



Brussels, 23 March 2012

BACKGROUND¹
GENERAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL
Monday 26 March in Brussels

*The Council session will start at 10.00 with a discussion on the first elements of the negotiation box covering certain aspects of the EU **multiannual financial framework** for 2014-2020 which is drawn up by the Presidency.*

*The Council will discuss the follow-up to be given to the **European Council's** meeting held on 1-2 March 2012.*

A presidency press conference will be held at the end of the Council (expected for +/- 14h00).

*
* *

Public events and press conferences 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>

Photos of the event can be found in our photographic library on www.consilium.europa.eu/photo where they can be downloaded in high resolution

*
* *

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

Multiannual financial framework

In public session, the Council will hold an orientation debate on the first elements of the negotiation box outlining the most central issues and options for certain parts of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the 2014-2020 period ([8057/12](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

More specifically, the paper covers headings 1 (smart and inclusive growth) with the exception of cohesion policy and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)², 3 (security and citizenship), 4 (global Europe) and 5 (administration), as well as some horizontal issues.

In the coming weeks, the presidency will supplement these first elements with the remaining elements belonging to the MFF negotiating package (cohesion, CEF, heading 2 (sustainable growth: natural resources and own resources). The General Affairs Council of 24 April is expected to hold a discussion on the negotiating box for cohesion and heading 2. From mid-May onwards the Council will pursue its work on the MFF on the basis of a negotiating box entailing all parts of the negotiation package.

Finance ministers will discuss the MFF at an informal meeting in Copenhagen on 30 and 31 March, without however drawing any conclusions.

The European Council on 28 and 29 June will discuss the negotiating box as the basis for the final stage of negotiations. The intention is to finalise the negotiations on the MFF by the end of this year.

Follow-up to the December European Council

The Council will take stock of the follow-up to be given to the European Council meeting held on 1-2 March, on the basis of a presidency note ([7824/12](#)).

The meeting focused in particular on the growth agenda and on economic policy.

² The "Connecting Europe" facility is a new instrument proposed by the Commission aimed at accelerating infrastructure development in transport, energy and information and communication technologies across the EU.