



Brussels, 4 December 2009

**BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>**  
**GENERAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL**  
**Monday 7 December in Brussels**

*The Council will discuss preparations for the December meeting of the **European Council**, covering in particular institutional issues, the economic, financial and employment situation, justice and home affairs (Stockholm programme) and climate change.*

*It will also discuss the annual communication from the Commission on the EU's strategy with regard to its **enlargement**, and will take note of a Council work programme prepared by the trio of future presidencies: Spain, Belgium and Hungary.*

*A presidency press conference will be held at the end of the Council conference (+/- 17.45, tbc).*

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*Press conferences and public events can be followed by video streaming:*  
<http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>

*Video coverage of the event will be available for preview and download in broadcast quality (MPEG4) on <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>*

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<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office

## **Preparation of the December meeting of the European Council**

The Council will prepare the European Council meeting to be held on 10 and 11 December. It will examine draft conclusions presented by the presidency in preparation for the meeting.

Issues to be addressed by the European Council, set out in an annotated draft agenda issued in November (*doc. 15525/09*), include:

- institutional issues;
- climate change: working towards an agreement at the UN conference in Copenhagen.
- the economic, financial and employment situation, comprising, in particular:
  - exit strategy with regard to measures taken during the economic and financial crisis;
  - supervision of financial markets;
- justice and home affairs (Stockholm programme);

The draft conclusions will be amended by the presidency after the Council meeting, in the light of comments made by delegations.

## **EU enlargement**

The Council will consider a communication from the Commission on the EU's enlargement strategy and main challenges for 2009-2010, and will take note of the Commission's conclusions and recommendations.

It is expected to confirm that the "renewed consensus on enlargement", approved by the European Council in December 2006, continues to form the basis for EU action at all stages of the enlargement process, with each country being assessed on its own merits. The principles underlying the renewed consensus are: consolidation of commitments, fair and rigorous conditionality, better communication and the EU's capacity to integrate new members.

In this connection, the Council will consider the negotiation process with regard to Turkey and Croatia, the situation concerning Iceland, and the stabilisation and association process in the Western Balkans.

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions.

## **Council work programme - Trio of presidencies**

The Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian delegations will present a draft 18-month programme for the Council (January 2010 to June 2011), prepared by the three future presidencies.

The presidency trio will exercise their functions on the basis of the Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on 1 December, endeavouring to ensure a smooth functioning of the new rules and provisions. This will require close cooperation with the new President of the European Council and the High Representative who will chair meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council.