

Media advisory – Foreign Affairs Council of 21 June 2021



Indicative programme

+/- 08.00

Arrivals ([live streaming](#))

+/- 08.15

Doorstep by High Representative Josep Borrell

+/- 09.30

Beginning of the Foreign Affairs Council (roundtable)

– Adoption of the agenda

– Approval of “A” items:

a) Legislative list (+/- 09.30 [public session](#))

b) Non-legislative list

– Belarus

– Iraq

– Latin America

– Current affairs

– Other business

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

Arrangements for the press conference

In light of the gradual relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions both in Belgium and Luxembourg, a limited number of journalists will be allowed to attend physically the Foreign Affairs Council. More info [here](#).

Press conference will remain accessible also in video conference. EU accredited journalists should register using [this link](#) to be able to ask questions remotely. Journalists who already registered for previous Foreign Affairs Council press conferences do not need to register again.

Deadline: Monday, 21 June 2021, 15.45

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](#)

Ethiopia: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union



On June 21, a majority of Ethiopian voters will be invited to participate in elections. Some constituencies will vote at a later stage, in part due to security and logistical challenges. The European Union (EU) takes note of this important step and recalls the fundamental democratic right of all Ethiopian citizens to be able to vote, everywhere in the country.

Aware of the importance of these elections for the political transition in Ethiopia, the EU has supported the electoral process and the work of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE). The EU commends the efforts deployed by NEBE personnel around the country, and welcomes the public commitment of the Ethiopian government to hold democratic and peaceful elections. Yet, the EU regrets the impossibility of sending an election observation mission.

Ethiopia remains in a complex domestic situation. Concerned with ongoing violence across the country, human rights violations and political tensions, harassment of media workers and detained opposition members, the EU calls upon the government and local and regional authorities to ensure a transparent and safe process, to guarantee the free and equal participation of all political parties and candidates who are running, to facilitate the participation of all citizens, to ensure freedom of the press and of expression as well as the safety of journalists, other media workers and election observers and to provide full logistical and administrative support to NEBE. The EU also calls on all actors to refrain from spreading hate speech and from calling for acts of violence.

The elections could be an important step in Ethiopia's democratic process. The EU also recalls the importance to engage in and foster a comprehensive, inclusive and transparent national dialogue with the participation of women and youth and all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations, political parties and regional authorities, in order to strengthen democracy and to support conflicts resolution as well as reconciliation. The EU will stand by Ethiopia in the implementation of democratic reforms as well as reconciliation efforts that would emerge from an inclusive and transparent dialogue.

Media advisory – General Affairs Council, 22 June 2021



Indicative programme

Chair: Ms. Ana Paula Zacarias, Portuguese Secretary of State of European Affairs

+/- 08.00

Arrivals ([live streaming.](#))

+/- 09.00

Beginning of the meeting of the General Affairs Council

- Adoption of the agenda
- Approval of “A” items
 - a) Non-legislative list
 - b) Legislative list

- Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process
- Conference on the Future of Europe
- Preparation of the European Council on 24-25 June 2021
- Rule of law in Poland / Article 7 (1) TEU Reasoned Proposal
- Values of the Union in Hungary / Article 7 (1) TEU Reasoned Proposal

Any other business

At the end of the meeting (+/- 16.15) press conference in [live streaming.](#)

Arrangements for the press conferences

In light of the gradual relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions both in Belgium and Luxembourg, a limited number of journalists will be allowed to attend physically the meeting of General Affairs Council. More info [here](#).

Press conferences will remain accessible also in video conference. In order to participate and ask questions, EU accredited journalists should register using [this link](#).

Those who already registered for previous press briefings or press conferences of European affairs ministers do not need to do it again.

Deadline for registration: Tuesday, 22 June 2021, 15.15

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants shortly after the deadline.

[Videos and photos from the event](#)

[Visit the meeting page](#)

[CPVO launches new online functionalities for applicants and title holders](#)

The Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO) launched an improved version of [MyPVR](#), the online portal for users and clients of the CPVO.

MyPVR 4.0.0 includes a series of new functionalities, and the design, speed and user friendliness of the portal has been improved considerably:

- Once connected to the [CPVO online system](#), users have access to the new dashboard and will be guided intuitively by the program;
- **Applicants and holders or their procedural representatives wishing to withdraw their CPVO applications or surrender their Community Plant Variety Rights can now submit an official request online;**
- It is now possible to send several documents at once and also to save the search results in your web browser.

