



# HANDBOOK OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



Council of the  
European Union



# **HANDBOOK OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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Brussels: General Secretariat of the Council, 2018

Previous editions: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015

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## Delegates Portal

The Delegates Portal contains useful information on organising a Presidency under 'Prepare your Presidency'.

<https://delegates.consilium.europa.eu>

For questions about how to prepare your Presidency, please contact:

[prepareyourpresidency@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:prepareyourpresidency@consilium.europa.eu)



# FOREWORD

This new edition of the *Handbook of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union* offers both an overview of the role of the Presidency and practical advice on how to best fulfil it. It updates essential information on the decision-making process and the evolving practical arrangements.

Among these new arrangements, the Europa building became fully operational in 2017, significantly improving the working conditions for the Presidencies and the delegates. It offers state-of-the-art meeting facilities and office spaces for the delegations, with an up-to-date electronic infrastructure. The new building gives additional possibilities for holding meetings of the Council and its preparatory bodies at the same time. In addition to the press facilities in the Justus Lipsius building, the Europa building offers a press room with modern audio-visual equipment.

This handbook has been drawn up under the sole responsibility of the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) with a view to ensuring the smooth running of the European Council and the Council. It has no legal force. It is an internal document summarising the practices and knowledge accumulated by the Secretariat in supporting the efficient conduct of the 6-month Presidencies – a role that has become increasingly complex over the years.

This handbook is one of a series of practical guides published by the General Secretariat of the Council. The Delegates' handbook, its sister volume, contains useful practical information to the delegates coming for meetings at the Council. The series includes also the Council's Rules of Procedure, and other booklets on, for example, the ordinary legislative procedure, drafting of documents, transparency, and the Europa building – all available in digital format on the Delegates Portal.

The 6 months of a Presidency present a considerable challenge to all of you who take it in turn to prepare for and exercise it. I trust that this handbook will help you in this essential role for the European Union – the General Secretariat is always here to assist and support you.

Jeppe Tranholm-Mikkelsen  
*Secretary-General of the  
Council of the European Union*



# I. INTRODUCTION

This handbook will give you both an overview of the characteristics of the Presidency and practical advice on how to execute it. Practice has played a large part in defining the role of the Presidency. Experience over the years has fleshed out the Presidency's role, the main features of which are described in this booklet. And remember that all along the road the staff of the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) are there to help and assist you in every aspect of the work

## THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL

The Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) contain a number of provisions dealing with the role of the Council Presidency and the conditions under which it is exercised. However, the Presidency's overall role is not described by the treaties, nor are detailed instructions and procedures set out on how to execute it. To this end, the Council has adopted a set of rules and procedures, which you will find in *Comments on the Council's Rules of Procedure*. To help member states to prepare their Presidencies, the GSC offers a wide range of types of support. For a comprehensive list of the types of support available, please see the *GSC service package for the Presidency*, Annex I to this brochure.

### Key tasks of the Presidency

- It plans, coordinates and chairs meetings of the Council and most of the Council's preparatory bodies, i.e. working parties and committees.
- It suggests compromise solutions with a view to reaching an agreement in the Council ('honest broker').
- It represents the Council in its relations with the European Parliament (EP), the Commission and other EU bodies.
- It negotiates on behalf of the Council to reach agreements on legislative files with other EU institutions.

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy presides over the Foreign Affairs Council, while Councils dealing with Trade and Enlargement are chaired by the rotating Presidency. This has implications for the chairmanship of the Council's preparatory bodies in this area. Hence, the Political and Security Committee and other working groups are chaired by a representative of the High Representative.

## The Presidency works in 'trio'

The Presidency is held by pre-established groups of three member states, often called 'the trio', for a period of 18 months. The groups are put together on the basis of equal rotation among the member states, taking into account their diversity and geographical balance within the Union. Each member of the group chairs in turn, for a period of 6 months, all configurations of the Council, with the exception of the Foreign Affairs configuration. The same applies to most of the Council's preparatory bodies. The order of Presidencies is defined by Council decision <sup>(1)</sup>.

## There is only one Presidency

The counterpart of the single Council is the single Presidency, whether it is exercised on a permanent basis (in particular in the field of foreign affairs) or by rotation (in other areas). References to the Presidency or the President apply to any person chairing one of the Council configurations or one of its preparatory bodies <sup>(2)</sup>. Coordination between the different Council configurations, including their preparatory bodies, and the various persons involved in the Presidency is therefore essential.

## The Presidency is neutral

The Presidency is, by definition, neutral and impartial. It is the moderator for discussions and cannot therefore favour either its own preferences or those of a particular member state. This means taking due account of all positions expressed.

The duty to be neutral exists alongside the political dimension, which is reflected in the priorities set in the choice and handling of dossiers. This order of priority reflects the stage of maturity of dossiers and the deadlines that apply to them, as well as the political priorities that the Presidency wishes to set for its semester.

In its role as moderator, the Presidency must also take action where it notes a stalemate; this may require compromise suggestions to reconcile the different interests involved in a single issue or a set of interconnected issues, which inevitably means that political choices have to be made.

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1 Council Decision (EU) 2016/1316 of 26 July 2016 amending Decision 2009/908/EU (OJ L 208, 2.8.2016, p. 42). The list of the 6-monthly Presidencies from the second half of 2017 onwards is contained in Chapter V, under Protocol, page 61.

2 Article 1(5) of the *Council's Rules of Procedure*, hereinafter referred to as the CRP.

## **The Presidency is in the hands of the Council**

The Presidency may propose any procedural decisions, which must be taken by the Council by a simple majority <sup>(3)</sup>. More specifically, any statement by or letter from the Presidency expressing a Council position, particularly in its relations with the other institutions, presupposes the agreement of the Council or the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper).

## **The Presidency deploys national resources**

A major effort by the entire national administrative apparatus is required to get the Presidency prepared and up and running. The size of this extra workload for national administrations (in both the capitals and permanent representations) should not be underestimated. The success of a Presidency depends to a large extent on how well it is prepared and how clearly responsibilities are divided between the capital and the permanent representation. In any case, the administration of the member state taking on the Presidency does not work in isolation. It has the support of the GSC.

## **Preparation of the Presidency**

In the run-up to the Presidency, the GSC contributes to the preparations. It gives advice covering organisational, staffing and decision-making procedures and other aspects, including media guidance. In particular, before the start of the Presidency, it also offers a range of seminars and briefings to key officials at the permanent representation and in the capital of the organising member state.

For information, please contact: [prepareyourpresidency@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:prepareyourpresidency@consilium.europa.eu)

## **THE ROLE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE COUNCIL**

The role of the GSC is to assist the European Council and its President, and the Council and its Presidencies. This role applies to the Council and its preparatory bodies as an institution, irrespective of the Council configuration or of whether the Presidency is permanent or rotating.

Assisting the Presidency takes many forms. The GSC assists the Presidency by providing practical, procedural and strategic advice. The GSC is closely and continually involved in organising, coordinating and ensuring the coherence of the Council's work and the implementation of its 18-month programme. Under the responsibility and guidance of the Presidency, it assists the latter in seeking solutions <sup>(4)</sup>.

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3 Article 19(7) CRP gives Coreper the power to adopt a number of procedural decisions.

4 Article 23(3) CRP.

The Secretary-General is the head of the GSC and holds overall political responsibility for its activities. In this work, the Secretary-General of the GSC has ultimate responsibility for the organisation and execution of the services provided by the GSC as a whole, and to the Presidency in particular, for meetings of the European Council, the Council and its preparatory bodies. He or she takes part in meetings of the European Council, of the General Affairs Council and, where appropriate, of certain other Council configurations. He or she maintains close contact with Coreper.

The Secretary-General, or a director-general acting on his or her behalf, gives notice of the acts adopted by the Council <sup>(5)</sup>. The normal practice is for the Presidency to be consulted prior to such notification. The Secretary-General or a senior Council official may, acting on the Presidency's instructions, represent the Council before European Parliament committees.

### **Planning of work and logistical support**

The GSC supports the Presidency in its responsibilities for organising work, drawing up the working calendar, setting the dates of meetings, convening meetings and arranging briefings before meetings. It also arranges for interpreting and the translation of documents. The GSC supports the Presidency in all logistical matters, which are described in Chapter V — Practical arrangements.

### **Support in the decision-making process**

Before and during meetings, the GSC informs the Presidency about the procedures applicable and draws up all relevant documents at every stage of the decision-making process (working parties, committees, Coreper and Council). It makes sure that those reports are circulated.

The GSC has gradually acquired an advisory role vis-à-vis the Presidency that manifests itself in different ways; in particular it is involved — to varying degrees — in working out the terms of Presidency compromises, in respect of both drafting and content.

The GSC assists and advises the Presidency in its relations with the European Parliament, and organises and accompanies the Presidency in its meetings with representatives of the EP, in particular in trilogues.

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5 Article 18 CRP.

## Advice in legal matters

The Legal Service of the Council is the legal adviser to the European Council and the Council <sup>(6)</sup>. It is vital for the Council to have access to independent legal opinions. While the Legal Service is an integral part of the GSC, it is independent in the opinions it gives. Representatives of the service attend working party, committee, Coreper, Council and European Council meetings, and are called upon to answer any legal questions raised during discussions or to ensure the legal accuracy of texts to be adopted by the Council. Oral contributions by the Legal Service, which are in some cases set down in written form, play an important part in helping the Presidency and delegations to conduct proceedings.

The Legal Service, and in particular its team of legal/linguistic experts, is also responsible for ensuring the drafting quality of legislative acts <sup>(7)</sup>.

## Press Office

The Press Office provides information on the Council's activities by drafting and circulating background notes, press releases, 'Outcome of the Council meeting' documents and other types of communication material. It also organises media training for the Presidency on aspects such as how to work with social media and how to make more effective doorstep statements in front of cameras.

The Press Office provides media monitoring services, arranges contacts with journalists and organises Presidency press conferences following Council meetings and any other press events that the Presidency considers appropriate.

The audio-visual service of the Press Office provides photo, video and live-streaming coverage of Council meetings on its web platforms

[tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu](http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu) and

[video.consilium.europa.eu](http://video.consilium.europa.eu).

If required by the Presidency, it can also provide radio and television studios for live interviews.

For information, please contact: [press.centre@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press.centre@consilium.europa.eu) and [presse@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:presse@consilium.europa.eu)

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6 The Director-General of the Legal Service is also the legal adviser to the intergovernmental conferences (IGCs) which amend the treaties.

7 Article 22 CRP.

## Institutional memory and transparency

The GSC acts as the registrar and institutional memory of the European Council's and the Council's discussions and decisions. As part of the policy of transparency <sup>(8)</sup>, the GSC is responsible for maintaining a public register of Council documents and for making certain documents directly accessible to the public <sup>(9)</sup>. It is also responsible for making the Council's legislative and other deliberations public — which is done through the internet — and for making statements in the minutes, items in those minutes, votes and explanations of votes public <sup>(10)</sup>. The public deliberations and the document register can be accessed through the Council website ([www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu)).

The GSC also publishes adopted acts and other official documents in the *Official Journal of the European Union* ([www.eur-lex.europa.eu](http://www.eur-lex.europa.eu)).

## Website

The GSC's web team supports the Presidency in setting up their website, linked to the Council website. It supports the Presidency with regard to both technical and communication issues. Around 1 year before the Presidency starts, the web team will make contact with the future Presidency to start work in close collaboration with the Presidency's communication team.

For information, please contact: [dgf1.web-communication@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:dgf1.web-communication@consilium.europa.eu)

## Open Day

Once a year, on a Saturday in May around Europe Day (9 May), the public is welcomed to the premises of the European Council and the Council of the European Union. The other Brussels-based EU institutions also open their doors on the same day, known as the Open Day.

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8 Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43).

9 Article 11 of Annex II CRP.

10 Articles 7-9 CRP.

Officials from the GSC give information and provide guided tours of the premises. Thousands of visitors come to this event, so the Open Day is an opportunity for the Presidency to present its priorities and its country to the public. This is possible for the Presidency for the first 6 months of year, as well as for the Presidency for the second half of the year.

For information on how to participate, please contact:  
[contact.jpo@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:contact.jpo@consilium.europa.eu) or tel. +32 (0)2 281 21 40.

## Delegates Portal

The GSC has created a web portal where you can find important information on how to prepare the Presidency: handbooks, information about the training, contact persons, etc. You will find the Presidency information at:

<https://delegates.consilium.europa.eu> > Information > Prepare your presidency

The portal also contains information about meetings and meeting documents. It gives you the possibility to create your personalised dashboard with planned meetings and meeting documents. It is also possible to create alerts through SMS or email, so that you are informed promptly when your dossier is to be dealt with at a meeting.

## Handbooks

Besides this handbook, there are also several other useful sources prepared by the GSC:

*Comments on the Council's Rules of Procedure — European Council's <sup>(11)</sup> and Council's Rules of Procedure <sup>(12)</sup>* (2016)

*Guide to the ordinary legislative procedure* (2016)

*Ordinary legislative procedure — Guide for the Presidency* (2016)

*FAQ — Organising the Presidency of the Council of the EU: Practical aspects* (2016)

*Delegates' handbook* (2017)

*Translating for the Presidency* (2017)

All of these sources of information can be found in electronic format on the Delegates Portal. Should you need a paper copy, please contact the Documentation Centre in the Justus Lipsius building, 00 GH 12,

[publications.documentation@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:publications.documentation@consilium.europa.eu) or tel. +32 (0)2 231 19 03.

