



COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL

Brussels, 27 and 28 May 2019

On Monday 27 May, the Council will deal with internal market and industry issues. On Tuesday 28 May, the Council will deal with space policy in the morning and research policy in the afternoon. All sessions will be chaired by Mr. Nicolae HURDUC, Romanian Minister for research and innovation.

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On Monday, the meeting will start at 10:30 and will last the whole day. Under the **competitiveness checkup**, discussions will focus on the effects of market competition on the competitiveness of the single market. This item will be followed by a policy debate (public session) on the **future approach to the EU's industrial policy and the single market**, together with the adoption of Council conclusions. In addition, the Council will be invited to adopt conclusions on the **competitiveness of the EU tourism sector**.

On Tuesday morning, the Council session will start at 09:00 with a policy debate on the **EU's role as a global actor in the field of space**, followed by the adoption of Council conclusions. It will be followed by a meeting of the **Space Council**, bringing together the EU and the European Space Agency (ESA). On Tuesday afternoon, the Council will have a public policy debate on how to enhance the positive **impact of research and innovation on EU competitiveness**.

Press briefing: Friday, 24 May 2019 at 14.30.

Press conferences:

Monday 27 May at +/- 17.00 (JUSTUS LIPSIUS press room)

Tuesday 28 May at +/- 13.15 (Space) (LEX building, room 01 AD 0)

Tuesday 28 May at +/- 17:30 (Research) (LEX building, room 01 AD 0)

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[Competitiveness meeting page](#)

[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.

Internal market and industry

Competitiveness "check-up"

On the basis of a presentation by the Commission and a report from the chair of the high level group on competitiveness and growth, ministers will exchange views on the **effects of market competition on the competitiveness of the single market**.

The 'competitiveness check-up' allows ministers to put forward priorities and respond to key issues and developments in the single market.

It is a regular working method that was established in 2015 with the aim of improving the role of the Competitiveness Council as regards the analysis of horizontal and sectoral economic issues as well as the monitoring of competitiveness mainstreaming.

In practice, it is based on a presentation by the Commission of the latest figures and trends related to single market integration and micro-economic issues, with ministers being invited to respond and provide input on possible implications for EU companies and citizens.

The EU's long-term industrial policy strategy and the future approach to the single market

On the basis of two presidency papers (one on the EU's [industrial policy](#) and the other on the [single market](#)) ministers will have a public policy debate on how to elaborate a comprehensive, long-term EU industrial policy strategy to ensure a sustainable and strong industrial development in the EU, as well as on how to strengthen and deepen the single market.

The Council will also adopt conclusions on each of these two topics. These conclusions should be seen as the follow-up to the March 2019 European Council, which stressed the importance of a globally integrated, sustainable and competitive EU industrial base and invited the Commission to present, by the end of 2019, a long-term vision for the EU's industry, with concrete measures to implement it. The same European Council also called for the further deepening and strengthening of the single market, with particular emphasis on services and on digitalisation, for the removal of any remaining unjustified barriers to cross-border trade across the EU and for the development of a long-term action plan for a better implementation and enforcement of single market rules by March 2020.

[Draft Council conclusions on internal market](#)

[Draft Council conclusions on industrial policy strategy](#)

[European Council conclusions - 21/22 March 2019](#)

[Commission communication on "A renewed EU industrial policy strategy"](#)

[Commission communication on "The single market in a changing"](#)

Competitiveness of the tourism sector

The Council will be invited to adopt a set of conclusions on how best to boost the competitiveness of the EU tourism sector as a driver for sustainable growth, more and better jobs, innovation and digitalisation.

The treaty on the functioning of the European Union (TFEU) has introduced a legal basis for EU actions in the field of tourism. Such actions should in particular promote the competitiveness of EU tourism undertakings. They should encourage the creation of a favourable environment for the development of tourism undertakings and promote cooperation between member states. However, EU competence in the field is limited as the EU is not empowered to adopt legally binding acts that harmonise member states' laws and regulations in the tourism sector.

