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General Affairs

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President **Ekaterina Zaharieva**
Deputy prime minister of Bulgaria

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 • Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
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ITEMS DEBATED

Multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027

The Commission presented to the Council its proposals on the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the years 2021 to 2027.

Ministers held a first exchange of views on the proposed package.

The debate was held in [public session](#).

June European Council

The Council began preparations for the European Council meeting, which will take place on 28 and 29 June, by discussing an annotated draft agenda.

At its meeting, the European Council is expected to

- aim at reaching a consensus on migration
- address a number of issues related to security and defence
- conclude the 2018 European Semester
- adopt conclusions on taxation, and on innovation and digital issues, as part of the follow-up to the leaders' debates on these topics
- have a first exchange of views on the next multiannual financial framework and decide on the timeline for completing the negotiations.

Rule of law in Poland

The Council discussed the situation with regard to the rule of law in Poland.

The Commission updated ministers on the latest developments in its dialogue with the Polish authorities.

The Council will return to this issue at its next meeting. Ministers encouraged the Commission and the Polish authorities to continue their dialogue with a view to achieving further concrete results by then.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

The Council authorised the signing, conclusion and provisional application of the protocol to the EU-Iraq partnership and cooperation agreement which takes into account Croatia's accession to the EU on 1 July 2013.

Creation of a cyber education platform within the European Security and Defence College

The Council adopted a decision creating a Cyber Education, Training, Evaluation and Exercise (ETEE) platform within the European Security and Defence College (ESDC). The Council also revised the budget allocated to the ESDC to accommodate for this new platform.

The objective of the ESDC is to provide member states and EU institutions with knowledgeable personnel able to work efficiently on Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) matters and to thereby contribute to a better understanding of CSDP and promote a common European security culture.

EU-Brazil memorandum of understanding on international cooperation

The Council approved the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the EU and Brazil on international cooperation.

The memorandum of understanding aims to facilitate the coordinated implementation of international cooperation activities carried out jointly by the EU and Brazil through their respective cooperation structures.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - transition to second stage of association

The Council adopted the EU's position for the Stabilisation and Association Council between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the EU concerning the transition to the second stage of the association ([7325/18](#)).

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia entered into force on 1 April 2004.

Update of the sanctions guidelines

The Council adopted the updated sanctions guidelines, including further elements concerning the definition of "financing and financial assistance".

On 8 December 2003, the Council approved the sanctions guidelines. The latest reviewed and updated text of the guidelines was adopted by the Council on 18 December 2017.

Sanctions on North Korea

The Council adopted a technical modification relating to 6 individuals on its list of those subject to a travel ban and an asset freeze in response to the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in flagrant disregard of UN Security Council resolutions.

EU training mission in Mali - extension of the mandate and broadened objectives

The Council extended the mandate of the EU training mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) for two years, until 18 May 2020. The Council also amended the mandate of the mission to include in its objectives the provision of advice and training support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force, as part of the EU's ongoing efforts to support the G5 Sahel process. In addition, the Council agreed to allocate a significantly increased budget of € 59.7 million to the mission for the period from 19 May 2018 to 18 May 2020, compared to € 33.4 for the current two-year period.

EUTM Mali assists in the reconstruction of effective and accountable Malian armed forces capable of ensuring the long-term security of Mali and, under civilian authority, restoring the country's territorial integrity. To this effect, EUTM Mali delivers training to units of the Malian armed forces and aids the development of an autonomous training capability. The mission also provides advice to the Malian authorities on reforming the army.

EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia - creation of a crime information cell

The Council adopted a decision allowing for the creation of a crime information cell within EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia. The information cell will be composed of up to 10 staff members from relevant law enforcement authorities of member states and from the EU agencies FRONTEX and EUROPOL in order to improve information sharing between them. The cell will be tasked to facilitate the receipt, collection and transmission of information on human smuggling and trafficking, the implementation of the UN arms embargo on Libya, illegal trafficking, as well as crimes relevant to the security of the operation itself.

EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia is the EU naval operation set up to disrupt the business model of migrant smugglers and human traffickers in the Southern Central Mediterranean.

Relations with Tunisia

The Council adopted the EU position for the 14th Association Council with Tunisia, that will take place on 15 May 2018.

Sanctions over actions undermining the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine

The Council added five persons to the list of those subject to restrictive measures over actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. They are listed because of their involvement in the organisation of the Russian presidential elections of 18 March 2018 in the illegally annexed Crimea and Sevastopol, thereby actively supporting and implementing policies that undermine the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. The five individuals hold positions of responsibility in the electoral commissions of Crimea or Sevastopol. The measures consist of a travel ban and an asset freeze.

The decision brings the total number of individuals listed by the EU to 155. In addition, the EU has frozen the assets of 38 entities under this sanctions regime.