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11 European Council Decision 2009/882/EU of 1 December 2009 (OJ L 315, 2.12.2009, p. 50).

12 Council Decision 2009/937/EU of 1 December 2009 (OJ L 325, 11.12.2009, p. 35).



## II. GETTING READY FOR THE PRESIDENCY

Incoming Presidencies are encouraged to make initial contact with the GSC (Directorate for General Policy) about 3-4 years in advance (see Annex II for contact persons in the GSC). Preparatory meetings between the Presidency representatives and the relevant GSC officials should normally be held in Brussels. The GSC will assist and guide you in all aspects of the Presidency. We outline below the steps that should be taken before the Presidency starts.

### TRIO PROGRAMME AND TIMETABLE

For each 18-month period, the ‘trio’ prepares a programme of Council activities for that period <sup>(13)</sup>. They have to present their draft programme in a single document to the General Affairs Council for endorsement no later than 1 month before the first member of the ‘trio’ starts its Presidency. The draft is prepared in close contact with the President of the Foreign Affairs Council, the Commission and the President of the European Council. The GSC assists the ‘trio’ throughout this exercise.

Each Presidency presents, for each configuration (including the Foreign Affairs configuration), a **working calendar of the meetings** to be held by the Council during its semester. This timetable must be available 7 months before the beginning of the semester concerned, and must also be presented in a single document <sup>(14)</sup>.

Each Presidency should take account of the following points when preparing the timetable:

- try to spread work out as evenly as possible over the semester, so as to prevent in particular an excessive concentration at the end;
- try to avoid overlapping meetings so that members of Coreper (both I and II) can participate in Council configurations if needed;
- avoid scheduling more than two Council meetings on the same day;
- do not schedule meetings on public holidays observed by the EU institutions, except in justified cases.

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13 Articles 1(4) and 2(6) CRP.

14 Article 1(2) CRP.

To ensure that the number of meetings scheduled by the Presidency matches the GSC's available resources, the Presidency needs to draw up a timetable for the meetings in conjunction with the Conference Directorate of the GSC <sup>(15)</sup>.

Changes to the timetable may sometimes be necessary, and the Presidency can always change it by proposing to cancel or add a meeting or to change dates. In any event, the Presidency should convene Council meetings only when there is a substantive agenda (that is, when there are policy decisions to be taken or political guidelines to be given). Sessions of the Council should not be convened for presentations or information points only. Limited use should be made of the option of adding extra Council meetings because of the costs involved and the availability of ministers.

It is also generally accepted that 1 month's notice is needed for unscheduled Council meetings. If it does change the timetable, the Presidency must make sure to consult Coreper. Any requests from the Commission or delegations for changes to the timetable must also be made in Coreper.

With regard to venues for meetings, the Council has its seat in Brussels, in the Europa building. During the months of April, June and October, the Council holds its meetings in Luxembourg. In exceptional circumstances and for duly substantiated reasons, the Council or Coreper, acting unanimously, may decide that a Council meeting will be held elsewhere <sup>(16)</sup>. This can happen when a meeting of the Council is required to take decisions or give political guidelines in the margins of international negotiations (for example, a WTO ministerial session).

The Presidency must comply with the number of configurations in which the Council meets, in accordance with the CRP.

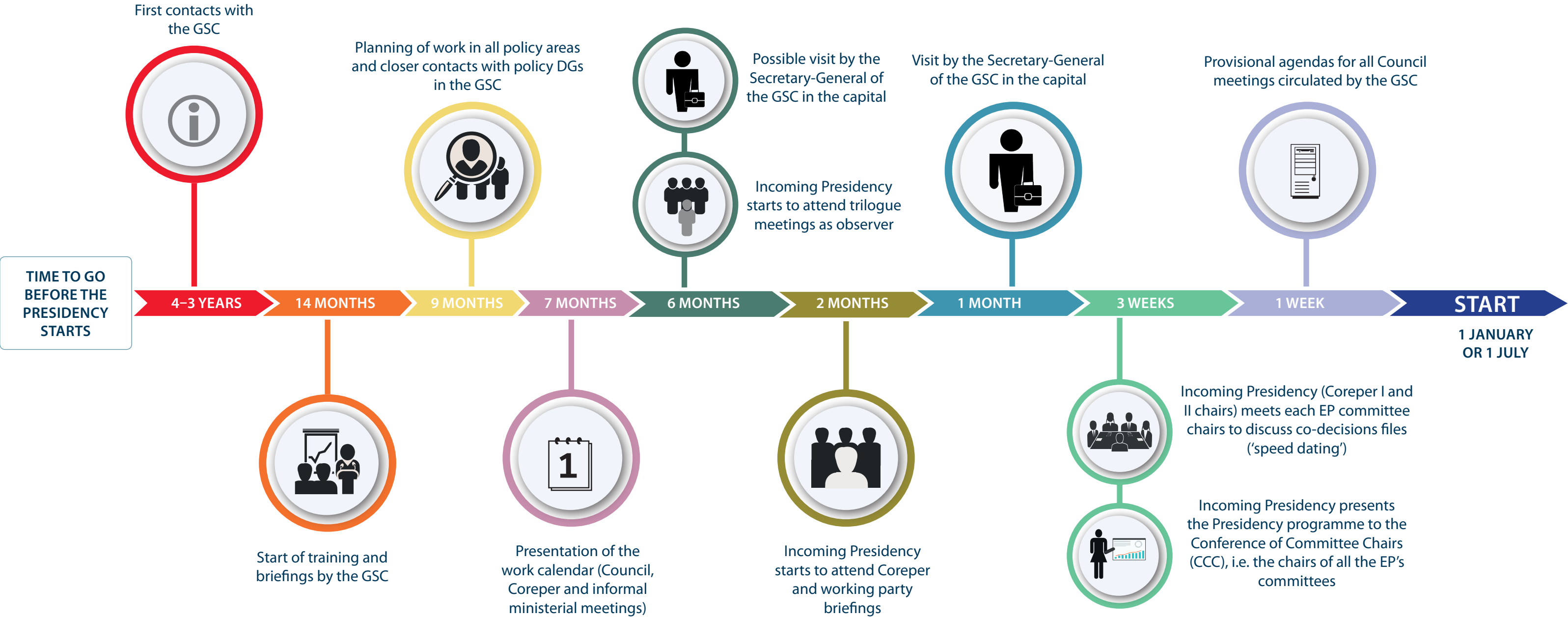
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15 See also Annex V CRP on Council working methods.

16 Article 1(3) CRP.

# INDICATIVE TIMELINE FOR PRESIDENCY PREPARATIONS

The illustration sets out important steps, but is not exhaustive



## INDICATIVE AGENDAS

Each Presidency draws up provisional agendas for all Council meetings scheduled for the following semester, setting out the legislative work and operational decisions planned. Work on these indicative agendas is done in cooperation between the incoming Presidency and the GSC, and has to begin at least 9 months before the Presidency starts. The GSC presents to the incoming Presidency, approximately 6-8 weeks before the start of the Presidency, draft provisional Council agendas. The Commission is consulted during the process.

The Presidency finalises those draft provisional agendas and circulates them at the latest 1 week before the beginning of the Presidency's term in office <sup>(17)</sup>. Subsequent changes to the agendas should be confined to cases of strict necessity.

Good coordination between the institutions and a smooth transition between Presidencies mean that each Presidency should:

- update the list of dossiers to be examined in the semester concerned;
- assess the importance of each dossier and its political or technical nature;
- in the case of dossiers under the ordinary legislative procedure ('co-decision'), take particular account of the timetable that is imposed by the treaty and by the schedule of sessions of the Council and the European Parliament;
- use the presentation and terminology that have become established.

## CHAIRPERSONS AND OTHER KEY PERSONS

### Chairpersons

One of the first tasks when setting up the Presidency is to appoint the chairs of the various working parties and committees. In all, about 200 working parties and committees need to be chaired. However, some working parties and committees are chaired by an appointed president, not by the rotating Presidency. Future chairs should be appointed in sufficient time to allow them to acquaint themselves with the proceedings and subjects. The GSC provides briefing programmes tailored to the needs of each Presidency.

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17 Article 2(7) CRP.

## Special provisions on the appointment of chairpersons

Where a dossier is to be dealt with essentially during a given semester, a delegate of the member state holding the Presidency during that semester may, during the preceding semester, chair meetings of committees, other than Coreper, and working parties when they discuss that dossier. In particular, for the budgetary procedure, meetings of the Council's preparatory bodies, other than Coreper, must be chaired by a delegate of the member state that is to hold the Presidency during the second 6-month period of the year prior to the financial year in question <sup>(18)</sup>.

If a member of the current Presidency is unable to attend a meeting, it may be chaired by another member of the 'trio' or by the following Presidency (even if this is outside the 'trio') <sup>(19)</sup>.

If a chair is to be replaced permanently under one of the above scenarios for the duration of a semester, the Presidency will ask the Council to endorse a list of the bodies concerned in advance of the semester <sup>(20)</sup>.

## Meeting coordinator

The Presidency must designate a person at the permanent representation as a meeting coordinator for the practical organisation of meetings. The meeting coordinator acts on behalf of the chair of Coreper. This person will remain in regular contact with the GSC departments responsible for reserving rooms and interpreters, and he or she must have the authority to take on-the-spot decisions.

The meeting coordinator notifies the General Secretariat of the Presidency's priorities, particularly in cases where the demands of translation, document production, interpretation or meeting rooms exceed available capacities. The meeting coordinator needs to be empowered to inform the GSC of the Presidency's priorities, and must be able to negotiate with working party chairs and, if need be, arbitrate.

The meeting coordinator should, as far as possible, be free to work exclusively on these tasks, and should preferably have a thorough knowledge of the decision-making procedure.

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18 Article 19(6), second subparagraph, CRP.

19 Article 20(2) CRP.

20 Article 19(4) CRP.

## DECORATION AND EXHIBITIONS

Each Presidency has the opportunity to present their country in an exhibition of their choice. The areas that can be used in the Justus Lipsius building are certain parts of Atrium, the area after the revolving doors behind to the information desk and the corridor on floor 50. The Presidency reception room and its waiting room on floor 50 are also normally furnished and decorated by the Presidency. Some areas in the Lex building and the Europa building can also be used for exhibitions.

For information, please see *FAQ — Organising the Presidency of the Council of the EU*, or contact: [buildings.help@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:buildings.help@consilium.europa.eu)



### III. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The decision-making process comprises several stages from the examination of a proposal until the final decision. Officials from relevant services of the GSC assist the Presidency throughout this process. Information and explanations regarding the ordinary legislative procedure ('co-decision') are available in the *Guide to the ordinary legislative procedure* (2016) and in *Ordinary legislative procedure — Guide for the Presidency* (2016). The procedural aspects <sup>(21)</sup>, including any consultation of other institutions and bodies of the Union, are explained in the Comments on the *Council's Rules of Procedure* (2016).

The list of Council preparatory bodies is regularly updated <sup>(22)</sup> and published by the GSC. It can be accessed on the Council website: [www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies)

**The ordinary legislative procedure** is the standard procedure in EU law-making.

The GSC Service Package for the Presidency describes in detail the support that the Presidency can expect from the GSC, in particular in relation to this procedure. The GSC offers the following.

1. In-depth knowledge of the ordinary legislative procedure. This includes inter alia the possibility of providing guidance to the Presidency on the internal rules and processes of the other institutions — the role of key players, lead directorates-general, working groups and committees, as well as the Commission's programming of coming proposals.
2. Understanding of the positions of the three institutions (including political positions of delegations, the Commission, the EP's rapporteurs/shadows and political groups, as appropriate, depending on the stage of the file). The GSC can therefore provide comprehensive information on key developments of dossiers in the Commission and the EP (notably EP plenary/committee debates and the votes).

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21 The reference here is essentially to the procedures laid down in Article 294 TFEU and those specific to the budget, international agreements and Titles V (CFSP) TEU and V (JHA) TFEU.

22 Second subparagraph of Article 19(3) CRP.

3. Expertise in the process of achieving **negotiating mandates in the Council**. This includes, inter alia:
  - a. drafting compromise proposals, in close cooperation with the Council Legal Service;
  - b. advising on:
    - the need for, and how to obtain, a full mandate before starting negotiations;
    - the different procedures required to obtain Coreper or Council-level mandates (e.g. 'general approaches') as well as the implications and risks of each choice;
    - the Presidency's prerogatives and responsibilities before or in the absence of a negotiating mandate.
4. Expertise in the process of **organising, preparing and conducting trilogues**, making the Presidency fully aware of the Council's institutional prerogatives, so that trilogues can take place in an efficient and fruitful manner. This also includes, inter alia, and as appropriate:
  - a. written and/or oral briefings before each trilogue;
  - b. strategic and tactical advice during trilogues (including on compromise solutions and key interinstitutional issues) and provision of clear conclusions on outcomes;
  - c. advice on the debriefing of delegations and on the process of concluding negotiations on a file.
5. **Constant contact between the relevant GSC departments**, the lead directorates-general, the Council Legal Service, the General and Institutional Policy Directorate and the Council Press Office. This includes, inter alia:
  - a. timely advance warning on important developments on files under the ordinary legislative procedure;
  - b. close cooperation in the preparation of appropriate press releases including, whenever possible, joint interinstitutional communications.

