

GENERAL AFFAIRS Council Tuesday 20 June in Luxembourg

Starting at 9.00, the Council will prepare the **European Council on 22-23 June 2017** by examining draft conclusions.

It is invited to approve the Council's **eighteen-month programme** covering the period 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2019.

The Council is also expected to approve the **country-specific recommendations**.

Finally, the Council will be briefed by the presidency on the **implementation of the better law-making agreement** with the European Parliament and the Commission; ministers will also exchange views on the **legislative projects for 2018**.

A presidency press conference will be held at the end of the meeting (+/- 12.30).

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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/permalink/95028>*

Preparation for the June European Council

The Council will examine draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 22-23 June, prepared by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, in cooperation with the Maltese presidency and the Commission.

The European Council will focus on:

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

- migration: the European Council will assess progress on measures to address the Central Mediterranean route and revert to the reform of the Common European Asylum System
- security and defence: the European Council will review progress in the ongoing work to strengthen EU cooperation on external security and defence; it will also provide strategic guidance where necessary
- jobs, growth and competitiveness: the European Council will review efforts to deepen the single market and reaffirm the EU's strong commitment to free and fair trade
- external relations: the European Council will be debriefed by its President and by the President of the European Commission on recent leaders' meetings and international summits
- other items: the European Council will address Digital Europe and the Paris agreement on climate change

An [annotated draft agenda](#) was discussed by the Council on 16 May 2017.

Eighteen-month programme of the Council

In public session, the Council is expected to endorse the [eighteen-month programme of the Council](#) covering the period 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2018.

The programme has been prepared by the incoming Estonian, Bulgarian and Austrian presidencies and, as regards the Foreign Affairs Council, the High Representative, in cooperation with the Commission. It is in line with the European Council's strategic agenda and the EU's legislative priorities for 2017.

European Semester

The Council is expected to approve, under the 2017 'European Semester' monitoring process, draft country's specific recommendations (CSR's) on economic and fiscal policies. The CSR will then be transmitted to the European Council for endorsement at its meeting on 22 and 23 June 2017. The draft CSR's have also been discussed in EPSCO and ECOFIN.

The European Semester is an annual process for the simultaneous monitoring of the member states' economic, employment and fiscal policies.

In the light of policy guidance given by the European Council annually in March, the member states present each year in April:

- national reform programmes, which include a macroeconomic scenario for the medium term, national targets for implementing the 'Europe 2020' strategy for jobs and growth, identification of the main obstacles to growth, and measures for growth-enhancing initiatives in the short term;
- stability/convergence programmes. Eurozone countries present stability programmes, whereas non-euro member states present convergence programmes. These set out medium-term budgetary objectives, the main assumptions about expected economic developments, a description of fiscal and economic policy measures, and an analysis of how changes in assumptions will affect fiscal and debt positions.

The Council then approves country-specific recommendations and opinions and, after endorsement by the European Council annually in June, adopts them each year in July.

Council website: [European Semester](#)

Better law-making agreement

The presidency will inform the Council on the [state of play of implementing the better-law agreement](#). Ministers will exchange views on the priorities for 2018 with a view to provide an input to the [Commission's letter of intent](#) on its work programme for next year. The discussion will be steered by the following questions:

- do the areas chosen by the Commission for 2017 continue to be the right ones in light of the priorities identified in the strategic agenda?
 - could some of these areas be adjusted in light of current developments, priorities and recent Commission proposals?
 - within those priority areas, are there initiatives that could usefully be included in the work programme for 2018?
 - are there other areas or initiatives which would deserve further attention?
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