Other EU measures in place in response to the Ukraine crisis include:

- economic sanctions targeting specific sectors of the Russian economy, currently in place until 31 July 2018;
- restrictive measures in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, limited to the territory of Crimea and Sevastopol, currently in place until 23 June 2018.

[Overview of EU restrictive measures in response to the crisis in Ukraine](#)

Sanctions on Libya

The Council adopted a decision transposing into EU law the update made to the list of vessels subject to restrictive measures in view of the situation in Libya by the UN Security Council Committee on 18 and 29 April 2018.

[EU-Libya relations](#)

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Schengen evaluation

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2016 evaluation of Estonia on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of management of the external land border. (8281/18)

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2017 evaluation of Portugal on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of management of the external border. (8283/18)

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2017 evaluation of Portugal on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of data protection. (8285/18)

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2017 evaluation of Portugal on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of the common visa policy. (8287/18)

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2017 evaluation of Portugal on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of return. (8289/18)

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2016 evaluation of the Republic of Malta on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of data protection. (8291/18)

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2017 evaluation of Sweden on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of police cooperation. (8293/18)

Decision to subject substances ADB-CHMINACA and CUMYL-4CN-BINACA to control measures

The Council decided to impose control measures on the new psychoactive substances ADB-CHMINACA ([5387/18](#)) and CUMYL-4CN-BINACA ([5392/18](#)).

This decision is based on the risk assessment produced by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

For more information, see [news release published by EMCDDA](#).

Migrant detention - Council of Europe

The Council endorsed the conclusions drawn by the Presidency regarding ongoing work at the Council of Europe on a draft recommendation on administrative detention of migrants, in view of the upcoming negotiating sessions of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on Administrative Detention of Migrants.

EU-Gambia - return

The Council confirmed the agreement on the draft good practices between Gambia and the EU for the efficient operation of the identification and return procedures of persons without authorisation to stay, with a view to their signature on the EU side.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Money laundering and terrorist financing

The Council adopted a directive strengthening EU rules to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing.

The directive sets out to close down criminal financing without hindering the normal functioning of payment systems. It amends directive 2015/849 and is part of an action plan launched after a spate of terrorist attacks in Europe in 2016.

Adoption of the directive follows an agreement with the European Parliament reached in December 2017. The Parliament approved the agreed text on 19 April 2018.

The main changes to directive 2015/849 involve:

- access to information on beneficial ownership, improving transparency in the ownership of companies and trusts;
- addressing risks linked to prepaid cards and virtual currencies;
- cooperation between financial intelligence units;
- improved checks on third countries.

Economic governance – recommendation to the euro area

The Council adopted a recommendation on the economic policies of the euro area ([7569/18](#) + [7552/18](#)).

This follows endorsement by the European Council in March 2018 under the 'European Semester', the EU's annual policy monitoring process.

The recommendation is prepared at an early stage in the process so that account can be taken of eurozone issues when approving country-specific recommendations.

For 2018, the Council recommends a broadly neutral fiscal stance for the euro area. It calls for a balanced policy mix that ensures sustainable public finances whilst supporting the economy. Member states with current account deficits or high external debt should aim to contain growth in unit labour costs and seek to improve their competitiveness. Those with large current account surpluses should promote wage growth, foster investment and support domestic demand and growth potential.

As regards labour markets, the Council calls for reforms that help create quality jobs, equal opportunities and access to the labour market, as well as fair working conditions. It also recommends reforms to support social protection and inclusion.

As concerns the EU's banking union, the Council calls for work to continue with regard to sharing risk and reducing risk in the banking sector.

The Council calls for swift progress on completing the EU's economic and monetary union.

The 2018 European Semester will conclude with the adoption of the new country-specific recommendations in July.

BUDGETS

Mobilisation of the EU solidarity fund for Greece, Spain, France and Portugal

The Council adopted a decision mobilising €104.2 million in commitments and payments from the EU solidarity fund to provide financial assistance to disaster-stricken Greece (€1.4 million), Spain (€3.2 million), France (€48.9 million) and Portugal (€50.7 million) ([6496/18](#)).

The decision provides financial assistance

- to Greece in response to earthquakes that affected the island of Lesbos in June 2017,
- to Spain following forest fires that occurred in Galicia in October 2017,
- to France, following hurricanes Irma and Maria that struck Saint Martin and Guadeloupe in September 2017 and
- to Portugal in response to forest fires that occurred in the Centro region between June and October 2017.

The EU solidarity fund can be mobilised in the case of a major natural disaster with serious repercussions on living conditions, the natural environment or the economy in a member state. Major disaster means that the estimated damage must either exceed €3 billion in 2011 prices, or 0.6% of the country's GNI, or 1.5% of the GNI of the region concerned.

