

Background brief*10 November 2025*

General Affairs Council

17 November 2025, Brussels

PRESS**EN****Chair:** Marie Bjerre, Minister for European Affairs of Denmark**Commission representatives:** Piotr Serafin, European Commissioner for budget, anti-fraud and public administration

Maroš Šefčovič, European Commissioner for trade and economic security

Michael McGrath, European Commissioner for democracy, justice, the rule of law and consumer protection

Starting time: 10.00**Media opportunities:**

- Doorstep Marie Bjerre: 17 November 2025, 09.40
- Press conference General Affairs Council: 17 November 2025, +/- 19.00

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Main agenda topics:In public session, the Council will hold a policy debate on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (**MFF**).The Council will also start preparations for the **December 2025 European Council** by discussing an annotated draft agenda.Ministers will take stock of the state of play of **EU-UK** relations.In public session, the Commission will present its **work programme for 2026**, and ministers will hold an exchange of views.Finally, in the context of the annual **rule of law** dialogue, the Council will hold a country-specific discussion on the rule of law situation in Bulgaria, Czechia, Ireland and Germany.

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[General Affairs Council, 17 November 2025 - meeting page](#)[Press conferences, doorsteps and other public events in video streaming](#)[High quality photo and video material](#)

Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034 (in public session)

Ministers will hold a policy debate on the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (**MFF**) 2028-2034.

Since 1988, the EU has been functioning with long-term budgets called **multiannual financial frameworks**. Long-term budgets aim to provide a stable framework, with overall spending limits to:

- align spending with the EU's political priorities
- increase predictability of EU finances for co-financers and beneficiaries
- ensure budgetary discipline
- make it easier to adopt the annual EU budget

The exchange of views will focus on the proposed **'Heading 1'** of the new MFF, which aims to deliver EU added value by fostering cohesion, upwards convergence, economic growth, competitiveness, resilience and security, and by supporting investments and reforms for an inclusive, sustainable, prosperous, sovereign and secure Europe.

To that end, a dedicated fund will aim to reduce economic, social and territorial disparities, support resilient, competitive and sustainable EU agricultural and fisheries sectors, invest in people, bolster security and migration management and protect the Union's external borders, while ensuring the good functioning of the single market.

Financing would be underpinned by **national and regional partnership plans** prepared by member states themselves, taking into account their specific national and regional challenges.

The discussion follows an exchange of views at the October General Affairs Council on **horizontal principles** underpinning the MFF and **'Heading 2'**, focused on competitiveness. Discussions will continue in the December General Affairs Council.

The Danish presidency intends to table a first **negotiating box** which aims to identify elements for political consideration and facilitate their discussion by EU leaders (without figures) ahead of the December 2025 European Council.

On 16 July 2025 and 3 September 2025, the Commission presented its proposals for a **new MFF for 2028-2034** amounting to **almost €2 trillion**.

[Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034 \(presidency note, 17 November 2025\)](#)

[General Affairs Council meeting, 21 October 2025](#)

[The 2028-2034 EU budget for a stronger Europe, Commission background information, September 2025](#)

[A dynamic EU Budget for the priorities of the future - The Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034, Commission communication, 16 July 2025](#)

[Questions and answers on the next long-term budget, Commission background information, 16 July 2025](#)

[EU budget 2028-2034, Commission factsheets, 16 July 2025](#)

[The EU long-term budget \(background information\)](#)

December European Council

The Council will start preparations for the December 2025 European Council meeting by discussing an annotated draft agenda. EU leaders are expected to discuss:

- Ukraine
- Middle East
- the next MFF
- enlargement
- migration, and
- geoeconomy and competitiveness

[December 2025 European Council meeting, provisional agenda](#)

EU-UK relations

The Council will take stock of the state of play of **EU-UK** relations. The EU and the UK have committed to strengthening relations at the 19 May 2025 summit in London, out of which emerged a renewed agenda for strengthening cooperation in several areas. As a matter of principle for the EU, relations can only be strengthened based on a full, faithful and timely implementation of existing agreements, the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the Withdrawal Agreement.

Ministers will be updated on the **implementation of the existing agreements** and post-summit developments. They will be able to take note of concrete progress as regards the UK participation in the SAFE instrument and the future negotiations on a common sanitary and phytosanitary area (SPS agreement) and on an agreement to link the EU-UK greenhouse emissions trading systems (ETS agreement).

The new areas of strengthened cooperation are foreseen in the Commission's **Common Understanding** with the UK and in the EU-UK **Security and Defence Partnership**. Concerning the Common Understanding, intense work is ongoing in 10 negotiating tables in which the various policy areas are discussed, including SAFE. As for the Security and Defence Partnership, the first foreign and security policy dialogue between the High Representative and UK Foreign and Defence Secretaries was held on 22 October 2025 in London.

[EU-UK Summit, 19 May 2025](#)

[General Affairs Council, 18 March 2025, main results](#)

[Relations with the UK \(background information\)](#)

Legislative programming (in public session)

The Commission will present its **work programme for 2026** and ministers will hold an exchange of views. This will be an opportunity for the Council to identify **key policy areas** and legislative proposals to be included in the joint declaration on the EU legislative priorities for 2026 and highlight those proposals that ought to be prioritised and accelerated. Ministers are also expected to express their views on the proposed withdrawal of legislative proposals and identify whether other proposals ought to be withdrawn. Following this discussion, the three institutions are set to agree on the **joint declaration** on EU's legislative priorities by the end of this year.

[Commission work programme 2026, 21 October 2025](#)

Annual rule of law dialogue

Ministers will hold a country-specific discussion in the framework of the annual rule of law dialogue, focusing on the rule of law situation in **Bulgaria, Czechia, Ireland** and **Germany**.

This will be the **third round** of country-specific discussion this year, after January and May. For each country, the Commission will first present the main findings of the respective country-specific chapter in its 2025 rule of law report. The delegations concerned will then be asked to present **key national developments** and particular aspects of their national rule of law framework. This will be followed by a round of comments and questions in which other delegations can share their experiences and best practices about the developments mentioned. Afterwards, the delegation whose situation is being discussed may present additional remarks.

The Council's annual rule of law dialogue was initiated by the Council conclusions of 16 December 2014. Its aim is to allow for an open exchange of comments and best practices based on the Commission's annual rule of law report, while ensuring objectivity, non-discrimination, and equal treatment of all member states. Since 2020, the dialogue is organised in two different types of political discussions: a horizontal discussion covering general rule of law developments in the EU, and country-specific discussions addressing **key developments in each member state**.

The presidency conclusions of 12 December 2023 consolidated the approach to the Council’s annual rule of law dialogue followed since 2020, including its structuring into horizontal and country-specific discussions. They also envisaged three country-specific discussions per year, each focusing on the situation in four member states.

[2025 Rule of Law report: Country Chapter Bulgaria](#)

[2025 Rule of Law Report: Country Chapter Czechia](#)

[2025 Rule of Law Report: Country Chapter Germany](#)

[2025 Rule of Law Report: Country Chapter Ireland](#)

[2025 Rule of law report \(European Commission\)](#)

[Rule of law \(background information\)](#)

Other points

The Commission will inform the Council on its proposal regarding the ‘**democracy package**’, including the European Democracy Shield and the EU strategy for civil society.

The Lithuanian delegation will inform the Council about recent **hybrid attacks** from Belarus.
