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## OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3552nd Council meeting

### General Affairs

Luxembourg, 20 June 2017

President **Helena Dalli**  
Minister for European Affairs and Equality of Malta

# P R E S S

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- <sup>1</sup>
- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
  - Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
  - Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

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## ITEMS DEBATED

### Preparation for the June European Council

The Council examined draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 22-23 June, prepared by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, in cooperation with the Maltese presidency and the Commission.

The European Council will focus on:

- migration: the European Council will assess progress on measures to address the Central Mediterranean route, and return to the reform of the common European asylum system
- security and defence: the European Council will review progress on the ongoing work to strengthen EU cooperation on external security and defence; it will also provide strategic guidance where necessary
- jobs, growth and competitiveness: the European Council will review efforts to deepen the single market and reaffirm the EU's strong commitment to free and fair trade
- external relations: the European Council will be briefed by its President and by the President of the European Commission on recent leaders' meetings and international summits
- other items: the European Council will address Digital Europe and the Paris agreement on climate change

An [annotated draft agenda](#) was discussed by the Council on 16 May 2017.

## **18-month programme of the Council**

In a public session, the Council endorsed the [18-month programme of the Council](#) covering the period 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2018.

The programme had been prepared by the incoming Estonian, Bulgarian and Austrian presidencies and, as regards the Foreign Affairs Council, the High Representative, in cooperation with the Commission. It is in line with the European Council's strategic agenda and the EU's legislative priorities for 2017.

## **European Semester**

Under the 2017 'European Semester' monitoring process, the Council approved draft country-specific recommendations (CSRs) on economic and fiscal policies. The [CSRs](#) will now be submitted to the European Council for endorsement at its meeting on 22 and 23 June 2017. The draft CSRs have also been discussed in EPSCO and ECOFIN.

The European Semester is an annual process for the simultaneous monitoring of the member states' economic, employment and fiscal policies.

Council website: [European Semester](#)

## **Better law-making agreement**

The presidency informed the Council about the [state of play as regards implementing the better-law agreement](#). Ministers exchanged views on the priorities for 2018 with a view to providing input for the [Commission's letter of intent](#) on its work programme for next year. Ministers emphasised the importance of delivering on work initiated in recent years. The Commission intends to submit its letter of intent on 13 September 2017.

## **OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

### **GENERAL AFFAIRS**

#### **Adjusting the Commission's exercise of implementing powers to the Lisbon Treaty**

The Council took note of a progress report on adapting certain legal acts to the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty on the Commission's exercise of implementing powers ([10170/17](#)). More specifically, the report reflects the state of play on a draft regulation that replaces the use of the so-called regulatory procedure with scrutiny in some legal acts with the use of delegated or implementing acts as set out in articles 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

### **BUDGETS**

#### **Mid-term review of the EU's multiannual financial framework 2014-2020**

The Council adopted a revised multiannual financial framework (MFF) covering the years 2014-2020, following a mid-term review ([14942/16](#) + [7031/17](#) + ADD 1 + ADD2).

The revised MFF reinforces the EU's support by €6.01 billion (at 2011 prices) for tackling the migration crisis, strengthening security, boosting growth and creating jobs. The revised MFF also improves the EU's capacity to respond more quickly to unexpected needs. Care is being taken not to increase the risk of an excessive backlog of unpaid bills.

The Council also adopted a decision offsetting the €2.8 billion in payments mobilised in 2014 under the contingency margin by a corresponding decrease of the payment ceiling in 2017 rather than in the years 2018-2020 ([7958/17](#)).

More details on the [MFF mid-term review](#)

## **ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**

### **Land parcel identification system**

The Council adopted conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' report entitled 'The Land Parcel Identification System: a useful tool to determine the eligibility of agricultural land - but its management could be further improved', as set out in [6793/17](#).

### **Cross-compliance**

The Council adopted conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' report entitled 'Making cross-compliance more effective and achieving simplification remains challenging', as set out in [6812/17](#).

## **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

### **Relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The Council adopted a decision on the conclusion of the Protocol to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with BiH to take account of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the EU. The Protocol was signed on 15 December 2016. The European Parliament gave its consent on 16 May 2017.

### **Sanctions against the Central African Republic**

The Council amended the restrictive measures against the Central African Republic (CAR). On 17 May 2017, the United Nations Security Council Committee added one person to the list of persons and entities subject to restrictive measures. The Council decision transposes this update by the UN.

The sanctions were introduced by the Council in December 2013 after the Council expressed its deep concern regarding the situation in the CAR. The sanctions implement the UN arms embargo against the CAR.

**COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY****Regionalisation of CSDP missions in the Sahel**

The Council adopted a decision to support the regionalisation of EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions in the Sahel region, namely EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUTM Mali.

