



GENERAL AFFAIRS Council

Tuesday, 12 December in Brussels

Chair: Estonian Minister for Foreign Affairs **Sven Mikser**

The meeting will start at 9.30.

The Council will conclude preparations for the **European Council meeting** on 14 December by examining draft conclusions. It will also take stock of the implementation of previous European Council conclusions.

The Council is expected to approve a **joint declaration** by the three institutions on the **EU's legislative priorities** until the end of the current legislative term in 2019.

The Commission will present its **annual growth survey for 2018**, which launches the European Semester, the annual cycle of economic governance in the EU. It sets out general economic and social priorities for the EU and gives member states policy guidance for the following years.

A presidency press conference will be held at the end of the meeting (+/- 12.30).

Meetings in the margins of the Council:

Monday, 11 December

17.30 EU-Montenegro intergovernmental accession conference, followed by a press conference

19.00 EU-Serbia intergovernmental accession conference, followed by a press conference

Tuesday, 12 December

13.00 Informal working lunch with candidate countries (Albania, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey)

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[Council meeting webpage](#)

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

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

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

Preparation for the December European Council

The Council will examine draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 14 December, prepared by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, in cooperation with the Estonian presidency and the Commission.

The European Council will focus on:

- **defence:** the 28 heads of state or government are expected to welcome the launch of the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) and to review progress in other fields, in particular EU-NATO cooperation
- **social issues, education and culture:** the European Council will also adopt conclusions, building on the discussions held at the Social Summit in Gothenburg and the Leaders' Agenda debate on culture and education
- **external relations:** the European Council will address this item in the light of the latest developments
- **migration:** as part of the Leaders' Agenda, the heads of state or government will hold a debate on the way forward on migration policy, including both internal and external dimensions

An [annotated draft agenda](#) was discussed by the Council on 20 November 2017.

Implementation of the better law-making agreement

The Council will be invited to approve a joint declaration agreed with the European Parliament and the Commission setting out the EU's legislative priorities until the end of the current legislative term. The three institutions are expected to sign it in the margins of the December European Council.

The purpose of the joint declaration is to strengthen the EU institutions' cooperation to tackle the big challenges which lie ahead. This instrument was set up by the [better law-making agreement](#) signed in April 2016. The first joint declaration was agreed in December 2016 and outlined the EU's legislative priorities for 2017.

Annual growth survey for 2018

The Commission will present to the Council its [annual growth survey for 2018](#), in which it outlines the most pressing economic and social priorities on which the EU and its member states should focus their attention in the coming months.

The adoption of the annual growth survey kicks off the European Semester of economic and budgetary policy coordination.
