



Council of the European Union

PRESS
EN

BACKGROUND¹
Brussels, 12 June 2019

GENERAL AFFAIRS Council **Tuesday 18 June in Luxembourg**

Chair: George Ciamba, Romanian Minister Delegate for European Affairs

In public session, the Council will hold a policy debate on **the next multiannual financial framework**. Ministers are expected to exchange views on the revised draft Negotiating Box addressed to them by the Romanian presidency following a series of technical and political discussions in the Council.

The Council will discuss the **2019 enlargement package** presented by the Commission on 29 May. It will be called upon to adopt conclusions on enlargement and the stabilisation and association process.

Ministers will continue preparations for the **European Council meeting on 20-21 June** by examining draft conclusions. They will take stock of the implementation of previous European Council conclusions.

As part of the European Semester process, the Council is expected to discuss a horizontal report on **country-specific recommendations** and transmit it to the European Council.

A presidency press conference will be held at the end of the meeting (+/- 15.30).

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[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.

Multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027

The Council will hold a policy debate on the next multiannual financial framework (MFF). Ministers are expected to exchange views on the revised draft Negotiating Box prepared by the Romanian presidency ahead of the June European Council ([10010/1/19 REV 1](#)).

The Negotiating Box is a tool used for structuring and facilitating the negotiation process on the MFF. It brings together those elements which are most likely to require political guidance from the leaders with a view to the Council reaching its position. Its aim is to facilitate preparations for the future draft European Council conclusions on the MFF to be tabled by the President of the European Council.

In its revised draft, the Romanian presidency aimed to streamline the draft Negotiating Box and clarify a significant number of issues which, in the presidency's assessment, will drive negotiations forward and limit the number of items that need to be dealt with in the final stage of negotiations, in accordance with the technical and political discussions held. The revised draft Negotiating Box is drawn up and developed under the responsibility of the Presidency and it is not binding on any delegation. The Presidency continued to be guided by the principle that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.

The preparation of a revised draft Negotiating Box follows a series of technical and political discussions in the Council since January 2019. Over the past few months, intensive work has been done on the MFF and the related sectoral proposals across different fields.

Until now, the Council has held several thematic discussions on the next MFF, focusing on its climate and migration aspects, Cohesion Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and the funding instruments in the field of external action. The Presidency also conducted at technical level an extensive examination of the proposal on the protection of the EU's budget with a view to advancing this file and improving its technical elements, where possible.

As regards sectoral proposals, ten so-called 'common understandings' were reached between the Council and the European Parliament during the Romanian presidency. Negotiations have started with the European Parliament on further 13 MFF-related sectoral files. 12 partial negotiating mandates (excluding horizontal and budgetary aspects) have also been achieved, with three further partial mandates on the agenda of the Justice and Home Affairs Council in June (Asylum and Migration Fund, Instrument for financial support for Border Management and Visa, and Internal Security Fund).

The leaders will discuss the next MFF at the European Council meeting on 20-21 June.

Enlargement and stabilisation and association process

The Council will discuss the EU's enlargement policy and the EU-Western Balkans stabilisation and association process.

The discussion will take place in the light of the Commission's 2019 enlargement package, published on 29 May, in which the Commission assesses the implementation of the EU enlargement policy in the Western Balkans and Turkey. In addition to the strategic communication and the individual reports (on Turkey, Montenegro, Serbia, the Republic of North Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo*), this year's package includes, for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Commission's opinion in response to the country's EU membership application. An implementation report on the Sofia Priority Agenda is also attached.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

In its package, the Commission stresses that a firm and credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans remains essential to drive transformation, foster reconciliation, export stability to the region and promote EU values, norms and standards. It notes that its Western Balkans Strategy of February 2018 generated a renewed engagement by the EU and its member states and created new momentum across the region. One year on, the Commission assesses that the partners from the region have made concrete progress and demonstrated commitment to the European perspective, even if the overall uptake of reforms varies.

In its opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for EU membership, the Commission considers that negotiations for accession should be opened once Bosnia and Herzegovina has achieved the necessary degree of compliance with the membership criteria and in particular the political criteria requiring stability of institutions, guaranteeing notably democracy and rule of law. It sets out a roadmap for comprehensive reforms needed before the criteria for membership could be fulfilled.

The Commission also recommends that the Council now opens accession negotiations with the Republic of North Macedonia and Albania.

[2019 Commission communication on EU enlargement policy](#)

[Council conclusions of 26 June 2018 on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process](#)

[EU enlargement \(background information\)](#)

June European Council

The Council will examine draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 20-21 June, prepared by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, in cooperation with the Romanian presidency and the Commission.

EU leaders will meet in Brussels to take the relevant decisions on appointments for the next institutional cycle and to adopt the EU's strategic agenda for 2019-2024. The strategic agenda will be used to plan the work of the European Council, and will provide the basis for the work programmes of the other EU institutions.

They will also revert to the issue of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework.

The European Council will also discuss climate change ahead of the United Nations Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit on 23 September 2019.

In the context of the European Semester, the European Council will discuss the country-specific recommendations.

In addition, the leaders will take note of a report on disinformation and elections prepared by the Romanian presidency in cooperation with the Commission and the High Representative.

The President of Romania will provide an overview of progress on the implementation of earlier European Council conclusions.

An [annotated draft agenda](#) was discussed by the Council on 21 May.

European Semester

As part of the European Semester process, the Council is expected to discuss a horizontal note on country-specific recommendations (CSRs), which summarises the discussions in ECOFIN and EPSCO, and transmit it to the European Council ([9969/1/19 REV 1](#)).

The European Council will discuss, on this basis, a conclusion on the country-specific recommendations at its meeting in June. The CSRs are scheduled to be formally adopted in the Council in July.

The country-specific recommendations provide member states yearly guidance on national reforms. They adapt priorities identified at EU level to the national level.

Due to the European Parliament elections, the Commission delayed this year the publication of its proposals on the CSRs. The procedure for their discussion within the Council is therefore adapted compared to the established practice.

[European Semester](#)

[European Semester 2019 - updated roadmap](#)