The aim of the financial assistance is to contribute to a rapid return to normal living conditions in the affected regions. The EU aid is complementary to the efforts of the country concerned and is used to cover a share of the public expenditure committed for dealing with the damage caused by a major disaster. It is meant to help the beneficiary country to restore infrastructure, provide temporary accommodation, secure preventive infrastructure and clean up disaster-stricken areas.

The Council also adopted its position on draft amending budget no 1 for 2018, approving €97.6 million in commitments and payments to be financed from the 2018 EU budget. The rest of the assistance has already been paid out to Greece, France and Portugal as advances.

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Belgium

The Council adopted a decision mobilising €4.6 million under the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to provide support to 2287 workers made redundant in six Belgian enterprises operating in the manufacture of machinery and equipment sector ([7858/18](#)). The redundancies are the result of a continuation of major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation.

The EGF helps workers to find new jobs and develop new skills when they have lost their jobs as a result of changing global trade patterns, e.g. when a large company shuts down or a factory is moved outside the EU, or as a result of the global financial and economic crisis. The help provided by the EGF consists of co-financing measures such as job-search assistance, careers advice, tailor-made training and re-training, mentoring and promoting entrepreneurship. It also provides one-off, time-limited individual support, such as job-search allowances, mobility allowances and allowances for participating in lifelong learning and training activities.

Timetable for adoption of the 2019 EU budget

The Council approved the timetable for this year's budgetary procedure and modalities for the functioning of the Conciliation Committee, as agreed during a trilogue between the presidency, the European Parliament and the Commission held on 27 March 2018 ([7984/18](#)).

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA**EU-Norway agreement on additional trade preferences in agricultural products**

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of an agreement in the form of an exchange of letters between the EU and Norway concerning additional trade preferences in agricultural products, as set out in documents [13357/17](#) and [13471/17](#).

49th meeting of the European Economic Area (EEA) Council - EU position

The Council established the European Union's common position for the 49th meeting of the European Economic Area (EEA) Council due to take place in Brussels on 23 May 2018, agreeing that the provisional agenda for the meeting ([1601/18](#)) and the draft conclusions of the EEA Council be submitted to the EEA Council for adoption.

In accordance with the EEA Agreement, the draft conclusions of the EEA Council should be adopted by agreement between the European Union and the EEA EFTA States.

ENVIRONMENT**Effort sharing regulation for greenhouse gas emission reductions**

The Council today adopted a regulation on greenhouse gas emission reductions. The regulation sets out binding emission reduction targets for member states in sectors falling outside the scope of the EU emissions trading system for the period 2021-2030.

This brings the EU closer to fulfilling its Paris climate commitment of a cut in greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. The regulation aims to ensure that the EU's target of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 30% in 2030 compared to 2005 levels in the effort-sharing sectors is reached. This includes buildings, agriculture (non-CO₂ emissions), waste management and transport (excluding aviation and international shipping).

See the [press release](#)

Better protection and management of land and forests

The Council today adopted a regulation establishing a framework for the inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) in the 2030 climate and energy framework.

This legislation will help reduce EU greenhouse gas emissions during the period 2021-2030 through improved protection and management of land and forests across the Union. The new regulation provides a framework for ensuring that emissions and removals generated by this sector are taken into account. This will enable the EU to reach its Paris Agreement target to cut emissions by at least 40% by 2030.

See the [press release](#)

Environmental reporting obligations simplified

The Council today adopted a decision which streamlines EU legislation in the field of environmental reporting. By amending or repealing legislation that is no longer applicable or relevant, the decision brings legal clarity, enhances transparency and reduces the administrative burden in the member states.

See the [press release](#)

Energy efficient buildings

The Council today adopted a revised directive on the energy performance of buildings, thereby completing the final stage in the legislative procedure.

The directive improves energy efficiency in buildings and encourages building renovation. Decarbonising the existing, highly inefficient European building stock is one of its long term goals. It promotes cost-effective renovation work, introduces a smartness indicator for buildings, simplifies the inspections of heating and air conditioning systems and promotes electro-mobility by setting up a framework for parking spaces for electric vehicles.

See the [press release](#)

INTERNAL MARKET**Cosmetic products: UV filters - fragrance compounds**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of two regulations amending [regulation 1223/2009 on cosmetic products](#) with a view to:

- adapting to technical and scientific progress the use of certain ingredients authorised as a UV-filter in cosmetic products ([6741/18](#) and [6741/18 ADD1](#)), and
- restricting the use of *Tagetes erecta*, *Tagetes minuta* and *Tagetes patula* extracts and oils in cosmetic products ([6941/18](#) and [6941/18 ADD1](#)).

These draft Commission regulations are subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt them, unless the European Parliament objects.

