



Council of the European Union

PRESS
EN

BACKGROUND BRIEF¹
Brussels, 10 May 2021

General Affairs Council **Tuesday 11 May, Brussels**

Chair: Ana Paula Zacarias, State Secretary for European Affairs of Portugal

The meeting will start at 10.00.

The Council will prepare for the special European Council meeting on 24-25 May 2021. Ministers will also focus on the state of play on the COVID-19 EU coordination and the Conference on the Future of Europe. Under any other business, the Council will be informed about matters related to the Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process, and the EU-Switzerland relations.

A presidency press conference will be held at the end of the meeting.

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[General Affairs Council, 11 May 2020 meeting page](#)

[Press conference by video streaming](#)

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

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

Special European Council meeting on 24-25 May 2021

The Council will prepare for the special European Council meeting on 24-25 May 2021.

EU leaders will meet in Brussels to coordinate the EU response to COVID-19 and discuss the latest developments.

Heads of State or Government will also focus on climate change, following-up on the European Council conclusions of December 2020.

Lastly, the EU leaders will turn to external relations, with a strategic debate on Russia. The 25 March statement of the members of the European Council provided for a strategic debate to be held "at a forthcoming European Council meeting".

[Special meeting of the European Council, 24-25 May 2021](#)

[Provisional agenda](#)

EU coordination on COVID-19

The Council will discuss the state of play on the COVID-19 EU coordination with a focus on the vaccination campaign, the ongoing work on digital green certificates, and the epidemiological situation and travel restrictions.

On 3 May, the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission held a first trilogue on the digital green certificate, meant to facilitate free movement, with a view to conclusion in June.

The ongoing technical work on COVID-19 interoperable digital certificates is part of the preparations for a common approach to the future gradual lifting of restrictions. Work is also ongoing on the revision of the Council Recommendation on travel from third countries.

[COVID-19: Council agrees its negotiating mandate on the Digital Green Certificate](#)

[Presidency press release on solidarity vaccines](#)

[COVID-19: research and vaccines](#)

[Video conference of the members of the European Council, 25 March 2021](#)

[COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic: the EU's response](#)

[COVID-19: travel and transport - Council updates recommendations on COVID-19 travel measures \(background information\)](#)

[Commission proposes to ease restrictions on non-essential travel to the EU \(press release\)](#)

Conference on the Future of Europe

Ministers for European Affairs will be informed by the presidency about the state of play regarding the Conference on the Future of Europe, following the formal inaugural event on 9 May in Strasbourg.

Right before this formal event, the Conference's Executive Board met for the fourth time to discuss and agree on the remaining chapter of the Rules of Procedure, related with the Conference Plenary and the approval of a calendar of events. With this, the Rules of Procedure have been completely finalised following the green light given by the Board, last 22 April, to the other two sections of the Conference's Rules of Procedure, notably that on citizens' participation and the Board's working methods. On that occasion, the Board was also informed about the practical modalities for the organisation of European Citizens' panels.

On 19 April the Conference on the Future of Europe digital platform was launched, allowing for the conversation to start with citizens across Europe. A number of ideas and events have already been posted on the platform.

The Conference on the Future of Europe is aimed at involving citizens in a wide-ranging debate on Europe's future in the coming decade and beyond, including in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 10 March the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission signed a joint declaration that sets out the objectives, structure, scope and timing of the Conference.

[Conference on the Future of Europe: launch of the citizens' platform on 19 April](#)

[The Conference on the Future of Europe gets green light from the Council](#)

[Joint declaration](#)

[Conference on the Future of Europe - revised Council position \(3 February 2021\)](#)

[Conference on the Future of Europe - Council position \(24 June 2020\)](#)

Any other business

Ministers will take stock of the Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process and EU-Switzerland relations.