## WORKING PARTIES AND COMMITTEES

The working party or a committee is the first stage in the decision-making process within the Council. It follows similar rules of procedure to Coreper and the Council <sup>(23)</sup>. In a working party, the national delegates examine the proposal in depth, article by article, and explore compromise options. Horizontal or institutional problems normally require discussion in Coreper, as do the most difficult political questions.

A working party reports to Coreper only when it considers that sufficient groundwork has been done and that all issues that could be resolved at its level have been resolved. The decision to ask Coreper to resolve outstanding issues in relation to the dossier is for the Presidency to take, in consultation with the GSC.

Relations between the chair and the delegate representing the member state holding the Presidency must be clarified before the meeting. This is in order to avoid both blatant collusion and contradictory situations that would compromise the clarity of discussions. It seriously compromises the authority of the chair if he or she presents the views of their member state!

### Preparations

The Presidency, with the assistance of the GSC, prepares the agendas for all working party meetings. It is usual to set up before every working party meeting a briefing between the Presidency and the relevant GSC officials (appropriate directorate-general, Legal Service and, if applicable, legislative unit). The Commission representative may be invited. The Presidency is responsible for setting up these briefings with the assistance of the GSC.

Once the GSC has received a Commission proposal <sup>(24)</sup> in all its language versions, the relevant working party is convened to examine it. With the Presidency's agreement, the GSC issues the notice of meeting and the agenda as well as all of the documents to be examined. They are generally sent out at least 1 week before the meeting, the reason being that delegations would be unable, in most cases, to adopt positions on documents circulated at the last minute.

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23 Annex V CRP.

24 For TFEU matters, proposals come mostly from the Commission although, under certain provisions of the treaty, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the Court of Justice may submit draft legislation for adoption by the Council. For Title V TEU, the initiative may come from the member states or the Commission.

The choice of meeting dates takes into account the availability of meeting rooms and interpreting facilities, as well as likely dates for discussion in Coreper or the Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA) <sup>(25)</sup>. In a number of cases, scheduled dates for meetings with the European Parliament will also need to be factored in.

## Negotiations

The discussions and negotiations at the meetings are important, but for negotiations to be effective it is also necessary to use the time between meetings. Thus, the chair, with the support of the GSC, can try to resolve outstanding issues through bilateral and multilateral exchanges with delegations and the Commission. The chair can also conduct written consultations by requesting delegations to submit written comments on a proposal. It is important for the chair to brief the working party on the results of his or her multilateral consultations or to circulate the comments received from delegations. This allows the chair to base the Presidency compromise proposals on delegations' comments in an objective manner.

For legislative proposals accompanied by an impact assessment, there is a Council procedure to be followed when examining such assessments. Detailed guidance, including a checklist, is set out in *Impact assessments — Indicative guidance for working party chairs* <sup>(26)</sup>. The Commission should be invited to present the impact assessment to the working party at the same time as it presents the legislative proposal.

The chair should organise the discussion at the working party in such a way as to enable delegations to express their views on the Commission impact assessment. When the legislative proposal is referred from the working party to Coreper/Council, the report should include a summary of the impact assessment discussion, if appropriate.

## Outcome

Working parties do not need, in principle, an outcome of proceedings. In general, new compromise texts are the next step for the examination of legislative proposals.

As far as an outcome is concerned, there are no final decisions and no votes in the working party. To get an indication, however, the chair can hold an informal poll of

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25 Article 21 CRP states that the Presidency must organise the meetings of the various committees and working parties so that their reports are available before the Coreper meetings at which they are to be examined and, unless considerations of urgency require otherwise, the Presidency must postpone to a subsequent Coreper meeting any legislative items on which the committee or working party has not completed its discussions at least 5 working days prior to Coreper's meeting.

26 Document 9790/16.

delegations' positions. At the end of the meeting, he or she will draw conclusions, summarising the content of the discussions and listing the points on which agreement seems possible, those raising political or horizontal questions to be referred to Coreper and perhaps also those requiring further examination at a subsequent working party meeting. The chair must ensure in any case that a dossier is only submitted to Coreper when there is a reasonable prospect of progress or clarification of positions being achieved at that level.

### **Next steps**

After the working party meeting, the GSC and the Presidency discuss what follow-up steps to take. These steps may include drafting compromises or a strategic document <sup>(27)</sup>.

Once a working party chair decides that a dossier should be put on Coreper's agenda, he or she informs the relevant desk officer at the GSC and the chair of the Antici or Mertens Group <sup>(28)</sup> (depending on the subject matter). Antici or Mertens will inform respectively the Coreper I or Coreper II coordination teams in the GSC and will determine the date on which the item will be dealt with by Coreper. However, an item can only be put on Coreper's agenda when the relevant service of the GSC makes a formal request to DPG. On the basis of the requests it receives, DPG draws up draft agendas for Coreper I and II in consultation with the Presidency. The final draft is approved by the chair of Antici or Mertens before it is issued.

### **Arrangements specific to the common foreign and security policy (CFSP)**

Working parties in the CFSP area meet with varying frequency. Notices of meetings, often with an annotated agenda, are normally sent to the capitals, the Commission and the permanent representations at least 1 week before the meeting.

They are mostly chaired by representatives of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, or by a rotating Presidency chair, with the assistance of the GSC. Working parties contribute to the preparation of Council decisions and/or positions by regularly bringing together experts from the member states' relevant ministries ('capitals configuration') and/or permanent representations ('Brussels configuration'). They carry out their work on the basis of instructions from the Political and Security Committee (PSC) (in the field of CFSP) and/or Coreper.

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27 See the *Guide for the drafting of documents*.

28 For more information on the Antici and Mertens groups, see page 33.

The GSC takes part in the drafting of the reports of CFSP working parties. These reports are issued at the latest 24 hours after the working party meeting. Member states are bound only by the operational conclusions which, after having been checked with the Presidency, are approved by a ‘silent’ procedure, which expires according to the timeline indicated in the message (‘COREU’).

### **Arrangements specific to justice and home affairs (JHA)**

As a result of the integration of the Schengen *acquis* into the European Union, many of the meetings referred to above are also frequently held in ‘mixed committee’ format with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, as these countries are also involved in this cooperation. However, the mixed committee format cannot be a substitute for normal meetings.

## **COREPER — THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE**

Coreper generally examines items that have been discussed previously in the working parties. Coreper, which is made up of the permanent representatives of the governments of the member states, is responsible for preparing the work of the Council. This horizontal task applies to the Council in all its configurations, except for the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, for which preparations are traditionally carried out by the SCA for most matters relating to agriculture <sup>(29)</sup>, and to all areas falling within the sphere of competence of the Union.

Coreper’s role is to ensure that the following principles and rules are observed:

- a. the principles of legality, subsidiarity, proportionality and providing reasons for acts;
- b. rules establishing the powers of Union institutions and bodies;
- c. budgetary provisions;
- d. rules on procedure, transparency and the quality of drafting <sup>(30)</sup>.

All items on the agenda for a Council meeting have to be examined in advance by Coreper, unless otherwise decided by Coreper (by simple majority) or, in urgent cases, by the Council (voting unanimously) <sup>(31)</sup>.

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29 Veterinary and zoo technical harmonisation, as well as the harmonisation of plant health, animal feeding stuff and plant and seed legislation, traditionally go through Coreper.

30 Article 19(1) CRP.

31 Without prejudice to the role of the Economic and Financial Committee as determined in Article 134(2) TFEU and the current Council decisions that concern it.

Coreper is divided into two parts:

- Coreper I, composed of the deputy permanent representatives, which meets on Wednesdays as a rule, but often also on Fridays, if needed;
- Coreper II, composed of the permanent representatives, which usually meets on Wednesdays or Thursdays.

The allocation of tasks, which is decided by Coreper itself, is:

- Coreper I: preparation of Council meetings in the following configurations: Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs, Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space), TTE (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy), Agriculture and Fisheries, Environment, and Education, Youth, Culture and Sport;
- Coreper II: institutional matters and preparation of Council meetings in the following configurations: General Affairs, External Affairs, Economic and Financial Affairs and Justice and Home Affairs.

### **Provisional agenda**

The provisional agenda is finalised by the Coreper chair (via Antici or Mertens) the week before the meeting <sup>(32)</sup>. It is forwarded to delegations by the GSC. At the beginning of the week of the meeting, a numbered and, if necessary, updated draft agenda is circulated to delegations.

The Coreper agenda is divided into two parts, as follows.

- Part I includes the items on which agreement has been reached at working party level and that can be endorsed by Coreper without debate, unless opposed by a delegation. If opposed, the item is withdrawn from the agenda or moved to Part II.
- Part II contains items requiring examination by Coreper, and ‘Other business’ items entered at the request of the Presidency, a delegation or the Commission. ‘Other business’ items will give rise to an oral or written communication from those requesting them, but cannot culminate in a decision. Procedural decisions <sup>(33)</sup> to be taken are marked with an asterisk on the agenda.

An item can be included on the agenda with the indication ‘Possibly’ to enable the Presidency to withdraw or retain the item at very short notice. It is advisable to make

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32 Preferably before noon on Friday to avoid costs and overtime for services of the GSC (translators, etc.).

33 Article 249(1) TFEU and Article 19(7) CRP.

only limited use of this procedure, as it makes planning and the work of delegations more difficult.

If one or more delegations so request, and Coreper agrees unanimously, a new item may be added when the final agenda is adopted at the start of the meeting. But this should be done only in exceptional circumstances.

The Presidency needs to organise the meetings of the various committees and working parties in such a way that their reports, usually prepared by the GSC for the Presidency, are available sufficiently in advance of the Coreper meetings at which they are to be examined. Unless considerations of urgency require otherwise, the Presidency must postpone to a subsequent Coreper meeting discussions on any legislative acts on which the committee or working party has not completed its discussions at least 5 working days prior to Coreper's meeting <sup>(34)</sup>.

It is essential for the above provisions to be respected. Departures from this discipline create avoidable costs and inefficiencies. The GSC does not have the budgetary margins to accelerate processes (especially document translation and production) to compensate for derogations from the CRP. This means that the GSC (Directorate for General Policy) will not, except in exceptional circumstances, accept items for inclusion on Coreper agendas after 12.00 on the Friday preceding the week of the meeting.

## **Preparations**

Working from the provisional agenda, the GSC drafts short notes for the delegates on the items in Part I ('I-item' note) and reports summarising the progress of discussions for items in Part II. It also draws up for each item in Part II an information note exclusively for the Presidency ('Brief for the chair of Coreper'). This brief contains information on the procedure to be followed, useful information and tactical advice for conducting proceedings, the components of a compromise, speaking notes and background information, as well as any other material useful for moving the discussions forward. On CFSP-related items, the chair may receive an additional information note prepared by the European External Action Service (EEAS).

The Presidency can also opt to make a specific compromise to get work moving. The contribution is drafted by the Presidency, assisted by the GSC, usually in liaison with the Commission. For CFSP matters, this is done with the EEAS.

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34 Article 21 CRP.

A preparatory meeting (briefing) is held before the Coreper meeting, attended by the Coreper chair together with the Mertens or Antici Group, officials of the GSC dealing with the matters on the agenda, a representative of the Legal Service, a representative from the Secretary-General's office and a Commission representative. When the dossiers on the agenda concern the Union's external policies, the EEAS representative takes part in the preparatory meetings.

In general and on the Presidency's initiative, 8 weeks before the end of a Presidency, the incoming Coreper chair is invited to attend these briefings.

### **Conduct of meetings <sup>(35)</sup>**

Coreper first adopts its definitive agenda. This is when requests are made for items to be taken under 'Other business' or for new items to be placed on the agenda (see above) and the chair states in what sequence items will be discussed.

The chair then calls upon Coreper to approve the items entered in Part I of its agenda. Such approval may occasion reservations and statements, but no discussion of substance can take place.

The Presidency announces its intentions regarding the conduct of the rest of the meeting.

As a rule, Coreper avoids long drafting exercises. Where it appears that improved wording is required for further work to proceed, the Presidency, aided by the relevant service of the GSC and, if necessary, the Legal Service, may be asked to redraft the text, or Coreper may request a working party to meet as a matter of urgency in parallel with Coreper proceedings.

### **Outcome**

In principle, there are no decisions taken by Coreper (except in the case of procedural decisions assigned to Coreper <sup>(36)</sup>). At the close of discussions, the chair of Coreper may:

- note Coreper's agreement on the item under discussion and therefore suggest that it be entered as an 'A' item on the agenda of a forthcoming Council meeting or, in the context of preparations for a Council meeting, as a nominal 'B' item (false 'B' item); or

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35 Annex V, points 6–16, CRP.

