Side Event to United Nations General Assembly High Level Week 2026

Global Food Security and the Black Sea –
the need for restoring freedom of navigation

hosted by the European Union, France, Romania and Ukraine

Date: 22 September, Time: 13:15 – 14:30

Location: UNHQ – Conference Room 5

Event Focus

On the margins of the 81st United Nations General Assembly High Level Week, this High-Level side-event will highlight the situation in and around the Black Sea and the targeted and systematic attacks against grain export infrastructure. Several countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia are likely to face further food insecurity on top of the already existing complications (e.g. the Gulf crisis or summer droughts linked to El Nino), which already result in higher market prices. The event should call for diplomatic action, notably a moratorium on attacks in the Black Sea.

Context

Ukraine is one of the world's key agricultural producers and exporters - **historically Ukraine provides up to 10% of total world wheat exports, heavily supplying regions in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia and contributing to the world food security**. Renewed military escalation by Russia is resulting in disruption of supply chains, higher prices and increased insecurity for millions of people globally, far beyond Ukraine. **The current situation can lead to a crisis much more serious than in 2022**, when the Black Sea grain initiative was put in place. **There is currently no fully effective alternative to Black Sea shipping of grains.**

Format

- This high-level event will be co-chaired by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy H.E. **Kaja Kallas**, Foreign Minister of France H.E. **Jean-Noël Barrot**, Foreign Minister of Romania H.E. **Oana-Silvia Țoiu** and Foreign Minister of Ukraine H.E. **Andrii Sybiha**.
- It will count on the presence as 'guest of honour' of the President of Ukraine H.E. **Volodymyr Zelenskyy**.
- The format will be **1+1** and the event will be **live-streamed**.
- Kindly please confirm **participation** and **whether your principal wishes to take the floor** (statement of 3 minutes) via the link below by Thursday, 17 September at 10:00am: https://forms.gle/DhPHvkLucEaqA4gn9
- **Translation** will be available in English, French and Arabic.

Focus of the discussion

- Enhance global awareness on the unprecedented intensification of attacks on port infrastructure and shipping in the Black Sea and the resulting pressure on food/grain exports via the Black Sea.
- Sound the alarm on the impact on global food security at an already critical moment.
- Issue a call for a moratorium on attacks in the Black Sea allowing for food exports to reach global markets.
- Reinforce the overall call for a full and unconditional ceasefire.

Guiding Questions:

- How is the situation in the Black Sea affecting global food markets and security;
- What is the expected impact on global food markets and food security if the current situation persists;
- What political and diplomatic action must be taken to protect Black Sea grain exports and avoid the impact on food security.