The Council decision allows for the establishment of a regional coordination cell based within one of the EU civilian missions, EUCAP Sahel Mali. The regional coordination cell include internal security and defence experts in G5 Sahel countries, deployed in Mali but also in EU delegations in other G5 Sahel countries, namely Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad.

In a first phase, the regional coordination cell will conduct an assessment of G5 Sahel countries' security and defence needs and gaps with a view to the development of a CSDP regional implementation plan that will make recommendations for any subsequent phase. It will also facilitate the organisation of training courses by the EU CSDP Missions in the Sahel for G5 Sahel countries security and defence trainees.

The objectives of reinforcing a regional approach in the EU work in the region is to support cross-border cooperation in the Sahel and regional cooperation structures, and to enhance national capacities of the G5 Sahel countries.

The EU supports the efforts the G5 Sahel countries and will work together against terrorism and any other threat to security and peace. On 19 June, the Council adopted conclusions on Mali and the Sahel which, in particular, strongly condemn the terrorist attack of 18 June in Bamako (Mali). The conclusions recall that the EU has a strong integrated approach towards achieving stabilisation of the region, including a full range of relevant instruments in the field of diplomacy, long-term development cooperation, support to human rights, stabilisation efforts, resilience building, humanitarian assistance, migration management and security, including CSDP missions.



## **DEVELOPMENT**

### **EU response to 2030 agenda for sustainable development**

The Council adopted conclusions stressing the commitment of the EU and its member states to achieving the 17 sustainable development goals set out by the UN's 2030 agenda for sustainable development, adopted in September 2015.

The conclusions reaffirm the EU's leading role in promoting an agenda addressing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. They set out the steps to be taken and means to be used to achieve full implementation of the 2030 agenda, and emphasise the importance of regular and transparent monitoring of the progress achieved.

See [press release](#)

## **JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**

### **Uniform format for short-stay visas**

The Council adopted a regulation amending regulation (EC) no 1683/95 laying down a uniform format for visas. This regulation establishes a new common design for the visa sticker to update its security features in order to prevent forgery.

Press release - [Uniform format for short-stay visas \(Schengen\): Council adopts regulation on the update of security features in the visa sticker](#)

### **New psychoactive substances directive**

The Council formally confirmed the political agreement ([9955/17](#)) reached earlier this year on the proposal for a directive amending council framework decision 2004/757/JHA of 25 October 2004 laying down minimum provisions on the constituent elements of criminal acts and penalties in the field of illicit drug trafficking, as regards the definition of drug.

For more information, see the [press release published on 29 May 2017](#)

## **EU action plan on drugs (2017-2020)**

The Council adopted the new EU action plan on drugs covering the period 2017-2020 ([9954/17](#)).

Building on the findings of the evaluation of the EU drugs strategy for 2013-2020 and the action plan for 2013-2016, the new action plan on drugs provides a strengthened response to the newly emerging health and security challenges in the area of illicit drug use and trafficking. While maintaining and updating the core policy areas and cross-cutting themes of the overall EU drugs strategy, the new action plan identifies new priority areas for action, including the monitoring of new psychoactive substances, as well as the use of new communication technologies for the prevention of drug abuse and evidence-gathering on the potential connection between drug trafficking and the financing of terrorist groups, organised crime, migrant-smuggling or trafficking in human beings.

For more information, see the [press release from the European Commission on the presentation of the action plan - 15 March 2017](#)

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **Campylobacter in broiler carcasses**

The Council did not oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending regulation (EC) no 2073/2005 as regards Campylobacter in broiler carcasses ([8950/17](#) + [8950/17 ADD 1](#)).

Commission regulation (EC) no 2073/2005 lays down the microbiological criteria for certain micro-organisms and the implementing rules that food business operators must comply with in respect of general and specific hygiene requirements. In particular the regulation lays down 'process hygiene criteria' which set indicative contamination values above which corrective action is required in order to maintain the hygiene of the process in compliance with food law.

The new Commission regulation amends regulation (EC) no 2073/2005 by setting a process hygiene criterion for Campylobacter in broiler carcasses. The objective is to reduce the risk of human campylobacteriosis, which is linked to broiler meat and is one of the most commonly reported human food-borne illnesses in the EU.

**CUSTOMS UNION****Tariffs and quotas on certain products**

The Council adopted a regulation amending regulation (EU) no 1388/2013 opening and providing for the management of autonomous tariff quotas of the Union for certain agricultural and industrial products (9766/17).

The regulation aims to ensure that adequate and uninterrupted supplies of products which are not produced in sufficient quantity in the EU can be imported at reduced or zero duty rates under the common customs tariff for appropriate volumes, without disturbing the markets for such products.

The Council also adopted a regulation amending regulation (EU) no 1387/2013 suspending the autonomous common customs tariff duties on certain agricultural, fishery and industrial products (9794/17).

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