36 Article 19(7) CRP.

- note agreement on a number of items, as well as substantive differences of views remaining on other points that need discussion at Council level; in such circumstances, he or she suggests that they be entered as Council ‘B’ items; or
- note that some matters need further study by Coreper before being forwarded to the Council, and thus re-enter the item on the agenda for a future meeting; or
- ask the relevant working party to sort out the technical difficulties that have emerged at the Coreper meeting.

In relation to the co-decision dossiers, and in particular the preparation of informal trilogues with the European Parliament, the chair summarises the elements of the discussion that form the Presidency’s mandate for its contacts with the Parliament.

After the Coreper proceedings, the GSC circulates a report to the delegations summarising the progress on each item to assist further discussion at Council level, as well as sending a briefing note to the Presidency. If full agreement has been reached in Coreper, the item is sent to the Council as a ‘false B-item’ or as an ‘A-item’. With regard to the latter, the GSC issues an ‘A-item note’ listing the references of the texts to be adopted by the Council after finalisation by the legal/linguistic experts, together with any statements.

Within 2 weeks of the Coreper meeting, the GSC issues a public summary record of the outcome of Coreper’s proceedings. It can be found on the Council website: [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu) > Documents & Publications > Document register > Summary records of Coreper Parts 1 and 2

Provisional agendas of Council meetings need to be sent to the members of the Council and the Commission at least 14 days before the Council meeting, and preferably 21 days in the case of JHA meetings <sup>(37)</sup>.

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37 Article 3(4) CRP and see also the footnote relating to Article 3(1) and (2) of the CRP, which states that: ‘The President will endeavour to ensure that, in principle, the provisional agenda for each meeting of the Council dealing with implementation of the Title of the TFEU relating to the area of freedom, security and justice and any documents relating to the items involved reach members of the Council at least 21 days before the beginning of the meeting.’

## Supporting and preparatory groups

The CRP gives Coreper the possibility of creating groups to support and facilitate its work. To this end, the groups below have been created and entrusted with different types of supporting and preparatory tasks before Coreper meetings <sup>(38)</sup>.

### *The Antici Group*

The Antici Group, set up in 1973, prepares the work of Coreper II. It is composed of the immediate assistants to the permanent representatives and a Commission representative, under the chairmanship of the rotating Presidency's Antici. Meetings of the group are also attended by a representative of the GSC and the assistant to the Director-General of the Legal Service. The group is responsible for examining 'I items' (items under Part I of the agenda), reviewing Coreper agendas and deciding on the organisation of proceedings, particularly the order in which agenda items will be discussed.

The Antici meeting is also the time when delegations inform one another of their respective positions and state what items they want entered under 'Other business'. The group reviews the minutes of meetings held by those Council configurations prepared by Coreper II, before those minutes are submitted as 'I items' to Coreper. The Antici Group may also be instructed by Coreper to deal with certain horizontal or particularly sensitive dossiers on an ad hoc basis.

### *The Mertens Group*

The Mertens Group, which was set up in 1993, is made up of the immediate assistants to the deputy permanent representatives and performs more or less the same function for Coreper I with a similar composition. It also deals with authorisations to hold Council or working party meetings outside the Council's headquarters.

### *The Nicolaïdis Group*

The Nicolaïdis Group assists with the organisation of meetings of the Political and Security Committee (PSC) — which is also involved in preparing for Coreper's CFSP-related work — for example by going through the provisional agendas in advance, deciding the order in which items should be taken and dealing, if necessary, with practical arrangements for the meeting.

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38 Annex V, points 4 and 5, CRP.

## THE COUNCIL

The Council consists of a representative of each member state at ministerial level, who may commit the government of the member state in question. The Council meets in different configurations depending on the subjects for discussion. These configurations are listed in Annex III. The frequency of Council meetings varies with the configuration.

In line with the working calendar presented 7 months before the beginning of the rotating Presidency, the Council meets when convened by its President on his or her own initiative or at the request of one of its members or of the Commission <sup>(39)</sup>.

Each Council configuration, apart from the Foreign Affairs configuration, is chaired by the appropriate minister of the member state holding the Presidency. The Foreign Affairs Council is chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who may, where necessary, be replaced by the member of that configuration who represents the member state holding the rotating Council Presidency <sup>(40)</sup>. When the Foreign Affairs Council is convened to discuss common commercial policy issues, its President is replaced by the rotating Presidency <sup>(41)</sup>.

Should it prove impossible for the member state holding the Presidency to provide a President for the Council, the position is filled temporarily by the member state next in line to hold the Presidency.

The General Affairs Council has horizontal responsibility for overseeing general coordination of policy and for ensuring coherence in the work done by the various Council configurations. It is also responsible for the preparatory work for European Council meetings, which includes drawing up an annotated draft agenda at least 4 weeks in advance and holding a final preparatory meeting in the 5 days leading up to the European Council <sup>(42)</sup>.

The Presidency can also decide that certain dossiers would best be negotiated and handled by the General Affairs Council. This is the case for negotiations on the multiannual financial framework, which are coordinated in advance by four consecutive Presidencies.

The Commission is invited to take part in Council meetings, although the Council may decide by simple majority to deliberate with the Commission not present ('in

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39 Article 1(1) CRP.

40 Second subparagraph of Article 2(5) CRP.

41 Ibid.

42 Article 2(2) and (3) CRP and Article 3(1) of the *European Council's Rules of Procedure*.

closed session'). The President and members of the Commission, as well as those of the Council, may be accompanied by officials who assist them <sup>(43)</sup>.

The Council deliberates in public when examining and voting on draft legislative acts <sup>(44)</sup>. The debates can be followed live on the Council website: [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu)  
> Press > Council streaming

## The agenda

The Presidency draws up the provisional agenda for each meeting on the basis of the material available at least 14 days before each meeting. For the Justice and Home Affairs Council, the time limit is 21 days.

To enable national parliaments to express their views on questions that might be of particular interest to them, the Council may not place a legislative proposal or initiative on its provisional agenda for decision until 8 weeks have elapsed since the submission of the proposal or initiative <sup>(45)</sup>. In addition, a 10-day period must elapse between the placing of a draft legislative act on the provisional agenda and the adoption of a position. The Council may, however, derogate from the 8-week and 10-day periods for reasons of urgency.

It is mandatory to enter an item on the provisional agenda if a delegation or the Commission so requests at least 16 days before the Council meeting and if the documents are available. After this deadline, unanimity is required to enter an additional item on the agenda <sup>(46)</sup>.

The provisional agenda is usually distributed to Coreper by the Presidency 3 weeks before the Council meeting. Items on which a vote may be taken are asterisked. It is important for the agenda to also make a distinction between items for discussion and those for decision.

For each item on the agenda, the GSC drafts a brief to the President of the Council. In the same way as the brief to the chair of Coreper (see above), this brief contains speaking notes and sets out the latest information that the GSC has on the state of the dossier, and outlines the main substantive, legal, procedural and tactical points that will assist the Presidency in conducting discussions. These briefs are exclusively reserved for the Presidency of the Council.

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43 Article 5(3) CRP.

44 Article 16(8) TEU.

45 Article 1 of Protocol 1 annexed to the treaties, and Article 3(3) CRP.

46 Article 3(2, 7) CRP.

The provisional agenda is divided into two parts: ‘Legislative deliberations’ and ‘Non-legislative activities’. Each of these two parts is divided into the following sections.

- ‘A’ items, which the Council may adopt without any discussion.

However, a member of the Council may always request the withdrawal of one of these items on the day of the Council meeting, the item then being held over until a later Council meeting, or kept on the agenda — as a ‘B’ item — by a simple majority if the item had been entered within the deadlines stipulated <sup>(47)</sup>.

Delegations may enter statements in the Council minutes when ‘A’ items are adopted <sup>(48)</sup>.

- ‘B’ items, which are the items that the Council will discuss.

The agenda may also include ‘Other business’ items. These items may be placed on the provisional agenda at the request of a delegation without any advance notice, but may occasion neither a discussion nor a decision by the Council. However, any request for the inclusion of an ‘Other business’ item must be accompanied by an explanatory document from the delegation submitting the request <sup>(49)</sup>. No items are to be placed on the Council agenda simply for presentation by the Commission or Council members, except where a debate on new major initiatives is envisaged <sup>(50)</sup>.

### **Preparatory briefing**

A preparatory briefing, chaired by the President, is held before each Council meeting. It is usually held either on the day before the Council, or in the morning before the start of the Council meeting. Depending on the Council configuration, the briefing is attended by the permanent representative or his or her deputy, and by the Secretary-General and/or the director-general of the department of the GSC concerned, by the legal adviser or a representative of the Legal Service as well as, where appropriate, by representatives of the Commission.

### **Council proceedings**

For efficiency and cost reasons, the Presidency should avoid having proceedings continue beyond 21.00.

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47 Article 3(9) CRP.

48 See also Chapter III, Outcome of Council meetings, Publication of votes.

49 Article 3(9) CRP.

50 Paragraph 6 of Annex V to the CRP.

The President conducts the proceedings in the following order.

- Noting ‘Other business’ items and any requests for changes to the agenda.
- Adoption of the agenda.
- Adoption of the ‘A’ items, taking account of any statements <sup>(51)</sup> or reservations. These ‘A’ items are normally adopted ‘en bloc’. If an item is the subject of a statement by one or more members of the Council that is likely to give rise to a discussion or a request for withdrawal, it can either be withdrawn from the agenda or left on the agenda on the basis of a simple majority vote (see above). The adoption of the ‘A’ items in the first part of the agenda, ‘Legislative deliberations’, takes place in public.
- Discussion of the ‘B’ items. Discussion of the ‘B’ items in the first part of the agenda, ‘Legislative deliberations’, takes place in public.

Discussions may be of different types, as follows.

- Discussions with a view to an agreement (on a legislative text, a resolution, a statement, negotiating directives, etc.).
- Policy debates, which give members of the Council the opportunity to express their general positions without really embarking on the negotiation of a text. In such discussions, it is important for the President to limit the amount of speaking time (to 3 or 4 minutes) per delegation. The time-consuming practice of *tours de table* should be avoided.

The Presidency may ask members of the Council to inform it beforehand in writing of any reservations or changes they would like to make to the text <sup>(52)</sup>.

The Presidency may, particularly in the event of a long-standing stalemate, draw up a compromise on a specific aspect or on a whole text. Such a compromise may also be presented as part of a package deal covering several texts under discussion. Such compromises may also be tabled in Coreper or in the working party.

In addition to the 28 Council members, the members of the Commission, the Secretary-General and the representative of the Council Legal Service may take the floor in the Council. Other persons, such as EU special representatives or the chairs of special committees, may be invited by the President to address the Council.

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51 Council members who make a statement may request that it appear in the Council minutes. See also Chapter III, Outcome of Council meetings, Publications of votes.

52 Article 20 and Annex V CRP.

After the discussion, the President draws the conclusions, which can be summed up as one of three main possible outcomes: agreement, referral or a vote.

- In the event of an agreement, the text is deemed to be approved ('political agreement'), although it may still have to appear as an 'A' item at a subsequent Council meeting for adoption after legal/linguistic finalisation.
- In the event of a referral to Coreper (which can resend it to a working party), it is customary for the President to give some indications for subsequent proceedings, outlining the main points under discussion and stressing the potential solutions to which delegations are asked to give further consideration.
- In the event of a vote, the following rules apply.

### Voting <sup>(53)</sup>

The Council can decide by simple majority voting (at least 15 Council members in favour), qualified majority voting or unanimity (all members in favour; abstentions do not prevent a decision from being taken).

In **qualified majority voting**, which is the default rule <sup>(54)</sup>, the size of each member state's population is also reflected. A qualified majority is reached if the following conditions are met:

When the Council acts on a proposal from the Commission or the High Representative:

- 55 % of the member states (i.e. 16 members if all member states participate in the vote) vote in favour; and
- they represent at least 65 % of the total population of the member states participating in the vote.

When the Council does not act on a proposal from the Commission or the High Representative:

- 72 % of the member states (i.e. 21 members if all member states participate in the vote) vote in favour; and
- they represent at least 65 % of the total population of the member states participating in the vote.

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53 The rules for voting in the Council are laid down in Article 16(4) and (5) TEU and Article 238 TFEU. They are explained in greater detail in Article 11 CRP. The *Comments on the Council's Rules of Procedure* explain the voting rules in the light of various procedures.

54 Article 16(3–5) TEU, and Article 238(2–3) TFEU.

In addition, any blocking minority must include at least four Council members representing at least 35 % of the EU population if all member states participate in the vote. When not all member states participate in the vote, a blocking minority must include at least the minimum number of members.

The figures for the population of the Union's member states are updated annually by Council decision based on statistics from Eurostat.

A voting calculator is available on the Council's website: [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu) > [The Council of the European Union > Voting system](#)

**Simple majority** voting is mainly used for procedural matters and requests to the Commission to undertake studies or submit proposals <sup>(55)</sup>.