Chemicals - classification and labelling

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a regulation amending regulation 1272/2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures for the purposes of its adaptation to technical and scientific progress ([6868/18](#) and [6868/18 ADD1](#)) and correcting regulation 2017/776.

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt it, unless the European Parliament objects.

Tractors - type-approval requirements

The Council decided not to oppose the entry into force of a Commission regulation amending and correcting delegated regulation 2015/208 supplementing regulation 167/2013 ([6254/18](#) and [6254/18 ADD 1](#)), and a corrigendum to a delegated regulation amending and correcting delegated regulation 2015/208 supplementing regulation 167/2013, with regard to vehicle functional safety requirements for the approval of agricultural and forestry vehicles ([7145/18](#)).

Type-approval requirements applying to agricultural and forestry vehicles are set out in [regulation 167/2013](#).

The new Commission regulation is a delegated act that may now enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects.

TRANSPORT

Railway safety - common safety methods

The Council decided not to object to a Commission regulation establishing common safety methods on safety management system requirements pursuant to directive 2016/798 and repealing Commission regulations 1158/2010 and 1169/2010 ([7383/18](#) + ADD 1).

The regulation is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the act can enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects to it.

Validation of flight crew licences and training

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a regulation amending regulation 1178/2011 as regards the automatic validation of Union flight crew licences and take-off and landing training ([6979/18](#)).

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

European Common Aviation Agreement

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the EU in the Joint Committee established by the European Common Aviation Agreement (ECAA) as regards its internal rules of procedure ([8054/18](#)).

International Maritime Organisation - passenger ship safety

The Council adopted a decision on an EU position for the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Maritime Safety Committee (99th session) concerning passenger ship safety. The meeting will take place in London from 16 to 25 May 2018.

AGRICULTURE

Amendments of pesticides - maximum residue levels

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending annexes II, III and V to regulation 396/2005 as regards maximum residue levels for cyantraniliprole, cymoxanil, deltamethrin, difenoconazole, fenamidone, flubendiamide, fluopicolide, folpet, fosetyl, mandestrobin, mepiquat, metazachlor, propamocarb, propargite, pyrimethanil, sulfoxaflor and trifloxystrobin in or on certain products ([7563/18](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [ADD 2 REV 1](#)).

Regulation 396/2005 establishes the maximum quantities of pesticide residues permitted in products of animal or vegetable origin intended for human or animal consumption. These maximum residue levels (MRLs) include, on the one hand, MRLs which are specific to particular foodstuffs intended for human or animal consumption and, on the other, a general limit which applies where no specific MRL has been set. MRL applications are communicated to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) which issues a scientific opinion on each intended new MRL. Based on EFSA's opinion, the Commission proposes a regulation such as those listed above to establish a new MRL or to amend or remove an existing MRL and to modify the annexes of regulation 396/2005 accordingly.

Spirit drinks

The Council decided not to oppose a Commission regulation amending and correcting Annex III to regulation 110/2008 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks ([7748/18](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

The corrections made by the new rules to several geographical indications listed in Annex III to regulation 110/2008 follow the positive opinion of the Commission Committee for Spirit Drinks of 27 March 2018.

The ECA's report on greening - Council conclusions

The Council adopted conclusions on [Special Report No 21/2017](#) of the European Court of Auditors entitled: "Greening: a more complex income support scheme, not yet environmentally effective".

The report focuses on the effectiveness of the payments designed to encourage farmers to produce in a more environmentally friendly manner and their relationship with the Common Agricultural Policy's environmental and climate-related performance.

The ECA's report on rural development programming - Council conclusions

The Council adopted conclusions on [Special Report No 16/2017](#) of the European Court of Auditors entitled: "Rural Development Programming: less complexity and more focus on results needed".

The report focuses on the process for planning EU rural development spending, its shortcomings and potential improvements.

FISHERIES

Fisheries Partnership Agreement with the Comoros - denunciation

The Council adopted a decision denouncing the Partnership Agreement in the fisheries sector (FPA) between the European Community and the Union of the Comoros ([14423/17](#)).

One of the objectives of the EU Comoros FPA was to ensure that the measures for the conservation and management of fish stocks were effective, and that illegal, undeclared or unregulated ('IUU') fishing was prevented.

In view of the Comoros' persistent failure to comply with undertakings made with regard to combating IUU fishing, the Council decided to denounce the standing FPA, with the decision taking effect six months after notification.

Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Mauritius - decision on new protocol

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of the protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for by the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius ([12476/17](#)).

The first protocol to the agreement concluded in 2014, expired on 27 January 2017.

The objective of the protocol is to enhance cooperation between the EU and Mauritius to promote a sustainable fisheries policy and sound exploitation of fisheries resources in Mauritius waters and to support Mauritius in the development of its sustainable ocean economy.
