

## European Council 18-19 February 2016 in Brussels

The European Council will start at 17.00 on Thursday 18 February. Ahead of the first working session the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, will as always address the European Council.

At its first working session the heads of state or government will discuss **a new settlement for the United Kingdom in the European Union**.

Over dinner the leaders will devote their discussions to **migration**.

On Friday morning the heads of state or government will reconvene in an informal working breakfast setting to continue the discussions on **a new settlement for the UK in the EU**. The President of the European Parliament will be invited to participate in this session.

This will then be followed by a formal European Council working session to discuss **Syria and Libya** as well as to adopt conclusions.

### Indicative programme:

|           |        |   |
|-----------|--------|---|
| Thursday: | 17.00  | Exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament |
|           | 17.30  | Family photo  |
|           | 17.45  | First working session   |
|           | 20.00  | Working dinner  |
|           | (ttbc) | Press conference by Presidents Tusk and Juncker                 |
| Friday:   | (ttbc) | Informal working breakfast                                      |
|           | (ttbc) | Second working session  |
|           | (ttbc) | Press conference by Presidents Tusk and Juncker                 |

### [Full media programme](#)

- Media accreditation: [www.consilium.europa.eu/](http://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>

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

## **A new settlement for the UK in the EU**

The heads of state or government will seek to agree on a new settlement for the United Kingdom within the European Union. This includes a legally binding decision by the 28 heads of state or government. The aim is to find mutually satisfactory solutions in the four areas of concern raised by UK Prime Minister David Cameron: Economic Governance, Competitiveness, Sovereignty and Social Benefits and Free Movement.

The discussions will be held on the basis of the proposal put forward by President Donald Tusk and will focus on those issues which remain open after extensive consultations and several meetings of the representatives of the member states (Sherpas).

[Timeline - a new settlement for the UK in the EU](#)

## **Migration**

The European Council will discuss all the elements of the EU's response to the migration and refugee crisis, focusing particularly on the state of implementation of the orientations agreed in December. Leaders will assess progress on the basis of detailed reports from the Presidency and the Commission.

The European Council is expected to underline the need to protect external borders, fully apply the Schengen Borders Code and further accelerate work on the 'European Border and Coast Guard' proposal. The European Council should also restate the need for hotspots to be fully functional. Leaders will equally recall the need to implement decisions on relocation and to ensure returns and readmission.

The heads of state or government are expected to welcome access for Syrian refugees to Turkey's labour market and initial steps to implement the EU-Turkey Action plan, while calling for further efforts to stem migration flows from Turkey and tackle traffickers and smugglers networks. Leaders are also expected to raise concerns about the continued migrant flows along Western Balkans route and discuss tailor-made packages of incentives that are currently being developed for specific third countries to ensure effective returns and readmission.

On humanitarian assistance, the heads of state or government will welcome the outcome of the Syria conference in London on 4 February while underlining the need for continued aid to be provided to Syrians and countries neighboring Syria. Leaders are also expected to call for urgent action to address the humanitarian situation of migrants in Greece and in countries along the Western Balkans route.

[Council website: EU response to migratory pressures](#)

[Timeline - finding solutions to migratory pressures](#)

## **Syria and Libya**

The European Council is expected to discuss the political, security and humanitarian situation in Syria. Leaders are to express their full support for United Nations Security Council resolution 2254, calling for its full implementation by all parties. They are further expected to discuss the latest developments in Syria, including the role of Russia, the ongoing diplomatic efforts, as well as the implications for Europe in terms of increased flows of refugees fleeing towards Turkey and Europe.

Leaders should also discuss the latest developments in Libya, recalling the EU's support to the Government of National Accord, as well as its offer of future support to the country.

## **European Semester**

The European Council will formally endorse the recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area, with a view to adoption by the Economic and Financial Affairs Council on 8 March 2016.

It is the first time that a recommendation for the euro area is approved at an early stage of the European Semester. The aim is to take greater account of eurozone issues when approving the country-specific recommendations later on.

[Council website: European Semester](#)

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