Choose the voting rule

Voting rule

Qualified majority

▼

Voting result

↑

Final result

Approved

[Download results as pdf](#)

28

member states

Minimum "Yes" required for adoption: (55%) 16

28

Yes

0

No

0

Abstain

%

Population

Minimum "Yes" required for adoption: 65%

100.00

Yes

0.00

No

0.00

Abstain

*A voting calculator is available on the Council's website*

55 Articles 238(1), 240(3), 241 and 337 TFEU.

**Unanimity is required in general** when the Council wants to diverge from a Commission proposal and where the Commission is not prepared to amend its proposal <sup>(56)</sup>. A unanimous vote is also the basic rule for the adoption of Council decisions in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) <sup>(57)</sup>. In some other exceptional cases, the treaties also require a unanimous vote <sup>(58)</sup>.

#### *Voting procedure <sup>(59)</sup>*

- The Council votes on the initiative of its President. The President is also required to open a voting procedure on the initiative of a member of the Council or of the Commission, provided that a simple majority of the Council's members agrees.
- Members of the Council generally vote in the order of the member states corresponding to successive Presidencies.
- Any member of the Council may also act on behalf of another member, but only one <sup>(60)</sup>.
- The presence of a majority of the members of the Council is required (the quorum, i.e. the presence of a minimum of 15 Council members, or fewer if one or more members of the Council may not legally participate in the vote — in the case of 'opt-outs' <sup>(61)</sup>).
- When the vote is taken, the President, assisted by the GSC, counts the votes and checks that there is a quorum. The result is then registered.

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56 This condition does not apply if the act adopted by the Council is based on a Commission recommendation; that is the case for acts of various kinds in the area of economic coordination, in particular those referred to in Article 121(2) and (4) and Article 126(7), (8), (9), (11) and (12) TFEU. In Article 126, paragraph 7 itself specifies a Commission recommendation as the basis, while the other paragraphs are covered by paragraph 13, which also specifies a recommendation.

57 Some exceptions from this are mentioned in Article 31(2) TEU.

58 Article 86(1) and Articles 113-115 and 352 TFEU.

59 Article 11 CRP.

60 Article 239 TFEU and Article 11(3) CRP.

61 Article 11(4) and Article 16 CRP.

### *Written procedures* <sup>(62)</sup>

In exceptional cases of urgency, or other special circumstances, a matter may be adopted by a written vote, where the Council or Coreper unanimously decides to use that procedure. Agreement by the Commission is also required where the written vote is on a matter which the Commission has brought before the Council. When the President has obtained written agreement for this procedure from all involved, he or she can proceed to the actual voting on the issue.

Moreover, on the initiative of the Presidency, the Council may also act by means of a simplified written procedure known as the ‘silence procedure’. In that case, if no member of the Council objects, the proposal is deemed to be adopted at the end of the period laid down by the Presidency, depending on the urgency of the matter.

The GSC establishes that the written procedures have been completed.

## **Outcome of Council meetings**

### *Publication of votes*

When the Council votes on a draft legislative act, the results and explanations of votes, as well as the statements in the minutes, are made public <sup>(63)</sup>.

There is a distinction between automatic publication and publication requiring a decision. The GSC assists the Presidency in all matters concerning publication of votes and their explanations. The types of votes automatically published and those requiring a decision are described in Annex IV. The votes made public can be found on the Council website: [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu) > Documents & Publications > Document register > Results of the public votes

### *The minutes*

The outcome of Council meetings is recorded in the minutes <sup>(64)</sup> drawn up by the GSC within 15 days of each meeting. Draft minutes are approved by the Council or by Coreper after each Council delegation and the Commission have checked their content. When approved, the minutes are signed by the Secretary-General, who may delegate his or her power to sign to directors-general of the GSC. The minutes are

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62 Article 12 CRP.

63 Articles 7 and 9 CRP.

64 Article 13 CRP specifies the content of the minutes (reference to the documents submitted to the Council, decisions taken or conclusions reached by the Council and statements made by the Council, by a member of the Council or the Commission the entry of which in the minutes has been requested).

also published on the Council website: [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu) > Documents & Publications > Document register > Minutes of the Council meetings

#### *'Outcome of the Council meeting' document*

The 'Outcome of the Council meeting' is drafted by the Council Press Office and contains the main conclusions of the meeting. This document commits only the GSC and not the Council. It is made available on the Council website: [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu) > Documents & Publications > Document register > Outcomes of the Council meetings

#### *Formal adoption of a text and signing*

Texts are formally adopted after finalisation in all the official languages of the Union by the legal/linguistic experts. The acts adopted jointly by the European Parliament and the Council in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure are signed by the President of the Parliament and the President of the Council <sup>(65)</sup>. In practice, signing takes place in the margins of a plenary part-session of the European Parliament.

Such acts and those adopted by the Council are also to be signed by the Secretary-General, who may delegate his or her power to sign to directors-general of the GSC <sup>(66)</sup>.

The Secretary-General, or a director-general acting on his or her behalf, also gives notice of the acts adopted by the Council to their addressees <sup>(67)</sup>. The normal practice is for the Presidency to be consulted prior to such notification.

#### *Publication in the Official Journal of European Union*

Acts adopted jointly by the European Parliament and the Council, or only by the Council, are published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* in all official languages of the Union <sup>(68)</sup>. The GSC ensures that all relevant documents are published. The Official Journal is published only in electronic format, which is the authentic version and produces legal effects ([www.eur-lex.europa.eu](http://www.eur-lex.europa.eu)). Paper copies can be printed exceptionally on demand. Requests should be sent to: [DQL.Journal-Officiel@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:DQL.Journal-Officiel@consilium.europa.eu)

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65 First subparagraph of Article 297(1) TFEU.

66 Article 15 CRP.

67 Article 18 CRP.

68 Article 17 CRP.

## INFORMAL MEETINGS OF MINISTERS

The main purpose of informal meetings is to permit joint consideration and an as free as possible exchange of views on topics of general scope; they are not formal Council meetings because they have not been convened as such under the *Council's Rules of Procedure*. It follows that such meetings cannot replace the Council's normal activities.

In order to preserve the informal nature of such meetings, the following guidelines <sup>(69)</sup> must be followed:

- a maximum of five informal ministerial meetings may be held during any Presidency;
- no official agenda may be drawn up;
- the presence of assistants is limited to a maximum of two per minister;
- discussions must in no circumstances require Council documents to be prepared, either before or after the meeting;
- such meetings cannot arrive at formal conclusions or decisions; any press release must make this point explicitly clear.

At a logistical level, the GSC is not involved at all. The Presidency has to take direct responsibility for the organisation and for all costs incurred.

However, there is one exception to that rule: where an informal meeting of agriculture ministers is held immediately before or after a meeting of the SCA, the GSC provides ministers with technical assistance in all matters relating to meeting room facilities, including interpreting.

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69 Approved by the Helsinki European Council in December 1999.

## SPECIFIC TASKS OF THE PRESIDENCY

### Preparations for and follow-up to the European Council

Planning, preparing and running European Council meetings is the responsibility of the permanent President of the European Council and his team. That said, the rotating Presidency has an important role to play, given the necessary synergies between the work of the Council and the European Council, and the fact that the formal preparations for each European Council meeting are dealt with in Coreper and the General Affairs Council, both chaired by the rotating Presidency.

While the formal strand of the European Council preparations is based on a set of straightforward rules and timelines set out in the *Rules of Procedure of the European Council*, close collaboration between the President of the European Council and his Cabinet and the rotating Presidency is crucial in delivering on the European Council's guidance. This is true in many respects, from meeting planning and priority setting to follow-up and implementation.

At the highest level, the member of the European Council representing the rotating Presidency is the linchpin in contacts between the President of the European Council and the rotating Presidency. At the start of each European Council meeting, he or she is also asked to brief the other members on the implementation of earlier European Council conclusions, possibly highlighting specific problems. In the day-to-day running of the Presidency, the Coreper II chair is responsible for close collaboration between the two institutions.

### The European semester

The European semester, the annual process of economic policy coordination, involves a number of Council configurations, the European Council and the Commission. The semester is divided into two phases: the first from the publication by the Commission of the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) in late autumn to the March European Council; and the second from the March to the June European Councils.

In the first phase, the Council debates the AGS in a number of configurations and adopts conclusions in EPSCO (the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council) and Ecofin (the Economic and Financial Affairs Council). All these contributions are often summarised in a Presidency synthesis report to the March GAC (General Affairs Council). On that basis, the March European Council provides guidance to member states for their national reform programmes and stability or convergence programmes.

In the second phase of the semester, the Commission proposals for country-specific recommendations are examined and approved in EPSCO and Ecofin in June. The June GAC then approves the integrated recommendations, which are then endorsed by the June European Council.

The incoming Presidency for the first semester of each year presents, together with the current Presidency, a roadmap to the GAC before the start of its term, outlining all Council discussions related to the European semester. The Presidency should also ensure appropriate coordination with the chairs of the independent committees that prepare the meetings of Ecofin and EPSCO; this usually takes the form of round-table coordination meetings once or twice in the cycle. These committees are the Economic and Financial Committee, the Economic Policy Committee, the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee.



## IV. THE PRESIDENCY'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

During its term, the Presidency will also have to manage many contacts with other EU institutions and bodies. Below is a summary of what is expected from the Presidency, always with the assistance of the GSC.

### THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

During its semester, the Presidency has to carry out a number of specific tasks in the context of relations and negotiations between the Council and the European Parliament. They aim at facilitating interinstitutional relations. Before and in the early days of the Presidency, in particular, it presents the Presidency's work programme to the Parliament's plenary and to individual committees. It is also involved to a considerable degree in parliamentary debates — both in the plenary and in the Parliament's different committees.

#### **Presentation of the Presidency work programme**

##### *Before the Presidency*

About a month before the beginning of the Presidency, a meeting is organised in the Presidency member state with the chairs of the political groups of the EP and the President of the EP (the 'Conference of Presidents') to discuss the Presidency's priorities.

Similarly, a few weeks before starting its term, the Presidency is invited to address the Conference of Committee Chairs (CCC), which consists of the chairs of all the EP committees.

##### *At the beginning of the Presidency*

At the beginning of its term, the Presidency presents its programme to the European Parliament at a Strasbourg plenary session, and participates in the subsequent debate on the matter with MEPs. It is established practice that on this occasion the Presidency is represented by its Prime Minister.

At an early stage in its term, the Presidency also appears before most of the EP committees to make a statement and to answer questions on issues of relevance for each committee. The Presidency is usually represented at ministerial level by the President of the relevant configuration of the Council. Such meetings allow for more detailed discussions on files which are of particular interest to committee members, and the GSC assists the minister in preparing his or her statement and replies.

### *Mid-term*

In addition, roughly half way through the Presidency, a stock-taking meeting may take place between the Presidency and the CCC in order to assess progress.

### *At the end of the Presidency*

At the end of its term, the Presidency, represented by its Prime Minister, reports to the Parliament plenary on the progress achieved.

## **Plenary sessions**

The Presidency intervenes on behalf of the Council in the following ways.

- Taking part in debates <sup>(70)</sup> on the basis of a report.
- Making a statement <sup>(71)</sup> on a specific subject, usually at the request of the European Parliament, or possibly at the Council's initiative; statements do not necessarily relate to the work of the Council. Some statements are recurrent, for example the one that the Presidency makes on the preparation of the European Council meetings, having regard to the role played by Coreper and the General Affairs Council in the preparation process.
- Taking part in a 'topical debate' <sup>(72)</sup> (provided for since 2017 in the *Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament*, under which each group has the right to ask for at least one debate per year on a matter of major interest for EU policy).
- Answering 'questions for oral answer with debate' <sup>(73)</sup>, which may be accompanied by a draft resolution, submitted to a vote the following day.

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70 For the role of the Council, see also Rule 162(10) and (12) of the *Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament*.

71 See Rule 123 of the *Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament*.

72 See new Rule 153a of the *Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament*.

73 See Rule 128 of the *Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament*.

- Potentially, answering ‘major interpellations’ <sup>(74)</sup> (instrument introduced in 2017 by the new *Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament*).

In addition, the Presidency can intervene on behalf of the High Representative, if a replacement is needed for issues falling exclusively or primarily in the area of CFSP <sup>(75)</sup>. The agenda for the plenary is usually organised in such a way as to require the Presidency to be present on Tuesday and Wednesday.

On the occasion of visits to the EP by heads of state or government, the Presidency may be present in the plenary, although it does not usually make a statement. However, the Presidency is generally invited to the meal which may take place during such visits and may hold private meetings in the margins with the visiting head of state or government.

For plenary sessions, the Presidency usually designates a minister for relations with the EP. He or she represents the Council, although the Council may be represented by another minister for specific debates (typically — but not automatically — on budget issues). With the agreement of the Presidency or at its request, the Council may also be represented by a member of the ‘trio’ <sup>(76)</sup>, by the next Presidency <sup>(77)</sup> or by the Secretary-General.

The Council may also present its views to the European Parliament by means of a written statement <sup>(78)</sup>.

At the European Parliament’s Conference of Presidents, during which the agenda of the plenary sessions is drawn up, the Council is represented by the GSC’s Directorate for Interinstitutional Relations.

### **Involvement in committees**

In addition to the ministerial appearances at the beginning (and possibly at the end) of a Presidency, some committees may request additional appearances by ministers during the Presidency term in order to be kept updated on developments within the Council on specific dossiers.

