



Council of the European Union

**PRESS**  
**EN**

**BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>**  
Brussels, 24 January 2020

## **GENERAL AFFAIRS Council**

### **Tuesday 28 January 2020 in Brussels**

Chair: Andreja Metelko-Zgombić, Croatian State Secretary for European Affairs

The meeting will **start at 11.00**.

Ministers will hear a presentation of **the priorities of the Croatian presidency** for the first half of 2020. This item will be taken in public session.

The Council will also hold an exchange of views on **the proposed Conference on the Future of Europe**.

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

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[General Affairs Council meeting page](#)

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

## Priorities of the Croatian presidency

The Council will hear a presentation on the priorities of the Croatian presidency for the next six months.

In the area of general affairs, the Croatian presidency will focus its activities on the remaining work on sectoral and horizontal legislation related to the next multiannual financial framework, both in the Council and with the European Parliament.

In this priority area, the presidency is cooperating closely with the President of the European Council, who was called in December to take the negotiations on the multiannual financial framework forward with the aim of reaching a final agreement.

Special attention will be given to the enlargement policy and to achieving further progress by candidates and potential candidates in line with the established criteria, while reaffirming their European perspective. An informal EU-Western Balkans summit will take place in Zagreb in May 2020.

Croatia will continue to work on the effective implementation of the EU Strategic Agenda and on promoting constructive cooperation between the European institutions in setting legislative priorities for the forthcoming period.

The presidency will promote a balanced and sustainable development of the EU aimed at reducing economic, social and territorial disparities, by also taking forward the negotiations on the cohesion policy legislative package under the MFF.

The priorities of the Croatian presidency also include enabling an orderly withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU and starting negotiations on future partnership.

The presidency will continue to promote the EU as a community of values, advocating a comprehensive and efficient approach to prevention, protection and promoting the rule of law in the EU, while strengthening dialogue and unity of member states. The General Affairs Council will remain seized of these highly important matters.

[Programme of the Croatian presidency](#)

[General Affairs Council configuration](#)

## Conference on the Future of Europe

Ministers will hold an exchange of views on the proposed Conference on the Future of Europe starting in 2020 and ending in 2022.

The European Council considered the idea of such a conference at its [meeting held on 12 December 2019](#). It asked the Croatian presidency to work towards defining a Council position on the content, scope, composition and functioning of the conference and to engage, on this basis, with the European Parliament and the Commission.

The discussion in the Council will serve as input into work on a Council position to be agreed for further engagement of the Council with other EU institutions.

Regarding the content and scope of the conference, EU leaders took the view that priority should be given to implementing the Strategic Agenda agreed in June 2019, and to delivering concrete results for the benefit of European citizens. They also considered that the conference should contribute to the development of the EU policies in the medium and long term to tackle better the current and future challenges.

On the composition and functioning of the conference, the European Council took the view that the conference should build on the successful holding of citizens' dialogues over the past two years and foresee broad consultation of citizens in the course of the process. It also stressed the need to involve the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission, in full respect of the inter-institutional balance and their respective roles as defined in the Treaties, as well as member states, including national parliaments.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen suggested the idea of a Conference on the Future of Europe in her [political guidelines for 2019-2024](#). The Conference should bring together citizens, including a significant role for young people, civil society and European institutions as equal partners. The Commission's ideas on the conference were laid out in detail in its [communication](#) published on 22 January 2020.

The European Parliament set out its position on the set-up and scope of the conference in a [resolution](#) adopted on 15 January 2020.

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