investigations of Trafficking in Human Beings has increased steadily over the last years from around 100 cases in 2016 to 183 cases registered in 2019. This has also lead to an increase in the number of Joint Investigation Teams (JIT), which has proven an effective tool to fight this form of crime, from 31 JITs in 2016 to 63 JITs in 2019.

Romania and the UK have been particularly active in this respect and cooperated closely in 76 THB investigations in the past four years:

Cases registered by Romania involving the UK	8	7	12	21	5	53
Cases registered by the UK involving Romania	6	6	4	6	1	23
Total registered cases involving Romania and the UK	14	13	16	27	6	76

Côte d'Ivoire : déclaration du Haut Représentant au nom de l'Union européenne sur l'élection présidentielle du 31 octobre 2020



Dans le cadre du processus électoral en cours, l'Union européenne (UE) rappelle son attachement aux principes d'inclusivité, de liberté d'expression, de transparence, de respect de l'Etat de droit et des éventuels mécanismes indépendants d'observation, nécessaires pour assurer un scrutin aux résultats crédibles et acceptés par tous.

L'UE déplore les violences et affrontements survenus ces dernières semaines, qui ont fait plusieurs victimes, et appelle les autorités à mener des enquêtes afin d'en poursuivre les auteurs. Elle appelle également au respect des libertés publiques, notamment le droit pour chaque citoyen de manifester pacifiquement, dans le cadre prévu par la loi, sans être inquiété, et d'exprimer des opinions politiques sans être arrêté ou emprisonné.

L'UE prend acte de la décision du Conseil constitutionnel, ce 14 septembre, relative aux candidatures retenues pour l'élection présidentielle. S'il ne lui revient pas de se prononcer à ce sujet, l'UE rappelle qu'il est de la responsabilité première des autorités et institutions ivoiriennes compétentes de garantir un processus électoral impartial, transparent, inclusif et équitable, emportant l'adhésion des citoyens. Elle note les différentes procédures ouvertes auprès de la Cour Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples (CADHP) relativement au processus électoral et rappelle son attachement au respect de la justice internationale.

L'UE appelle l'ensemble de la classe politique et de la société civile, ainsi que les administrations concernées, à dialoguer et à s'engager de manière responsable, constructive et pacifique et faire en sorte que ce processus électoral puisse consolider durablement la réconciliation entre tous les Ivoiriens. Elle encourage aussi les autorités à prendre l'initiative pour contribuer à cet apaisement du climat politique.

En tant que partenaire historique de la Côte d'Ivoire, l'UE continuera à accompagner et soutenir le pays dans ce processus, avec tous les acteurs concernés.

[Press release – MEPs to discuss the situation in Belarus with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya on Monday](#)



Members of the [Foreign Affairs Committee](#) will host Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and other members of the Belarusian democratic opposition, Volha Kavalkova and Pavel Latushka, for a debate on the latest political developments and the popular uprising in Belarus. Ms Tsikhanouskaya, who will be present in person, is expected to address the committee at 13.45 CET, followed by an exchange of views with MEPs.

She will also hold a bilateral meeting with [European Parliament President David Sassoli](#) on Monday at 12.00 CET.

The same day, Foreign Affairs Committee MEPs will vote on new recommendations on how the EU should reassess its relations with Belarus, in particular with regard to the latest developments. The vote result will be announced on Tuesday, 22 September.

You can follow the committee meeting live [here](#). (21.09.2020)

Mass protests since the latest “presidential elections”

Belarus has been in the midst of a political crisis following accusations of vote rigging in the presidential elections held on 9 August, which incumbent authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko claimed he won with a vast majority, triggering massive popular protests and general strikes.

Since then, the Belarusian authorities have been cracking down hard on demonstrators calling for Mr Lukashenko’s resignation, with many reports and documented cases of torture and ill-treatment of detainees and protesters being brought forward.

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Belarus on 17 September, in which MEPs called for new elections to be held, new sanctions against Alexander Lukashenko and his regime, while pointing out that Ms Tsikhanouskaya, who was the main democratic contender in the elections, is considered by many Belarusians as the actual winner of the vote and the country’s real president-elect. Read more [here](#).

Monday's meeting will be organised together with the [Subcommittee on Human Rights](#) and the [delegation for relations with Belarus](#).