

European Council 19-20 March in Brussels

The spring European Council will start at 16.00 on Thursday 19 March with the traditional exchange of views with European Parliament President Martin Schulz.

The heads of state and government will discuss the **Energy Union** at their first working session on Thursday afternoon.

Over dinner the leaders will discuss relations with **Russia** and the situation in **Ukraine**. They will also take stock of the preparations and provide a steer for the **Eastern Partnership** summit in Riga.

On Friday morning the European Council will reconvene at 10.00 for its second working session. Leaders will have an exchange of views on the economic situation and conclude the first phase of the **European Semester** for 2015. They will then address the situation in **Libya**.

Indicative programme:

Thursday:	16.00	Exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament
	16.30	Family photo
	16.45	First working session
	19.00	Working dinner
	± 22.00	Press conference
Friday:	10.00	Second working session
	± 12.30	Press conference

[Full media programme](#)

Invitation letter by President Tusk

- *Media accreditation:* www.consilium.europa.eu/
- *Press conferences by video streaming:* <http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>
- *Video coverage in broadcast quality and photos in high resolution:* <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>

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

Energy Union

The European Council is to have an in-depth discussion on the energy union, which aims at affordable, secure and sustainable energy. Leaders are expected to give guidance on some key aspects and request the EU institutions and the member states to further this work. In particular, the heads of state and government are expected to call for more interconnections, better enforcement of existing energy legislation and reinforced transparency on the gas market.

The energy union is one of the five priorities of the European Council's strategic agenda, adopted in June 2014. At its meeting in October last year (when the climate deal was reached) leaders reiterated the aim of building an energy union and in December they tasked the Commission to present a comprehensive proposal ahead of the March 2015 European Council meeting. The energy union package was published by the Commission on 25 February. The proposal has since been discussed in both the Energy (5 March) and the Environment Council (6 March).

[Energy Union - Council website](#)

Russia/Ukraine

The heads of state or government will discuss relations with Russia and the latest developments in regard to the conflict in Ukraine. The European Council is expected to call on all parties to fully implement the Minsk agreements, underlining the Russian leadership's responsibility in this regard. Leaders are expected to have a strategic debate on the best way for the EU to further support the peace efforts, including through restrictive measures. They are also likely to pledge full backing to the OSCE mission's ability and capacity to monitor the implementation of the Minsk agreements. The European Council should further renew its support for the Ukrainian government's reform efforts and call for swift adoption of the already pledged 1,8 billion € of EU support. Finally, leaders are expected to address the need to challenge Russia's ongoing disinformation campaign.

[Ukraine sanctions policy - Council website](#)

[Fact sheet EU-Ukraine relations](#)

Eastern Partnership

The European Council will discuss preparations and provide a political steer for the fourth Eastern Partnership summit that will take place in Riga on 21-22 May 2015. Leaders are to reaffirm their continued commitment to the partnership and are expected to underline the importance of strengthening democratic state structures. The summit should focus on developing, strengthening and differentiating the relations with the six partners, notably through state-building. The European Council should also call for the earliest possible ratification by all member states of the three Association Agreements/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements, which were signed in June 2014 in Brussels. It is intended to develop, strengthen and differentiate relations with the six partners.

[Eastern Partnership - Presidency website](#)

European Semester / Growth and Jobs

The heads of state or government will in the presence of the President of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, have an exchange of views on the economic situation in Europe and conclude the first phase of this year's European Semester. Leaders are likely to endorse the three main pillars of the Annual Growth Survey: fiscal consolidations, investment and structural reform. The European Council is also expected to welcome the agreement on the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) in the Council. It will call for the fund to be up and running by mid-2015. Leaders should also discuss the state of play in the negotiations with the US on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement. They are likely to reconfirm their commitment to conclude the negotiations by the end of the year and to step up the efforts to communicate the benefits of the agreement.

[European Semester - Council website](#)

[European Fund for Strategic Investment - Council website](#)

[TTIP - Commission website](#)

Libya

The European Council will discuss the situation in Libya. Leaders will call for the rapid formation of a government of national unity and reiterate support for the UN-brokered political dialogue between Libyan parties. Leaders are likely to discuss how the EU can continue to support the talks and their outcome. The heads of state or government are also expected to underline the serious challenges that Libya's security situation is posing to its neighbours, the wider region and Europe, especially as regards terrorism. In this context, leaders are expected to call for the EU to step up engagement on counter-terrorism with partners. With regard to the continuing loss of life at sea of migrants departing from Libya, the European Council is expected to call on the Council to address the challenges posed in a comprehensive manner while in the meantime strengthening the EU's border mission, Operation Triton, in the central Mediterranean.

[Council conclusions on Libya, 16 March 2015](#)