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74 See Rule 130b of the *Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament*; so far, the Council has not been invited to take part.

75 See paragraph 6 of the Declaration by the High Representative on political accountability (OJ C 210, 3.8.2010, p. 1).

76 Article 1(4) CRP.

77 First paragraph of Article 26 CRP.

78 Third paragraph of Article 26 CRP.

The Presidency normally accepts such invitations provided they do not become excessive. These meetings are part of the Council's relationship with the Parliament. They may provide useful opportunities to inform committees of developments within the Council. However, the Presidency should be careful and avoid being drawn into negotiations during these meetings.

When a minister is not available, senior officials of the Presidency or the GSC, acting on instructions from the Presidency, may also appear before committees <sup>(79)</sup>. This is, however, not systematic and needs to be decided on case by case, in the context of the issue and if a specific request of the European Parliament has been made.

As regards the Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET), the Presidency's obligations are reduced. Normally, any meeting with the Presidency is supposed to be limited to discussing issues of enlargement and neighbourhood policy, although it invariably happens that members of the European Parliament (MEPs) try to draw the minister into a wider discussion of foreign policy issues. There is no requirement for the Presidency to attend meetings of AFET's two sub-committees, Security and Defence (SEDE) and Human Rights (DROI), unless it is specifically requested to do so by the High Representative on his or her behalf <sup>(80)</sup>.

The Secretary-General or a senior Council official may, acting on the Presidency's instructions, represent the Council before European Parliament committees <sup>(81)</sup>.

### **Exchange of views on international agreements**

The European Parliament must be immediately and fully informed at all stages of the negotiation and conclusion of agreements between the EU and third countries or international organisations <sup>(82)</sup>. It is generally the negotiator, either the Commission or the High Representative, that briefs the Parliament. However, the briefing may also take the form of an exchange of views in a parliamentary committee or a plenary part-session attended by the Presidency. The Council informs Parliament of its decisions and requests Parliament's consent where appropriate.

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79 Article 26 CRP.

80 Article 26 CRP.

81 Article 26 CRP.

82 Article 218(10) TFEU.

## Trilogues (ordinary legislative procedure)

A trilogue is any trilateral meeting held between the three institutions during the legislative process, with a view to bringing the positions of the two institutions closer together in order to achieve an agreed outcome. Formal trilogues only take place at third reading or ‘conciliation’ stage. Trilogues held during first or second reading phases are all informal. They are sometimes referred to as ‘political’ or ‘technical’ (and also known as ‘technical meetings’).

- A **political trilogue** is one that is attended by MEPs (e.g. the chair of the EP committee dealing with the proposal, the rapporteur and the shadow rapporteurs) and which is intended to address the key political issues.
- A **technical trilogue** or technical meeting tends to be attended on the EP’s side only by the EP Secretariat, and by MEPs’ assistants and/or representatives of the political groups, because it is intended to address issues of a technical and non-contentious nature and/or issues that are so technically complex that thorough discussion is required to ensure that the co-legislators share a common understanding.

For those legislative files where Council Presidencies have decided that the Coreper/SCA chair should head the Council Presidency negotiating team, the Coreper/SCA chair will normally attend only political trilogues, while the working party chair will attend technical trilogues. The question of whether an issue is ‘political’ or ‘technical’ should be agreed jointly by the Council Presidency and the EP, at an early stage in the negotiations. The working party chair can also be chosen by the Presidency to head the Council Presidency negotiating team at all levels.

Even when it is clear that an agreement will not be reached at first reading, continued contacts with the EP may be justified in order to define the points of disagreement more clearly. This would either pave the way for an early second reading agreement, or reduce the number of possible EP amendments at second reading.

See the *Guide to the ordinary legislative procedure* for more information.

## Interparliamentary bodies and delegations

Under the Lisbon Treaty, responsibility for participating in the meetings of interparliamentary bodies and delegations has in most cases passed to the High Representative and her staff. The Presidency is therefore no longer required to attend these meetings, unless the High Representative specifically requests that it attend in her place.

Nevertheless, the Presidency may still be invited to participate in certain meetings such as those of the European Economic Area Joint Parliamentary Committee (where the Presidency is included in its capacity as the EU Presidency of the EEA Council), or meetings relating to candidate countries. However it is not always necessary for the Presidency to be represented at these meetings at political level.

The Council has also traditionally attended the meetings of the ACP–EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, on behalf of the High Representative. It is normally required to participate in these meetings at ministerial level for at least half a day to give a presentation on the state of relations between the European Union and the ACP states and to reply to questions from members of the assembly. This meeting can be held in the country holding the Presidency. Briefing material for this meeting is provided directly by the relevant GSC departments.

### **Attendance by MEPs at informal meetings of the Council**

The incoming Presidency is often approached by the European Parliament about participation in informal Council meetings. These requests are generally made by the chairs of the relevant committees.

EP participation in these informal meetings is not governed by uniform rules. The practice varies depending on the set-up of each meeting. The Presidency must therefore strike a balance between, on the one hand, maintaining good relations with the EP and having exchanges with its representatives during informal meetings and, on the other hand, preserving a space in which ministers can hold discussions among themselves.

## **THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE**

Apart from the relations established with the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) in the context of the normal operation of the institutions, there are no specific obligations incumbent on the Presidency <sup>(83)</sup>.

However, when planning the Presidency work programme, it has become practice for the Presidency to meet the Commission. The Presidency is represented by the relevant ministers and the Commission by its President and relevant members.

There are also contacts between the Presidency and the EEAS to coordinate the work programme of the respective Council configurations.

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83 See, however, Article 2(6) CRP on the preparation of the 18-month draft programme by the three-Presidency team; the draft is prepared with the President of the Foreign Affairs Council with regard to that configuration's activities during that period, and in close cooperation with the Commission.

## THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Apart from courtesy visits, the Presidency has no specific formal obligations towards the Court of Justice. There are, however, regular contacts between the Council Legal Service and the Court of Justice in the context of legal proceedings and, in particular, in the procedure for the appointment of judges.

## THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS

The Presidency invites the President of the Court of Auditors to present the Court's annual report to the Ecofin Council. The Council examines this report in the context of the discharge procedure. The Council examines special reports submitted by the Court of Auditors and adopts conclusions on the recommendations contained therein.

## THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

As is the case with the EP, the Presidency presents its priorities to each of these consultative bodies at the beginning of its term, and the outcome at the end of its semester.

Ministers may occasionally be invited to intervene at the plenary sessions of the committees — or other forums organised by them — for discussions on specific topics, in particular on issues for which the Presidency had requested exploratory opinions from the committees.

The GSC's Directorate for Interinstitutional Relations follows and reports on some bureau meetings of the two committees, as well as on important plenary discussions.

## NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

The parliament of the member state holding the Presidency traditionally hosts and chairs the meetings of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC), which take place once every Presidency.

The Presidency often presents its priorities either to the COSAC meeting, or to the COSAC's preparatory meeting, known as the meeting of the chairpersons of the Committees for Union Affairs.

The GSC's Directorate for Interinstitutional Relations attends and reports on these meetings.



## V. PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

### SECURITY AND ACCESS TO COUNCIL BUILDINGS AND MEETING ROOMS

It is important that the Presidency is aware of security measures designed to ensure the safe conduct of the Council's day-to-day work. The Presidency should therefore include the Directorate for Safety and Security when considering a number of aspects essential for safeguarding the effectiveness of the security system. These aspects include the application of security measures to meetings where classified information is discussed and collaboration regarding access control to certain meetings.

For information about accreditation, please see the *Delegates' handbook*, Chapter IV: Access to the Council buildings.

In the case of meetings of certain Council configurations, and of certain Council preparatory bodies, and Coreper, meeting access and attendance checks are carried out by the competent GSC services in conjunction with the Directorate for Safety and Security staff. Access and attendance checks at other meetings are carried out under the responsibility of the Presidency or by the Directorate of Safety and Security staff at the request of the Presidency.

For questions or advice on security issues, including where classified information is to be discussed, please contact the Directorate for Safety and Security at: [security.clearances@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:security.clearances@consilium.europa.eu) or tel. +32 (0)2 281 78 98.

#### Access to the Council meeting room

Access to the Council meeting room is open to a maximum of five persons per delegation, including the minister and permanent representative or his or her deputy <sup>(84)</sup>. Other members of delegations can follow the Council's discussions in a listening room, unless decided otherwise.

The Presidency is at liberty to adjust the composition of delegations around the table depending on the degree of technicality or political sensitivity of the matter discussed. Whatever the case, the GSC and the Legal Service are always present.

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84 Only those in possession of a pass issued by the GSC may attend Council meetings (Article 5(3) and (4) CRP). See also the *Delegates' handbook* (2016), Chapter IV: Access to the Council buildings, accreditation.

## Security measures applicable to meetings where classified information is discussed

In meetings where classified information is handled, it is very important that the chair ensures that the security measures are followed. All discussion of classified items must be organised in accordance with the Council's security rules for protecting EU classified information <sup>(85)</sup>. Meetings where information classified RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED or CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL is discussed can take place in any meeting room, whereas meetings where information classified SECRET UE/EU SECRET is discussed must take place in a secured meeting room. Access to meetings classified CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL or above requires appropriate security clearance. Only individuals who have a need to know may attend the discussion of classified items. Classified information may not be handled on the meeting room's communication and information system.

At the beginning of each meeting where classified information is discussed, the chair must inform all participants of the security measures to be applied. Different measures apply according to the level of the classified information discussed:

### *Meetings where information classified RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED is discussed*

At the beginning of the meeting, the chair will remind participants not to leave classified documents unattended. After the meeting, the chair will remind the delegates that they are to remove or return any classified information distributed for or during the meeting.

### *Meetings where information classified CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL is discussed*

In addition to the measures mentioned above, the chair will remind delegations and interpreters that all electronic devices (portable computers, mobile phones, tablets, etc.) in the meeting room must be switched off for the duration of any CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL items. This is due to the risk of eavesdropping. Electronic devices that cannot easily be deactivated cannot remain in the meeting room (or interpreting booths) during discussion of such items. They can be put in lockers that are available outside meeting rooms 20, 35 and 70.5 and in the Atrium hall in the Justus Lipsius building. Please note that the Atrium closes at 19.00. The chair will also remind participants that those who do not hold a valid security clearance are requested to leave the room during discussion of classified items.

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85 Council Decision 2013/488/EU of 23 September 2013 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 274, 15.10.2013, p. 1).

### *Meetings where information classified SECRET UE/EU SECRET is discussed*

Meetings where SECRET UE/EU SECRET items are discussed must always take place in a secured meeting room designated for this purpose. In addition to the measures mentioned above, the chair must remind participants that no mobile phones, portable computers or any other electronic equipment may be taken into the room. All such objects must be placed in the special-purpose lockers at the entrance to the room. No interpretation is provided at these meetings. The Directorate for Safety and Security will perform security clearance checks for all persons entering the room.

The Presidency has no discretion in these matters, but the Directorate for Safety and Security provides advice and assistance regarding the implementation of these rules. For questions, please contact: [security.clearances@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:security.clearances@consilium.europa.eu) or tel. +32 (0)2 281 78 98.

## **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

### **Costs covered by the Presidency's member state**

- The costs of meetings convened on the Presidency's initiative outside the institutional framework — principally those held in its own country as informal meetings of ministers, e.g. Coreper, the Political and Security Committee, the Special Committee on Agriculture and the 15 working parties officially convened by each Presidency.
- Travel and accommodation expenses for GSC staff coming to the member state for briefings and training programmes in preparation of the Presidency.
- In some cases, travel and accommodation expenses for GSC staff participating in informal ministerial meetings.
- The cost of security staff to supervise contractors carrying out work for decoration and expositions in the Council buildings. A security guard must be present in each area where work is being carried out, throughout the duration of the work <sup>(86)</sup>.
- The cost of insurance for works of art which the Presidency displays in Council buildings.

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86 Decision 30/2013.

## Costs covered by the GSC

- Each member state is entitled to a reimbursement up to a fixed annual envelope for delegates' travel expenses. For the member state holding the Presidency this amount is increased by 50 %. The meetings giving right to reimbursement are listed in Annex V.
- A limited number of official meals <sup>(87)</sup>.
- Interpreting, up to a certain volume. For details, please see section 'Interpreting' below.
- Translation of documents.
- Production of documents, including publication in the Official Journal.
- The costs of all meetings within the framework of the Council that are held in non-EU states, such as association or cooperation councils, are born by the host state. However, interpreting costs could be charged to the Council budget, but are subject to the prior agreement of the Secretary-General. The GSC generally helps with the practical organisation of such meetings.

## INTERPRETING

For the system to work effectively, Presidencies must plan and schedule the meetings of working parties preceding Council meetings as carefully as possible. Meetings will need to be planned in certain cases down to sub-area level. Presidencies must establish their detailed timetables for the entire semester at least 3 months before it starts, to make it possible for the GSC to plan the interpreting teams and calculate the estimated costs of interpreting requests from delegations at the beginning of each semester for the 'on-request' working parties.

There are different interpreting arrangements depending on the type of meeting to be covered.

