



GENERAL AFFAIRS Council **Tuesday 15 March in Brussels**

Starting at 10.00, the Council will prepare the **European Council on 17-18 March 2016** by examining draft conclusions.

The Council will take note of a presidency synthesis report on the discussions and main messages of different Council configurations in relation to the 2016 **European Semester**. It will also hold a debate on better governance and the **quality of public administrations**.

The Council will adopt the **interinstitutional agreement on better law-making** and discuss its implementation with regard to programming.

Ministers will also take note of information provided by the Commission on the contribution of the **EU cohesion policy** for growth and jobs.

Without discussion, the Council will adopt the regulation setting up an **emergency support mechanism** in response to the difficult humanitarian situation caused by the **refugee crisis** notably **in Greece**.

A presidency press conference will be held after the end of the meeting at +/-14.00.

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<http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu/event/general-affairs-council-march-2016>

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

Preparation for the March European Council

The Council will examine draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 17-18 March, prepared by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, in cooperation with the Netherlands presidency and the Commission.

The European Council is due to focus on:

- Migration, following the EU-Turkey summit on 7 March 2016
- European Semester/Single market
- Other items

An [annotated draft agenda](#) was discussed by the Council on 16 February 2016.

European Semester

The Council will take note of a [presidency synthesis report](#) on the contributions of seven Council configurations involved in the current European Semester exercise.²

The report emphasizes that pressing ahead with an ambitious jobs and growth agenda remains crucial to sustain the still fragile economic recovery in Europe.

The Council will also hold a thematic debate about better governance and the quality of public administrations.

The European Semester involves simultaneous monitoring of the member states' fiscal, economic and employment policies during a six-month period every year. In the light of the guidance provided by the European Council, the member states will prepare their national reform programmes (economic and employment policies) and stability or convergence programmes (fiscal policies) for this year.

Agreement on better law-making

The Council will adopt the interinstitutional agreement on better law-making. The agreement is expected to be signed by the Presidents of the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission in the margin of the Council and enter into force the same day.

A deal on the interinstitutional agreement was reached between the Council, the Parliament and the Commission on 8 December 2015. Its main purpose is to improve the way in which the European Union legislates to ensure that EU laws better serve citizens and businesses.

² Economic and Financial Affairs Council, Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council, Competitiveness Council, Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council, Environment Council, Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council and Justice and Home Affairs Council

The Council will also discuss how to implement the interinstitutional agreement with regard to programming legislative priorities.

Pursuant to the interinstitutional agreement the Commission consult both the Council and the Parliament before adopting its annual work programme and take their views into account. In addition, drawing on the Commission's annual work programme, the three institutions will identify joint legislative priorities for the following year.

Council [press release](#) on the interinstitutional agreement

[Council website on better lawmaking](#)

Cohesion policy: investments for growth and jobs

The Council will take note of a Commission communication "[Investing in jobs and growth - maximising the contribution of European Structural and Investment Funds](#)". The communication provides an overview of the main results of negotiations between member states' authorities and the Commission on their investment programmes following the reform of the European structural and investment funds.

Ministers will also adopt [conclusions](#) on this issue.

Emergency support for Greece

Without discussion, the Council will adopt the regulation setting up an emergency support mechanism in response to the difficult humanitarian situation caused by the refugee crisis notably in Greece.

[Council press release](#) from 9 March 2016 published following agreement reached in the Council's Permanent Representatives Committee.
