



Council of the European Union

PRESS
EN

BACKGROUND BRIEF¹
Brussels, 22 January 2025

General Affairs Council Brussels, 28 January 2025

Chair: Adam Szłapka, Minister for the European Union of Poland

The meeting will start at **10:00**.

In public session, the Polish presidency will present its priorities with a focus on those falling within the remit of the General Affairs Council.

As part of the annual rule of law dialogue, ministers will also hold a country-specific discussion. The Council's annual rule of law dialogue was initiated in 2014. It allows for an open exchange of comments and best practices on rule of law developments across the EU and in individual member states, while ensuring objectivity, non-discrimination, and equal treatment of all member states.

A press conference will take place after the meeting (+/- **13:00**).

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[General Affairs Council, 28 January 2025 - meeting page](#)

[Press conferences and public events by video streaming](#)

[Video coverage in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

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Presidency priorities

In public session, the Polish presidency will present the priorities for its term of office. Ministers will have an opportunity to present their comments. The main priority of the Polish presidency is security in its 7 dimensions: external, internal, information, economic, energy, food, and health. In this context, the Polish presidency has established the following overall priorities for its semester:

- defence and security
- protection of people and borders
- resistance to foreign integration and disinformation
- ensuring security and freedom of business
- energy transition
- competitive and resilient agriculture
- health security

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

As regards the **General Affairs Council** configuration, work will focus on safeguarding the rule of law, EU enlargement and internal reforms, countering foreign information manipulation and interference, strengthening the democratic resilience in the EU and its neighbourhood, developing cooperation with the UK, and laying ground for the negotiations of the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

[Polish presidency priorities](#)

[Polish presidency programme](#)

Annual rule of law dialogue

As part of the annual rule of law dialogue, ministers will discuss the rule of law situation in Hungary, Portugal, Romania, and Slovenia.

This will be the eleventh round of country-specific discussions after the ones held in November 2020, April and November 2021, April and December 2022, March and October 2023, and January, May, and November 2024. For each member state, the Commission will present the main findings of the respective country specific chapter in its 2024 rule of law report. The member state concerned will then be asked to present key national developments and particular aspects of their national rule of law framework. This will be followed by a round of comments and questions in which other delegations can share their experiences and best practices in relation to the developments mentioned.

The Council's annual rule of law dialogue was initiated by the Council conclusions of 16 December 2014. Its aim is to allow for an open exchange of comments and best practices based on the Commission's annual rule of law report, while ensuring objectivity, non-discrimination, and equal treatment of all member states. It is organised in two different types of political discussions: a horizontal discussion covering general rule of law developments in the EU, and country-specific discussions addressing key developments in each member state. The presidency conclusions of 12 December 2023 consolidated the approach to the Council's annual rule of law dialogue followed since 2020, including its structuring into horizontal and country-specific discussions. They also envisaged three country-specific discussions per year, each focusing on the situation in four member states.

In line with this approach, the Polish presidency will hold two country-specific discussions at the General Affairs Council, the first one on 28 January. Another country-specific discussion is expected to take place at the General Affairs Council of 27 May 2025 focusing on Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, and Belgium.

[2024 Rule of law report \(European Commission\)](#)

[Rule of law report 2024: with the fifth edition, the EU is better equipped to face rule of law challenges \(European Commission press release, 24 July 2024\)](#)

[Evaluation of the Council's rule of law dialogue – Presidency conclusions \(Council press release, 12 December 2023\)](#)

[Rule of law \(background information\)](#)

Any other business

The Czech delegation will underline the importance of further advancing the gradual integration of Ukraine and Moldova in the EU's single market.