A full interpretation regime (23/23) is provided for Council meetings, European Council meetings and meetings of up to 20 preparatory bodies, and is entirely funded from the Council's budget. For the other preparatory bodies, interpreting is provided 'on request' (see Annex VI). The procedures and details for interpreting 'on request' and the interpreting arrangements for the different committees and working parties can be seen in Annex VII. Please note that there are preparatory meetings for which no interpreting is provided (which include, in particular, meetings outside the headquarters of the Council). The breakdown between delegations sharing official languages for the purpose of the financing of interpreting can be found in Annex VIII.

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87 For more information, please see *FAQ — Organising the Presidency of the Council of the EU*.

For the preparatory bodies, provision is made for an overall annual budget totalling around EUR 2 million for each language <sup>(88)</sup>. Delegations wishing to have active or passive interpreting <sup>(89)</sup> for their language in the bodies in question may request it, with the cost being set off against the budget allocated. Requests exceeding the provision available for the language are borne by the requesting state. Unused amounts are automatically transferred to the budget for travel expenses <sup>(90)</sup> unless there is a request by a delegation not to do so <sup>(91)</sup>.

In this context, cancelling meetings less than 2 weeks before the event should be avoided wherever possible. Late cancellation for a full regime (23/23) can cost the Council budget EUR 64 000.

## TRANSLATION

The Translation Service at the GSC translates major policy documents and legislation at certain key stages of the legislative procedure (approximately 40 % of all official documents). Translation priorities are set through the core documents policy, which defines what documents are automatically sent for translation. During the legislative procedure, documents are generally translated only in the later stages. Thus, documents used for working parties are only occasionally translated, whereas translations are provided for Coreper when possible, and always for Council meetings.

The Translation Service also provides the Presidency with the translation of several document types that are only translated into the language of the Presidency: briefs for Council chairs, briefs for appearances at the European Parliament, the main results of Council meetings and other communications. Requests for translation are submitted by the GSC desk officer on behalf of the Presidency, based on the previously identified language needs of the Presidency ministers.

From 3 months before the start of the Presidency and throughout its duration, the English and French language units offer the Presidency a fast-track editing service for texts of up to 10 pages. These can include any documents related to the Presidency, such as draft conclusions, notes, speeches, invitations, Presidency work programmes and texts for the Presidency website. Requests for editing are emailed directly to the relevant language unit:

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88 To be shared by countries with the same official language.

89 Active interpretation means that you can speak in and listen to your own language. Passive interpretation means that you can speak in your own language, but listen to another language.

90 Annex VII: Decision 111/07, Article 6, point 2.

91 Annex VII: Decision 111/07, Article 6, point 5.

English: [unite-en-presidency-editing@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:unite-en-presidency-editing@consilium.europa.eu)

French: [unite.fr-editing@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:unite.fr-editing@consilium.europa.eu)

For more information, please see the brochure *Translating for the Presidency* (2017).

## PROTOCOL

The Protocol Service at the GSC always assists the Presidency in all practical matters concerning protocol issues. Below is a short summary of useful information for the Presidency. For questions about protocol matters, please contact:

[protocole@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:protocole@consilium.europa.eu) or tel. +32 (0)2 281 77 00.

### Member states, acceding states and candidate states

As a general rule, the protocol order for member states is based on the alphabetical order of the names of the member states in their national language. Member states are followed first by the acceding states, in the same alphabetical order, and then by the candidate states in the order of their applications for accession to the European Union.

In official documents, the two-letter ISO code <sup>(92)</sup> is to be used for country abbreviations, with the exception of Greece, the United Kingdom and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, for which the abbreviations used are EL, UK and FY.

The member states and candidate states are listed in Annex IX.

### Languages

Language versions are listed in alphabetical order of the official names of the languages in their written form in the language itself. In official documents the two-letter ISO code is to be used <sup>(93)</sup>.

The member states' and candidate states' languages are listed in Annex X.

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92 ISO code 3166 alpha-2.

93 ISO code 639-1 alpha-2.

## Order of rotating Presidencies

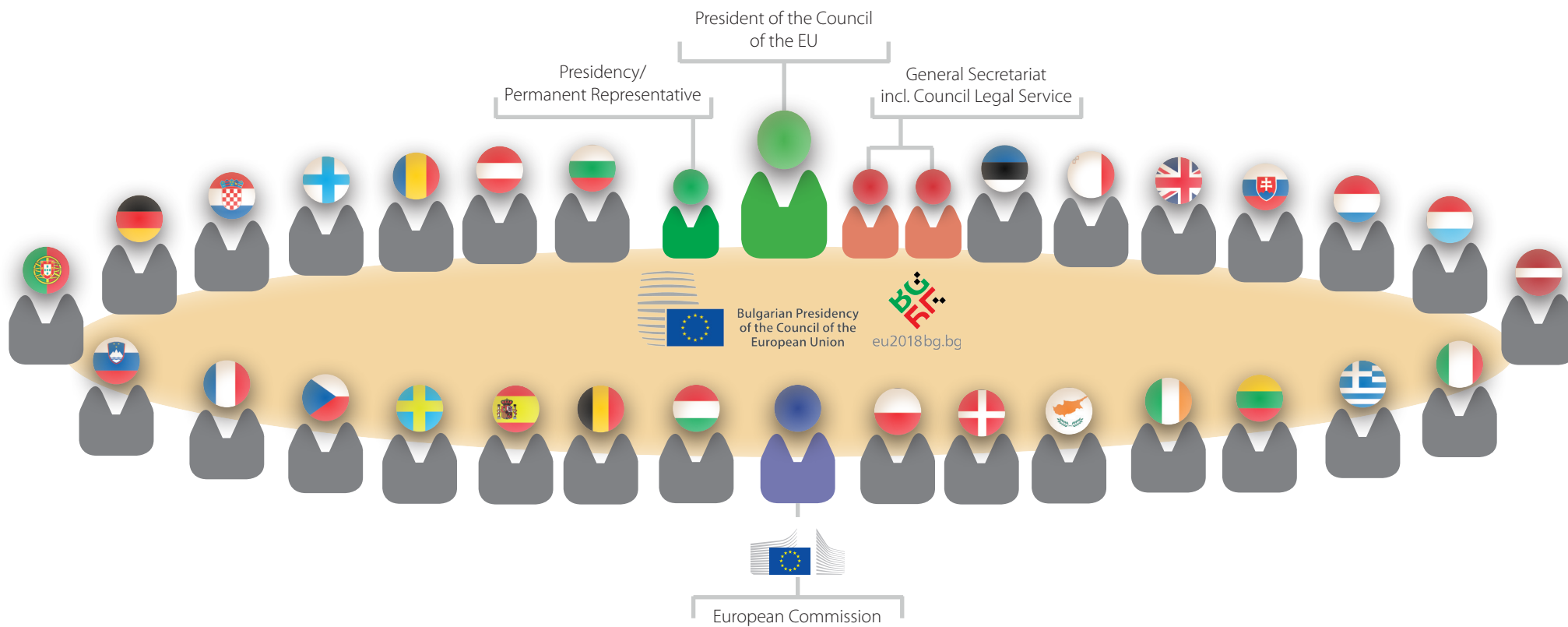
The order of the rotating Presidencies is decided by the Council <sup>(94)</sup>. Below is the order of the Presidencies from the second half of 2017 to the first half of 2023 per pre-established group of three member states:

2017 (July-December)	Estonia	
2018 (January-June)	Bulgaria	
2018 (July-December)	Austria	
2019 (January-June)	Romania	
2019 (July-December)	Finland	
2020 (January-June)	Croatia	
2020 (July-December)	Germany	
2021 (January-June)	Portugal	
2021 (July-December)	Slovenia	
2022 (January-June)	France	
2022 (July-December)	Czech Republic	
2023 (January-June)	Sweden	

At meetings of the European Council, the Council and Council bodies, alphabetical order is replaced by the order of Council Presidencies. The acceding states are always seated after the last member state in the order of the rotating Presidency.

As an example, the standard table plan shows the Council of the European Union seating arrangements (except for the Foreign Affairs Council) during the first half of 2018. For subsequent Presidencies, the seats of the member states rotate clockwise around the table.

94 Council Decision (EU) 2016/1316 of 26 July 2016 determining the order in which the Presidencies shall be held (OJ L 208, 2.8.2016, p. 42). The decision covers the years 2016-2030. Due to the outcome of the referendum in the United Kingdom in June 2016, the United Kingdom decided to withdraw from its planned Presidency in the second half of 2017.



*The example above shows the Council of the European Union seating arrangements (except for the Foreign Affairs Council) during the first half of 2018. For subsequent Presidencies, the seats of the member states rotate clockwise around the table.*

## Placing of flags

### *Internal EU meetings*

For internal EU meetings, the flags of the member states are placed in the alphabetical order of their names in their national language from left to right as you look at them. The flags of acceding states come next in the alphabetical order of their names in their national language, followed by those of candidate states in the order of their applications to join the EU.

When an event is organised by the President of the European Council, the European flag precedes the flags of the member states. The same applies for all events organised by EU institutions or services.

When an event is organised by the Presidency, its flag comes first in the series and the European flag comes last. The flags of the other member states are placed in between in the alphabetical order of the names of the member states in their national language.

### *Bilateral summit meetings between the Union and a third state, when taking place in Brussels*

The flag of the third country is flown to the left of the European flag, as you look at them.

### *Multilateral meetings with third states, when taking place in one of the member states of the European Union*

At multilateral meetings with third states, it is customary to fly the flags of all participating states and put the flag of the host state or the EU flag in first place. The alphabetical order to be followed may vary depending on the type of meeting. According to a well-established practice:

- at meetings such as EU–GCC, EU–ACP, ASEM and EU–ASEAN the alphabetical order in English is followed;
- at Union for the Mediterranean meetings the alphabetical order in French is followed.

### *Official photo sessions*

When an official photo session is organised during a visit by a head of state or government or another high-level dignitary, the visitor and the host frequently pose in front of the flags. As a matter of courtesy, the host should ensure that his or her guest is to his or her right. The same rule applies at press conferences.

In both cases, the flags are arranged so that the visitor and host can each pose or speak in front of his or her own flag for clearer identification.

## Order of precedence

### *Order of precedence of institutions <sup>(95)</sup>*

1. European Parliament
2. European Council
3. Council of the European Union
4. European Commission
5. Court of Justice of the European Union
6. European Central Bank
7. European Court of Auditors

### *Order of precedence of bodies and services*

1. European Economic and Social Committee
2. European Committee of the Regions
3. European Investment Bank
4. European External Action Service

### *Order of precedence among dignitaries of the institutions, bodies and services*

1. President of the European Parliament
2. President of the European Council
3. Members of the European Council, including the President of the European Commission. Among the members of the European Council the order of precedence is the following:
  - a. head of state or government of the rotating Presidency
  - b. other heads of state according to the order of Presidencies
  - c. other heads of government according to the order of Presidencies, as well as the President of the Commission
4. Presidents of the Council of the European Union acting in that capacity (rotating Presidency as well as the High Representative)
5. President of the Court of Justice

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95 Article 13 TEU.

6. President of the European Central Bank
7. President of the European Court of Auditors
8. High Representative (acting in that capacity)
9. Ministers acting as members of the Council
10. Vice-Presidents of the European Parliament and of the European Commission
11. President of the European Economic and Social Committee
12. President of the European Committee of the Regions
13. President of the European Investment Bank
14. Vice-Presidents of the European Central Bank
15. Members of the European Commission and of the European Parliament
16. Judges and advocates-general of the Court of Justice
17. President of the General Court
18. European Ombudsman
19. Members of the Board of Directors of the European Central Bank
20. Members of the European Court of Auditors
21. Permanent representatives
22. Vice-Presidents of the European Economic and Social Committee
23. Vice-Presidents of the European Committee of the Regions
24. Vice-Presidents of the European Investment Bank
25. Members of the General Court
26. European Data Protection Supervisor
27. Members of the European Economic and Social Committee
28. Members of the European Committee of the Regions
29. Registrar of the Court of Justice, secretaries-general and registrars of the institutions, bodies and services
30. Assistant European Data Protection Supervisor
31. Directors-general of the European institutions, bodies and services
32. Directors of the European institutions, bodies and services

### *Order of precedence among dignitaries of the institutions in the context of the external representation of the Union*

Notwithstanding the preceding list, as far as the external representation of the Union is concerned, the precedence of dignitaries is as follows:

1. President of the European Council <sup>(96)</sup>
2. The Commission <sup>(97)</sup>
3. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy <sup>(98)</sup>

### *Order for motorcades*

As a general rule, the order of arrival of official motorcades follows the reverse protocol order; for departures, motorcades follow the order of protocol.

However, for practical reasons, at European Council meetings and the meeting of Council bodies, the order of arrivals and departures strictly follows the 'first come, first served' principle.

### **VIP entrances**

Reception of VIPs and their entourage normally takes place at the VIP entrances: in the Europa building at rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 165, and in the Justus Lipsius building at rue Froissart/Froissartstraat 110. However, subject to prior notification, they may exceptionally use the pedestrian main entrances at Justus Lipsius, rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175, and at the Europa building, rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 155. When using a pedestrian access point the VIP will undergo X-ray controls, unless the Protocol Service is notified in time and a member of the permanent delegation is on standby to wait for and to confirm the identity of their VIP.

