



Council of the European Union

**PRESS**  
**EN**

**BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>**  
Brussels, 17 June 2015

## **GENERAL AFFAIRS Council** **23 June 2015 in Luxembourg**

Starting at 09.30, the Council will prepare the **June European Council** meeting (25-26 June) on the basis of draft conclusions.

As part of the **European Semester**, the Council is expected to approve draft country's specific recommendations (CSR's) and transmit them to the European Council for endorsement.

The Council will discuss the **better regulation agenda** aimed at designing EU policies and laws so that they achieve their objectives at minimum cost.

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the political crisis in the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**.

Press conference: at the end of the meeting (+/-13.30).

### Meetings in the margins of the General Affairs Council:

On Monday 22 June an Accession Conference with Montenegro will take place at 17.20 while the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Council will start at 18.00.

Press conference at +/- 20.10

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*Press conferences and public events by video streaming: <http://video.consilium.europa.eu>*

*Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery on: [www.eucouncil.tv](http://www.eucouncil.tv)*

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

## Preparation for the June European Council

The Council will examine draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 25-26 June, prepared by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, in cooperation with the Latvian presidency and the Commission.

The European Council is expected to focus on:

- **Migration:** leaders are expected to focus on relocation, resettlement and return policy. They should also look forward to the Valletta Conference with countries of origin and transit in Africa.
- **Security challenges:** this will include discussions on EU internal security, such as counter-terrorism, the EU's strategy on foreign and security policy, as well as capabilities and Europe's defence industry.
- **Economy:** the European Council will conclude the 2015 European Semester and welcome the agreement reached on the European Fund for Strategic Investments. The heads of state or government will further discuss and provide orientations on the digital single market and the 4 Presidents report on better economic governance in the euro area.

An [annotated draft agenda](#) was discussed by the Council on 19 May.

## European Semester

As part of the European Semester, the Council is expected to approve draft country's specific recommendations (CSR's) and transmit them to the European Council for endorsement. The draft CSR's will also have been discussed in EPSCO and ECOFIN.

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.

[Council website: European Semester](#)

## Better regulation agenda

The Council will hold an orientation debate on the better regulation agenda proposed by the Commission on 19 May 2015.

The discussion will be guided by the following question:

How could EU institutions and member states, through the better regulation agenda, maintain and deliver European added value, in particular for the completion of the internal market, and contribute to enhancing competitiveness in Europe, particularly focusing on SMEs?

The debate will be based on the two following documents:

- a presidency report outlining the state of play on the draft inter-institutional agreement on better law making [\[9806/15\]](#)
- a presidency note on the entire better regulation agenda [\[9804/15\]](#)

The better regulation agenda consists of the two following key documents

- a draft inter-institutional agreement [\[9121/15\]](#)
- a communication on "better regulation on better results" [\[9079/15\]](#)

### **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the political crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

In April 2015, the Council voiced "grave concern regarding the deteriorating situation in the country, in particular in the area of rule of law, fundamental rights and freedom of media". It urged all sides to assume their responsibilities and take immediate measures towards a sustainable solution, constructively engage to restart political dialogue and restore trust in the institutions.

Commissioner Hahn has continued discussions on a solution for the political crisis in the country on 10 June, though a final agreement was not yet reached. As a consequence, the Commission announced it would reconsider how to best contribute to the political process in the country, remaining ready to facilitate discussions.

[Statement following the meeting with political leaders of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 10 June 2015](#)

[Council conclusions on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 21 April 2015](#)

### **Any other business**

#### ***Informal meeting of EU cohesion ministers***

The presidency will inform ministers about the outcome of the informal meeting of EU ministers responsible for cohesion policy which took place in Riga on 9-10 June 2015.

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