We invite all users to try the new functionalities and to communicate any feedback at: [suggestions \[at\] cpvo \[dot\] europa \[dot\] eu](mailto:suggestions[at]cpvo[dot]europa[dot]eu)

[CoR and ESPON need your help to map digital innovation on local level](#)



□□ The DIGIsurvey, a keystone of the [DIGISER project](#) was launched on 8 June 2021. DIGISER is a research project under the ESPON programme carried out by OASC, IS-Practice, POLIMI, CPC, and Deloitte.

Data on how cities, towns and rural areas across Europe tackle digital innovation is scarce. The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) provides an insight on the national level, but a DESI for the local level does not exist. For some years, the CoR has been working with its partners on the LORDI (Local and Regional Digital Indicators) framework, which will now be filled by data from this DIGIsurvey. The DIGIsurvey aims at measuring the

digital innovation of governance and public service provision on the local level.

[□ Complete the survey here](#)

□ Towards effective local decision-making

Local authorities need relevant data based on the different needs and setup of their public services to make well-informed decisions on the best possible actions to boost digital transformation. “This is the place where the DIGISER project with its DIGISurvey has shown to be effective: the DIGISurvey will gather data from cities and municipalities to provide decision-makers with relevant and comparable information on digital transformation in their constituencies and to inspire digital transformation processes,” **Michael Murphy**, Chair of the ECON commission of the European Committee of the Regions, points out.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of our society to unforeseen events. Nevertheless, it has also shown that those who had been relying on digital solutions could better face the negative impact of the economic shock. Therefore, the Living-in.EU initiative, a movement to boost sustainable digital transformation in cities and communities in the EU, is of key importance for the EU to promote the transition towards a cohesive, digital Europe, where no one is left behind,” he adds.

Towards better policies

The results of the DIGISurvey will help mayors, local councillors and elected politicians deliver new and effective digital solutions to their citizens. The data gathered will provide local administrations information on best practices that cities across Europe have already adopted, as well as insight into projects that did not deliver the expected results. More importantly, the results of the survey will help inform national and EU policies and support programmes, based on input received from the local level.

Martin Gauk, Project Coordinator of ESPON DIGISER, explains that good metrics can direct better policies. “In order to promote digital transformation and the scaling up of digital innovation in cities and communities, we need to know what works, what doesn’t and why. And that means turning to measurements and metrics. In order to boost digital transformation through a ‘European Way’ where digital solutions help to create places where people enjoy living and working, we have to have more discussion on how to design policies that would support this goal.”

He adds that a fruitful discussion needs to happen at the level of the (digital) single market, where local, regional, national and international actors all have a role in shaping it. “That requires a better understanding, evidence and engagement. Hence, participation in this survey is not only about providing input, but it is also about having a voice in the process of how best to go ahead with this transformation, learning from themselves and from other cities – from the successes as well as the struggles.”

“Furthermore, there are substantial resources allocated to boost and scale the digital transformation for the next programming period. Having the right understanding and information, cities can use the results of this survey as an argument for acquiring financial support for their efforts related to digital transformation.”

As **Markku Markkula**, Chair of the Espoo City Board, President of the Helsinki Region and member of the Broadband Platform, says, “Digitalisation is embedded everywhere. And digital-assisted innovations are influencing everywhere. This renewal transcends to the core of what we do and how we operate today in Espoo and Oulu as European digitalisation forerunner municipalities – and for sure in many other cities, towns, and villages in Finland and Europe. Digital innovation is the driver of more people-centric public services. DIGISER will be fundamental in mapping out the status quo in cities, towns, and rural areas across Europe. In Espoo, we have gladly contributed to the survey and are looking forward to the results.”

The more cities that take part in the survey, the more data can be collected and the better informed local administrations can be when deciding on the best path towards their digital transformation.

“You can only know whether you progress in your local digital transformation if you measure it. This is what we do at the national level and it is what we lack at the local level. This survey that will result in commonly agreed digital indicators is essential for all cities and communities. It will help cities to help themselves. I invite all EU cities and communities to take part and shape the Local and Regional Digital Indicator framework together,” **Eddy Hartog**, Head of Unit Technologies for Smart Communities of the European Commission, explains.

[Click here](#) for more information on ESPON DIGISER.