



Council of the European Union

PRESS
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BACKGROUND¹
Brussels, 26 April 2017

GENERAL AFFAIRS Council (Article 50) **Thursday 27 April in Luxembourg**

Chair: Louis Grech, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for European Affairs of Malta

Commission representatives: Commissioner Frans Timmermans and Michel Barnier, Brexit chief negotiator

Starting at 11.00, the Council, in a EU 27 format, will prepare the **European Council (Article 50) on 29 April 2017** by examining the draft guidelines for the Brexit negotiations.

A presidency press conference will be held at the end of the meeting (+/- 13.00).

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Press conferences and public events by video streaming: <http://video.consilium.europa.eu/en/webcasts>
Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery on:
<https://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu/event/general-affairs-council-february-2017-16190>

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

Preparation for the European Council (Article 50) of 29 April

Ministers will examine the draft guidelines for the Brexit negotiations, presented by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, to the member states on 31 March 2017.

The guidelines, to be adopted by the European Council, are aimed at defining the overall framework for negotiations with the UK by defining the positions and principles that the EU will follow in these negotiations. In particular, they set out a phased approach to negotiations, focusing first on the conditions for an orderly withdrawal of the UK. Only after sufficient progress has been deemed to be achieved in the first phase of negotiations, will the EU 27 engage in talks to identify a common understanding on the future relationship between the EU and the UK.

[Brexit - background information and timeline](#)

Background

On 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. The UK Prime Minister informed the European Council on 28 June.

On 29 June, the 27 leaders and Presidents of the European Council and Commission issued a statement after the results of the UK referendum, setting out the core principles underlying their stance in future negotiations, including:

- no negotiations without notification
- balance of rights and obligations
- no access to Europe's single market without acceptance of EU's four freedoms.

On 15 December 2016, the heads of state or government declared they stood ready to start negotiations with the UK as soon as the UK had notified its intention to leave under Article 50 of the Treaty. They also agreed on the general institutional framework for the upcoming negotiations and reiterated their commitment to the principles agreed in June 2016.

On 29 March 2017, the UK triggered the Article 50 and formally notified to the European Council its intention to leave the EU.

[Statement after informal meeting of the 27 heads of state or government, 29 June 2016](#)

[Statement after the informal meeting of the 27 heads of state or government, 15 December 2016](#)

Next steps

After the adoption of the guidelines by the European Council on 29 April and based on the recommendation of the Commission, the Council is expected, on 22 May 2017 to:

- adopt a decision authorising the opening of negotiations and nominating the Commission as Union negotiator
 - adopt negotiating directives
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