

European Council
9 March 2017

Informal meeting of the 27 heads of state or government
10 March 2017

The European Council on Thursday 9 March will be the first one to take place in the Europa building. It will start at 15.30 with an exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani.

Then Prime Minister Muscat, representing the Maltese Presidency of the Council, will chair the election process of the President of the European Council for the next period of 2,5 years starting on 1 June 2017.

Afterwards Prime Minister Muscat will update his colleagues on progress made in the Council on the implementation of European Council conclusions and the **Malta declaration on migration** in particular. This will provide the opportunity for the leaders to exchange views on migration.

The European Council will then discuss the **state of the European economy**. Leaders will be briefed by ECB President Draghi. They will address the 2017 European Semester and take stock of efforts to deepen the **single market**. They will also reaffirm the EU's commitment to a fair and free **trade** policy.

The working dinner will start with a discussion on **European security and defence**, before turning to the situation in the **Western Balkans**.

An **informal meeting of the 27 leaders** will take place on Friday. The objective is to prepare the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties.

[Invitation letter by President Donald Tusk](#)

Indicative programme:

Thursday:	European Council 15.30 Exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament 16.00 Working session +/- 18.30 Press conference by Presidents Tusk and Juncker 19.30 Working dinner
Friday:	Informal meeting 10.00 Working session +/- 12.30 Press conference by Presidents Tusk and Juncker

[Press package on the Europa building](#)

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

Election of the President of the European Council

The President of the European Council is elected by the European Council by qualified majority². He or she is elected for a 2,5 year term, renewable once.

The Maltese Presidency is in charge of the consultations on the appointment and Prime Minister Muscat will chair this part of the European Council.

President Tusk's first mandate at the helm of the European Council will end on 31 May 2017. He declared his candidacy for a further term during the Malta Summit on 3 February.

Migration: implementation of Malta declaration

In line with the new working methods which put more emphasis on implementation and follow-up to previous decisions, Prime Minister Muscat is expected to report to his colleagues on progress made in the Council on decisions taken by the European Council and in particular the Malta declaration on the external aspects of migration.

Leaders are expected to reiterate their determination to deliver on all the elements of the declaration and to encourage efforts by the Council to deliver rapidly on other aspects of the EU's comprehensive migration policy.

[Malta Declaration on the external aspects of migration](#)

[EU response to migratory pressures](#)

Jobs, growth and competitiveness

The European Council will take stock of the economic situation in Europe, against a backdrop of economic growth in all 28 member states. Leaders are expected to note the importance to ensure that the recovery is sustained and the need for reforms to modernise the economies. They will further underline the importance of other measures such as the extension of the European Fund for Strategic Investments. Leaders are also expected to recall that the benefits of economic growth should be spread more widely and fairly.

Leaders will take stock of progress on deepening the single market and are expected to reaffirm their objective of delivering on all the single market strategies by 2018.

On trade, heads of state or government are expected to welcome the positive vote in the European Parliament on the EU-Canada comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and recall its commitment to a robust trade policy in an open and rules-based multilateral trading system, while defending the EU of unfair trade practices.

The European Council will endorse the policy priority areas of the Annual Growth Survey and the draft Council recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area.

[Investment plan for Europe](#)

[Single market strategy for goods and services](#)

[Trade agreements](#)

[2017 European Semester](#)

[Draft Council recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area](#)

² 72% of members, representing at least 65% of the EU population.

European Public Prosecutor Office

The European Council will take note of the impossibility to reach a consensus on the creation of a European Public Prosecutor Office (EPPO). This will open the door to establishing an enhanced cooperation between a group of at least nine member states.

[Factsheet on the EPPO](#)

Security and defence

The European Council will reaffirm EU's commitment to strengthen its external security and defence, including by committing sufficient additional resources and by implementing the guidelines provided in December. Leaders are expected to welcome the progress made so far as outlined in Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of 6 March.

Looking at ongoing legislative work, the leaders are also expected to discuss internal security and the fight against terrorism.

[Council conclusions 6 March 2017](#)

[European Council conclusions December 2016](#)

[Security and defence](#)

[EU fight against terrorism](#)

Western Balkans

The European Council will discuss the current situation in the Western Balkans and recall its support to the European perspective of the region. The EU is committed to support the stability of the region and to deepen political and economic ties with and within the Western Balkans.

Informal meeting of the 27 leaders

On Friday, the 27 leaders will meet to prepare the Rome celebration, that will take place on 25 March for the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties. The aim is to have a political discussion on the content of the Rome declaration on the future of the EU that they are expected to adopt in Rome.

The Treaties of Rome were the founding treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC), which were signed on 25 March 1957 and entered into force on 1 January 1958.

[Political reflection on the future of the EU](#)

[60th anniversary of the Rome treaties, 25/03/2017](#)

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- Media accreditation: www.consilium.europa.eu/
 - Press conferences by video streaming: <http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>
 - Video coverage in broadcast quality and photos in high resolution: <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>