



Council of the European Union

PRESS
EN

BACKGROUND¹
Brussels, 11 October 2017

GENERAL AFFAIRS Council **Tuesday 17 October in Luxembourg**

Chair: Estonian Deputy Minister for EU Affairs **Matti Maasikas**

Meeting will start at 10.00.

The Council will prepare for the **European Council of 19-20 October 2017** by discussing draft conclusions.

The Council will also hold its **annual rule of law dialogue**, centred on **media pluralism and the rule of law in the digital age**.

Over a working lunch, ministers will discuss the recently published cyber security package, which will be presented by Commission Vice President Andrus Ansip.

Press conference: +/-12.45.

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¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the Press Office.

October European Council

The Council will discuss draft conclusions of the European Council meeting on 19-20 October 2017, drawn up by the President of the European Council in cooperation with the Estonian presidency and the Commission.

The October European Council is due to focus on migration, Digital Europe, defence and external relations.

In particular, leaders will take stock of the measures taken to stem illegal flows on all migration routes, decide on additional measures as required, and call for further progress on the Common European Asylum System.

Regarding digital issues, they will look at how the EU can best meet the challenges and use the opportunities presented by the digital revolution. Input will be provided through a report by the Estonian prime minister on the discussions held at the digital summit in Tallinn on 29 September.

Defence issues will include the planned permanent structured cooperation (PESCO).

In the area of external relations, leaders are expected to address relations with Turkey and possibly other foreign policy issues.

An [annotated draft agenda](#) was discussed by the Council on 25 September 2017.

[19-20 October 2017 European Council webpage](#)

Rule of law dialogue

The Council will hold its third annual rule of law dialogue, focusing on media pluralism and the rule of law in the digital age.

The discussion will be steered by a [presidency note](#), which includes questions related to:

- challenges to the rule of law and fundamental rights in the digital age and in the new media environment
- best ways to support journalists, publishers and internet intermediaries in ensuring the quality of journalism and reliability of information published
- the role of member states in ensuring that EU citizens of all ages have sufficient media literacy skills

The topic will be introduced by the Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Michael O'Flaherty.

Following the discussion, the presidency will draw up presidency conclusions, which it, together with its trio partners, will forward to the relevant Council preparatory bodies for further consideration.

The third rule of law dialogue builds on a seminar on the same theme organised by the presidency on 12 July 2017 in Brussels ([summary of the seminar](#)).

The rule of law dialogue was established in December 2014 to promote and safeguard the rule of law in the framework of the treaties. The first dialogue took place in November 2015 and the second in May 2016.