

## **GENERAL AFFAIRS Council**

### **Tuesday 20 September in Brussels**

Starting at 10.00, the Council will prepare for the **European Council on 20-21 October 2016** by discussing an annotated draft agenda. Ministers will also take note of the implementation of the **June European Council** conclusions.

The Council will hear a presentation by the Commission of its **mid-term review of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2014-2020** and have a first discussion.

Ministers will exchange views on a **Commission** letter of intent on its **work programme for 2017**.

Without discussion, the Council is expected to

- adopt conclusions asking the Commission to provide an assessment of the application of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** for membership of the EU
- issue a recommendation to the eurozone member states on the establishment of **national productivity boards**
- approve the conclusion of an **agreement with Andorra against tax evasion**

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

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*Press conferences and public events by video streaming:* <http://video.consilium.europa.eu/en/webcasts>  
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<http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu/permalink/84799>

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

## **Preparation for the October European Council**

The Council will examine an [annotated draft agenda](#), drawn up by the President of the European Council in cooperation with the presidency and the Commission, for the European Council meeting to be held on 20 and 21 October 2016.

The European Council will focus on:

- migration; the European Council will take stock of the latest developments and progress and set out the necessary orientations
- trade issues; the European Council will hold a comprehensive debate on trade issues; it will look at the key files and discuss orientations for the future of the EU's trade policy
- external relations; the European Council will hold a policy debate on relations with Russia

The annotated draft agenda will serve as the basis for draft conclusions, to be prepared in the run-up to the meeting.

## **Follow-up to the June European Council**

The Council will be informed about the state of play of conclusions adopted by the June European Council.

## **MFF mid-term review**

The Commission will present its mid-term review of the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020.

The MFF regulation sets out annual maximum amounts which the EU is allowed to spend on different policy areas over the period from 2014 to 2020. It translates political priorities into figures, ensures budgetary discipline for the EU and facilitates the adoption of the annual EU budget.

Pursuant to article 2 of the MFF regulation the Commission must present, by the end of 2016 at the latest, a review of the functioning of the MFF taking full account of the economic situation at that time as well as the latest macro-economic projections.

On 14 September 2016, the Commission presented a package consisting of the following documents and legislative proposals:

- a communication on the [mid-term review/revision of the MFF 2014-2020](#)
- a [staff working document accompanying the communication](#)
- a [proposal to amend the MFF regulation](#)
- a [proposal to amend the interinstitutional agreement on budgetary discipline, cooperation in budgetary matters and sound financial management](#)
- a [proposal amending decision 2015/435 to mobilise the contingency margin](#)
- a [proposal to revise the EU financial regulation and to make the corresponding changes to 15 sectorial legislative acts](#)

## **Commission work programme for 2017**

The Council will exchange views on a [Commission letter of intent](#) on its work programme for 2017. In its letter of intent the Commission sets out items of major political importance for next year.

The discussion will be steered by the following questions:

- Which of the envisaged initiatives do ministers see as particular important, also in the light of the Strategic Agenda?
- Are there initiatives ministers would like to see in the Commission's work programme that are not contained in the letter of intent?
- Are there any of the envisaged initiatives where ministers have doubts as concerns the purposefulness of these initiative?

The aim of the exchange of views is to provide the Commission with broad indications of where the Council and its member states put the emphasis in relation to the priorities for 2017. The views expressed will be summarised in a presidency letter; they will allow the Commission to take ministers' comments into account before adopting its work programme in October. Following that the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission will agree a joint declaration on priorities for 2017.

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