[Draft Council conclusions on tourism](#)

Any other business

a) Current legislative proposals

i) Directive on cross-border conversions, mergers and divisions

The Council will be informed of progress achieved so far regarding the proposed directive, which introduces comprehensive procedures for cross-border conversions and divisions and provides for additional rules on cross-border mergers of limited liability companies established in an EU member state.

ii) Directive on the modernisation of the EU consumer protection rules

The Council will be informed of progress achieved so far regarding the proposed directive, which modernises and reinforces EU consumer protection laws as part of the 'New Deal for Consumers' launched by the Commission in 2017.

iii) Directive on representative actions for the protection of the collective interests of consumers

The Council will be informed of progress achieved so far regarding the proposed directive, which empowers qualified entities, such as consumer organisations, to seek redress on behalf of a group of consumers that have been harmed by an illegal commercial practice.

iv) Regulation on the general safety of vehicles

The Council will be informed of progress achieved so far regarding the proposed directive, which imposes enhanced safety standards for car manufacturers in a bid to significantly reduce the number of road casualties and injuries.

b) Co-operation among market surveillance authorities on the safety of non-food products

On the basis of a [note from the Commission](#), the Council will be informed of the main findings of the Commission's assessment of the Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products (the RAPEX system). The RAPEX system enables quick exchanges of information among 31 European countries and the Commission. It helps track down dangerous products, remove them from the market and keep consumers, particularly vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly, safe.

c) Better regulation

On the basis of a [presidency note](#), the Council will be informed of the actions undertaken by the presidency in the field of better regulation during the last 5 months, as well as of the conclusions drawn from these activities.

d) Forum dedicated to auto industry (Craiova, 18 March 2019)

On the basis of a [presidency note](#), the Council will be informed of the outcome of the automotive industry forum held in Craiova on 18 March 2019, bringing together policy makers and relevant stakeholders. The forum provided an update of latest developments in the automotive industry, with particular emphasis on clean vehicles, automated and connected vehicles and the competitiveness of the EU's automotive industry.

e) Circular Plastics Alliance - state of play

On the basis of a [note from the Commission](#), the Council will be informed by the Commission on the latest state of play regarding the Circular Plastics Alliance and the future process. The Alliance is an initiative launched by the Commission in December 2018 in order to boost the EU market for recycled plastics through voluntary actions and commitments. The target is to reach 10 million tonnes of recycled plastics that will be used within the EU in 2025.

f) Work programme of the incoming presidency

The Council will be informed of the work programme of the incoming Finnish presidency as far as internal market and industry policies are concerned.

Space

On the basis of a [presidency paper](#), ministers will have a policy debate on how best to strengthen EU's role as a global actor in the field of space. The debate will focus on how the EU can maximise the benefits of its space policy and consolidate its position as one of the world leaders in space-related activities. Space-related activities are widely seen as a long term driver for innovation that enables progress on a wide spectrum of other activities, from basic research to societal and economic applications, safety and security. They support decision and policy makers in developing, implementing and monitoring a wide range of sectoral policies, such as environment, agriculture, fisheries, transport or digitalisation and create new opportunities to address global challenges.

Furthermore, on the basis of another [presidency paper](#), ministers will prepare the meeting of the Space Council, which will take place on the same day in the margins of the Competitiveness Council.² In this context, the Council will be invited to adopt conclusions on space as an enabler.

[Draft Council conclusions on space as an enabler](#)

[EU space policy](#)

Research and innovation

On the basis of a [presidency paper](#), ministers will have a public policy debate on the strategic choices at EU level that will ensure that research and innovation remain a strong driving force for the competitiveness of the EU economy.

The March 2019 European Council had pointed out that in order to remain globally competitive in key technologies and strategic value chains, the EU needs to encourage more risk-taking, and step up investment in research and innovation.

Any other business

a) Common declaration on the future role of BIOEAST

On the basis of a [paper from the Slovak delegation](#), the Council will be informed of the signing by the ministers of agriculture and ministers of research of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia of a common declaration of on the future role of the BIOEAST initiative in the context of Horizon Europe.

b) Black Sea strategic research and innovation agenda

On the basis of a [presidency note](#), the Council will be informed of the launching of the above mentioned agenda at the Bucharest conference on "Sustainable development at the Black Sea" on 8-11 May 2019. The aim of the strategic research and innovation agenda is to streamline the financial and scientific resources made available for research and innovation within the concept of the blue economy in the Black Sea area.

c) Work programme of the incoming presidency

The Council will be informed of its future work programme under the incoming Finnish presidency in the fields of space and research and innovation.

² The Space Council is a forum enabling the EU and the European Space Agency (ESA) to facilitate and coordinate cooperative activities on European space policy. ESA is composed of 22 member states: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom (which are also EU Member States) + Norway and Switzerland. Canada also sits in the Council and takes part in some projects under a Cooperation Agreement. Slovenia is an Associate Member. Seven other EU member states have Cooperation Agreements with ESA: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Slovakia. Read more about ESA at www.esa.int.