



MAIN TOPICS FOR THE COMING FORTNIGHT¹

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For video coverage of Council sessions and audiovisual material, please see the following Council websites:

- <http://video.consilium.europa.eu> (live webcast of public deliberations, public debates and press conferences), and
- www.eucouncil.tv (video material available for download in broadcast quality and photo gallery).

¹ This document has been prepared under the sole responsibility of the Press Office.
Information may be subject to change, depending on further developments.

Friday 8 November 2019 (09.00)

Economic and Financial Affairs Council

Europa building, Brussels

In the morning, finance ministers will hold a joint policy debate with ministers of education on the importance of effective and high-quality education and training to achieve a strong economic base for Europe.

The ECOFIN Council is expected to adopt conclusions on climate finance in view of the COP25 conference which will take place in Santiago de Chile from 2 to 13 December 2019. The Council is also expected to adopt conclusions on EU statistics, reviewing progress achieved and providing guidance for further work in this area.

Ministers will discuss the state of play on the work concerning digital taxation. They will also seek a general approach on the excise duty package and two VAT-related legislative files: the transmission and exchange of VAT-relevant payment data and the special VAT scheme for small enterprises.

The Council will also be debriefed by the Presidency and the Commission on recent G20 and IMF meetings, receive a presentation of the 2019 annual report of the European Fiscal Board and adopt a Council recommendation on the appointment of a member of the ECB executive board.

In the margins of ECOFIN, ministers will meet their EFTA counterparts from Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, as well as social partners in the context of the macro-economic dialogue.

On the eve of ECOFIN, the Eurogroup will meet at 15.00 in its regular format. It will discuss investment and innovation and the selection process of a new ECB executive board member. The Commission will present its Autumn economic forecast. The Eurogroup will then meet in an 'inclusive format' (27 member states) to discuss the state of play of different workstreams related to EMU reform.

Press briefings: **Ecofin** - Monday 4 November at 10.00
Eurogroup - Tuesday 5 November at 14.30

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Friday 8 November 2019 (09.30)

Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council (Education)

Europa building, Brussels

In the morning, ministers of education will hold a joint policy debate with finance ministers on the importance of effective and high-quality education and training to achieve a strong economic base for Europe.

The Council meeting will then deal with education issues. The discussion will focus on ways to pursue the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of education and training for a strong economic base for Europe.

In the afternoon, ministers of education are expected to adopt conclusions on the **key role of lifelong learning policies in empowering societies to address the technological and green transition**. Ministers will also adopt a resolution on further developing the **European education area** and will hold a policy debate on **artificial intelligence in education and training**.

Press briefing: Thursday 7 November at 15.00

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Monday 11 November 2019 (09.00)

Foreign Affairs Council

Europa building, Brussels

The Foreign Affairs Council, chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, will start with a discussion on **current affairs**, allowing ministers to review pressing issues on the international agenda. They are expected to touch upon Venezuela, following the international solidarity conference on the Venezuelan refugee and migrant crisis (28-29 October) and Turkey, as a follow-up to the Council and European Council conclusions of 14 and 17-18 October.

Foreign ministers will then have an exchange of views on **Afghanistan**, in particular following the Presidential election of 28 September 2019. They are also expected to take stock of recent developments in the peace negotiations and efforts to find a lasting and negotiated political solution to the conflict.

The Council will discuss **the regional security situation in the Gulf and Iran** and will reflect on the ways the EU can contribute to its stabilisation.

EU foreign ministers will also have a discussion on **Sudan** in preparation for an exchange of views with Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, that is expected to take place over lunch.

Further information

- [Venezuela: the Council's response to the crisis](#) (background information)
- [Council conclusions on Turkey's illegal drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean](#), 14 October 2019
- [Council conclusions on North East Syria](#), 14 October 2019
- [EU relations with Afghanistan](#) (Factsheet, EEAS website)
- [EU relations with Iran](#) (background information)

Press briefing: Friday 8 November 2019 at 9.30 (to be confirmed)

Contacts

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Tuesday 12 November 2019 (10.00)

Foreign Affairs Council (Defence issues)

Europa building, Brussels

The Foreign Affairs Council (Defence) will be chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini. Defence ministers will have a **discussion on security and defence issues**, with a particular focus on PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) and its coherence with other initiatives.

Defence ministers will then have an exchange of views on **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations**. They will assess the current state of deployment, and reflect on challenges and areas for further improvement.

Over lunch, defence ministers will exchange views on **EU-NATO cooperation** with NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg. It will be an opportunity for him to brief defence ministers on the state of play of preparations for the next NATO summit that will take place on 3-4 December in London.

The Council is expected to adopt a number of decisions and conclusions without debate, including a Council decision adopting 13 new PESCO projects, as well as the 2019 report of the Head of the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the 2020 Council guidance to the EDA. Before the Council meeting, there will be an **EDA steering board meeting** at 8h30. The discussion will focus on the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). The steering board is expected to adopt the EDA 2020 budget and staff establishment plan and the EDA three-year planning framework 2020-2022.

Further information

- [PESCO](#) (website)
- [Military and civilian missions and operations](#) (background information)
- [EU-NATO cooperation \(EEAS factsheet\)](#)
- [European Defence Agency](#) (website)

Press briefing: Friday 8 November 2019 at 10.30 (to be confirmed)

Contacts

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Friday 15 November 2019 (09.00)

Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Budget)

Europa building, Brussels

The Council will prepare negotiations with the European Parliament on the EU's general budget for 2020. The negotiations will take place at a conciliation committee meeting the same day.

On 23 October, the Council announced that it could not accept all of the Parliament's amendments for the 2020 budget. As a result, a three-week conciliation period started on 29 October aimed at bridging the differences between the two institutions. This period will end on 18 November.

The Parliament is asking for total commitments to be increased to €171.0 billion and total payments to €159.1 billion. The Council set total commitments at €166.8 billion and total payments at €153.1 billion.

The conciliation committee is composed of the 28 member states and 28 members of the Parliament. Its first meeting will take place on 4 November.

If the committee agrees on a joint text, Council and Parliament will have 14 days to approve it.

Press briefing: Thursday 14 November at 10.00 (to be confirmed)

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Other events

Thursday 7 November 2019

- [Eurogroup meeting](#)

Monday 11 November 2019

- [EU / Uzbekistan Cooperation Council](#)

[Finnish presidency website](#)
