



Council of the European Union

PRESS
EN

BACKGROUND¹
Brussels, 16 November 2017

GENERAL AFFAIRS Council

Monday 20 November in Brussels

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

Meeting will start at 9.30.

The Council will start preparations for the **European Council on 14 and 15 December** on the basis of an annotated draft agenda. It will also take stock of the implementation of earlier European Council conclusions.

As part of the annual legislative programming exercise, ministers will exchange views on the Commission's **work programme for 2018**, which will first be presented by the Commission.

The Council will take note of the progress made in implementing an **interinstitutional agreement on better law-making**.

In preparation for the European Semester 2018, the Estonian presidency, together with the incoming Bulgarian presidency, will present the **2018 European Semester roadmap**.

The Council is expected to adopt, without discussion, conclusions on enhancing **cybersecurity** in the EU. It will also adopt the regulations creating an **Entry-Exit System** to register information of third country nationals crossing the external borders of the Schengen area.

Over a working lunch, ministers will discuss the future of the multiannual financial framework together with Commissioner Günther Oettinger.

Press conference: +/-12.45.

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Press conferences and public events by video streaming:

<http://video.consilium.europa.eu/en/webcasts>

Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery:

<https://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu/permalink/100178>

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

December European Council

The Council will prepare for the forthcoming European Council meeting on 14 and 15 December 2017 by discussing an [annotated draft agenda](#) drawn up by the President of the European Council in cooperation with the Estonian presidency and the Commission.

The December European Council is expected to focus on the following topics:

- **Defence:** it will welcome the launch of Permanent Structured Cooperation and review progress in other fields, in particular on EU-NATO cooperation.
- **Social issues, education and culture:** it will adopt conclusions on social issues as well as on education and culture as a follow-up to the Gothenburg Social Summit.

In the light of events, the European Council may address specific foreign policy issues. Under the Leaders' Agenda, it will hold a thematic debate on the way forward on the external and internal dimension of migration policy, but is not expected to adopt conclusions on this.

The annotated draft agenda will serve as the basis for draft conclusions, to be prepared in the run-up to the meeting.

[14-15 December European Council](#)

[Leaders' Agenda](#)

[Gothenburg social summit](#)

European Council follow-up

The Council will take stock of the implementation of earlier European Council conclusions, with a particular focus on developments since October.

Commission work programme for 2018

In the context of the annual legislative programming exercise, ministers will exchange views on the [Commission's work programme for 2018](#), which will first be presented by the Commission. The discussion will take place in public session.

As the last step in the process, the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission will agree on a joint declaration on priorities for 2018. The joint declaration is expected to be approved by the General Affairs Council on 12 December and signed by the Presidents of the three institutions on the sidelines of the December European Council.

[Annual legislative programming process - timeline and steps](#)

Interinstitutional agreement – implementation

The Council will take note of the state of play as regards the implementation of an [interinstitutional agreement on better law-making](#).

The agreement was signed by the Presidents of the Council, the Parliament and the Commission in April 2016. It provides for closer co-operation between the institutions, in particular on legislative planning. It also covers areas such as impact assessments and public consultations, delegated and implementing acts, transparency, simplification and implementation of EU law.

European Semester 2018 – roadmap

In preparation for the European Semester 2018, the Estonian presidency, together with the incoming Bulgarian presidency, will present the [2018 European Semester roadmap](#).

The roadmap sets out how work will be taken forward in the remainder of 2017 and the first half of 2018. The objective of the roadmap is to ensure that all relevant Council configurations work in a coordinated manner, with the General Affairs Council overseeing the process.

The European Semester is a cycle of economic and fiscal policy coordination within the EU. It helps the member states to coordinate their economic, employment and fiscal policies better and to align them with the objectives and rules agreed at EU level.

[European Semester](#)