If the Council is meeting, the VIP entrance and access will remain open until the last VIP leaves the building — Europa or Justus Lipsius.

Access via the VIP entrance is restricted to the following categories of visitors:

- heads of state or government;
- members of royal families;
- ministers;

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96 Article 15(6) TEU.

97 Article 17(1) TEU.

98 Article 27(2) TEU.

- state secretaries;
- dignitaries of the European institutions, bodies and services <sup>(99)</sup>;
- secretaries-general and deputy secretaries-general of the European institutions, bodies and services, and of international organisations or similar bodies;
- ambassadors and deputy ambassadors or equivalent <sup>(100)</sup>;
- persons designated by the Cabinet of the President of the European Council or the Private Office of the Secretary-General, by the Head of Protocol (or by delegation the Protocol Service) or by the Head of the Directorate for Safety and Security (or by delegation the Directorate for Safety and Security);
- duly accredited persons accompanying the visitors specified above.

#### *VIPs regularly attending meetings during the Presidency*

VIPs regularly attending meetings during the Presidency may obtain an electronic pass not only for entry via the automated pedestrian access points, but also for automatic opening of the VIP access barrier for their cars (rue Froissart/Froissartstraat 110 and rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 165). Their vehicles, with the appropriate sticker from the Directorate for Safety and Security, may be parked in the VIP car park on level CO.02 or in the courtyard opposite the VIP entrance. VIPs then enter on foot via the VIP entrance on level CO.02.

The aforementioned electronic passes may, at the request of the permanent representations, be given to the regular chauffeurs of the VIPs in question.

The vehicles of members of the Council who do not have the aforementioned passes may be authorised to enter the VIP courtyard. For this to be done, the permanent representation must send to the Accreditation Service, in advance, the names of the VIPs and the registration numbers and makes of their vehicles.

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99 The President and members of the European Parliament, the President and members of the European Commission, the President of the Court of Justice, the President of the European Central Bank, the President of the Court of Auditors, the High Representative, the President of the Economic and Social Committee, the President of the Committee of Regions and the President of the European Investment Bank.

100 Including permanent representatives, heads of mission of third countries, deputy permanent representatives, PSC ambassadors, members of the EU Military Committee or their replacements and other chiefs of the defence forces.

### *Other VIPs*

VIPs who occasionally visit the Justus Lipsius and Europa buildings (ministers and ambassadors, the President of the European Parliament and similar persons) may use the VIP entrance (rue Froissart/Froissartstraat 110 and rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 165) to enter by car and then enter the building on foot via the VIP entrance on level CO.02, provided that the Directorate of Safety and Security has been notified in advance of their arrival.

Persons accompanying these VIPs in their cars must be accredited at the VIP entrance accreditation desk at level CO.02. If the Directorate for Safety and Security is notified in advance of their arrival, their passes are prepared in advance and made available as soon as they arrive at the VIP entrance. Otherwise they must go through the usual accreditation procedure.

### *Opening hours*

Weekdays: 7.00-19.00

Closed (unless specific events or demand):

- Nights, weekends and holidays;
- August summer holidays.

### *Contact*

During office hours (weekdays 7.00-19.00): [security.secops@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:security.secops@consilium.europa.eu)

Outside office hours: [security.dispatching@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:security.dispatching@consilium.europa.eu)

For general security information in:

- Europa building, tel. +32 (0)2 281 89 10
- Justus Lipsius building, tel. +32 (0)2 281 78 51

Emergencies: tel. +32 (0)2 281 20 00



## **ANNEXES**



## GSC SERVICES FOR THE PRESIDENCY

This list is not exhaustive.

### 1. Preparation of future Presidency

- Long-term preparation of Presidency (n–3 years).
- Training sessions for national administration staff, including traineeships (several days) in the GSC.
- Preparation of 18-month ‘trio’ programme.
- Establishing background fiches for each file (state of play, issues, timelines).
- Planning of file handling (detailed work programme).
- Preparatory briefings for senior officials and ministers, in Brussels or the capital.
- Draft agenda planning for future meetings.
- Forward planning of meeting and interpreting facilities.
- Forward planning of press and communication support.
- Advice on decoration and expositions in the Council buildings.
- Possibility for a GSC official to be seconded to the Presidency to assist in its preparation and execution.

### 2. Running Presidency

#### *(a) Meeting support at all levels*

Prior to meetings

- Agenda planning, including objectives, structure of discussion, documentation required.
- Advice on handling (substance, tactical) of individual files.
- Legal advice to chair on procedure and substance.
- Presidency briefing, including the Commission.
- Expert meetings prior to working parties where appropriate.
- Gathering and analysis of national delegations’ views.

- Dissemination to delegations of all relevant information and documents regarding meetings.
- Updated list of contacts.
- Drafting meeting documents and compromise texts (including Council conclusions).
- At Coreper/Council level: written briefs for the chair on all agenda items (NB: as a rule, no written briefs for chairs of working parties, only exceptionally for high-level working parties).
- At Council level: pre-meeting with professional organisations.
- At Council level: organisation of press briefings and Presidency background briefings; preparation of media guidance notes; general advice on media handling.
- Informal ministerial meetings: no support in terms of documents, translations, logistics (NB: informal support/advice within discretion of DG).

#### During meetings

- Assistance to chair: in running meeting, tactical and practical advice.
- Legal advice to chair on procedure and substance (and to the meeting at the chair's request).
- Preparation of room documents.
- Note-taking.

#### After meetings

- Post-working party/Coreper/Council debriefing meeting with Presidency to discuss next steps.
- Advice on follow-up to agenda items.
- Preparation of minutes/outcome of proceedings (for all members of the Council).
- At Council level: issue of press release, organisation of press conferences, media analysis.

### *(b) Relations with European Parliament*

- Background notes/speaking points/oral briefings for appearances by Presidency ministers before EP committees or plenary (NB: only for meetings with EP during the Presidency).
- Managing ordinary legislative procedure/assistance in trilogues:
  - o liaison with EP committee secretariat;
  - o tracking of EP committee work;
  - o advice on handling contacts with EP rapporteurs, including through written briefs, as necessary;
  - o organising meetings (dates, agendas, participants);
  - o preparation of draft compromise texts, follow-up to meetings;
  - o trilogue debriefing notes for the Presidency to be presented in Coreper;
  - o conciliation: DQPG/Unit 2 covers substance of files.
- Monitoring of relevant EP committee work.
- Preparation of draft replies to parliamentary questions.
- Support in negotiations on interinstitutional agreements.
- Transport services for Presidency during EP plenaries in Strasbourg.
- End-of-Presidency reception in Strasbourg.

### *(c) Meetings with international organisations/external field*

- Interface with relevant international organisations.
- Briefing notes for Presidency.
- Participation at meetings and on the spot assistance:
  - o organising EU coordination meetings;
  - o preparation/updating of negotiating texts;
  - o dissemination of texts to delegations;
  - o procedural/tactical advice.
- Organising follow-up to the meetings.

#### *(d) Document management*

- Translation, production and distribution of official documents.
- Assignment of English and French translators for editing and translating of Presidency documents.
- Tracking process of translation of documents, legal/linguistic revision and publication in liaison with DG A3.

#### *(e) Meeting logistics*

- Protocol support.
- Providing meeting rooms, IT solution for meeting planning, interpretation services (via the Commission interpreting service, SCIC), conference centre facilities.
- Organisation of events and signing ceremonies.
- Providing increased delegates' travel expenses budget to Presidency member state.

#### *(f) Other*

- For all preparatory bodies chaired by the GSC, GSC provides necessary input and works in close cooperation with the Presidency.
- DGB: tracking of committees serviced by the Commission (Employment Committee and Social Protection Committee).
- DGC: Crisis coordination arrangements (including training for member states and institutions), observer status in European Development Funds, Friends of Presidency on external financing instruments, co-secretariat of ACP institutional framework, co-secretariat of association and cooperation agreements with third countries.
- DGD: liaison with Schengen countries, participation in external meetings (governing board of CEPOL, JHA agencies' directors, COSI project groups), chairing e-Law working group; participation in migration missions to third countries.
- DGG: Arbitration Convention, 'invisible' legislative procedures (monetary agreements with third countries, approval of national central bank auditors, etc.), tracking of committees serviced by the Commission (Economic and Financial Committee, Economic Policy Committee).
- DGG: ensuring permanent liaison between chair of Ecofin Council (27 MS) and meetings of Eurogroup, ESM, EFSF, Euro-Plus Pact, Fiscal Compact.

- Legal Service: assistance to meetings of Article 255 TFEU panel and to IGC meetings for appointment of Court of Justice judges.
- DG F:
  - o media monitoring and communication action plans;
  - o audio-visual services and products: access to TV and radio studios, photographer team (photo opportunities), video crew (video coverage, video streaming);
  - o online communication: support to set up and run the Presidency website; publication of Council activities, decisions, conclusions; European Council/ Council website and link to Presidency website; content and publishing support through websites, social media platforms, e-publication;
  - o support for Presidency public events.

### **3. Post-Presidency**

- Feedback session with the Presidency to evaluate GSC's performance during the Presidency.

## KEY CONTACT PERSONS IN THE GSC

### HORIZONTAL QUESTIONS

General policy questions and interinstitutional relations

- Jim Cloos
- Gábor Iván
- Klaus Schwab (coordinator for incoming Presidencies)
- Geneviève Tuts

Legal Service

- Hubert Legal

Meeting planning/interpretation/protocol

- David Galloway
- Dominique Marro

Quality of legislation (lawyer-linguists)

- Andreas Lernhart

Document translation

- Sabine Ehmke-Gendron and Minna Vuorio

Document production

- Reijo Kemppinen

Media/press

- Reijo Kemppinen

## SECTORIAL COUNCILS

General Affairs (and the European Council)

— Jim Cloos

Foreign Affairs (Trade and Development Cooperation)

— Leonardo Schiavo

Economic and Financial Affairs

— Carsten Pillath

Justice and Home Affairs

— Christine Roger

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs

— Angel Boixareu

Competitiveness

— Carsten Pillath

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

— Jaroslaw Pietras

Agriculture and Fisheries

— Angel Boixareu

Environment

— Jaroslaw Pietras

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport

— Jaroslaw Pietras

### COUNCIL CONFIGURATIONS <sup>(101)</sup>

1. General Affairs
2. Foreign Affairs
3. Economic and Financial Affairs <sup>(102)</sup>
4. Justice and Home Affairs <sup>(103)</sup>
5. Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs
6. Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space) <sup>(104)</sup>
7. Transport, Telecommunications and Energy
8. Agriculture and Fisheries
9. Environment
10. Education, Youth, Culture and Sport <sup>(105)</sup>

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101 Annex I to the CRP amended in September 2010 by decision of the European Council (EUCO 19/10).

102 Including the budget.

103 Including civil protection.

104 Including tourism.

105 Including audio-visual affairs.

## PUBLICATION OF VOTES

### Automatic publication of votes <sup>(106)</sup>

The following are made public automatically ([www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu) > Documents & Publications > Document register > Results of the public votes).

- The results of votes and explanations of votes by members of the Council, as well as the statements in the minutes and the items in those minutes relating to the adoption of legislative acts.
- The results of votes and explanations of votes by members of the Council or their representatives on the Conciliation Committee provided for under the ordinary legislative procedure, as well as the statements in the Council minutes and the items in those minutes relating to the Conciliation Committee meeting.
- The results of votes and explanations of votes by members of the Council, as well as the statements in the minutes and the items in those minutes relating to the adoption of non-legislative acts laying down rules which are legally binding in or for the Member States, by means of regulations, directives or decisions, on the basis of the relevant provisions of the treaties, with the exception of internal measures, administrative or budgetary acts, acts concerning interinstitutional or international relations or non-binding acts (such as conclusions, recommendations or resolutions).

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106 Articles 7(4) and 9(1) CRP.

### **Publication decided on by the Council or Coreper <sup>(107)</sup>**

- The results of votes are made public by a unanimous Council or Coreper decision taken at the request of one of their members when the Council acts pursuant to Title V (CFSP) TEU; in other cases, a Council or Coreper decision taken by a simple majority at the request of one of their members is required.
- When results of votes are made public, explanations of votes are also made public at the request of the Council members concerned. Explanations of votes may only be published with due regard for the CRP, legal certainty and the interests of the Council. The Council's interests are a matter for the Legal Service.
- Statements entered in the Council minutes and items in those minutes relating to the adoption of the acts referred to in the first and second indents are also made public by Council or Coreper decision taken by a simple majority at the request of one of their members.

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107 Article 9(2) CRP.

## MEETINGS GIVING RIGHT TO REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES

DECISION No 30/2013

### OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL CONCERNING REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES OF DELEGATES OF MEMBER STATES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL,

Having regard to the European Council's Rules of Procedure of 1 December 2009 <sup>(108)</sup>, and in particular Article 13(3) thereof and to the Council's Rules of Procedure of 1 December 2009 <sup>(109)</sup>, and in particular Article 23(5) thereof,

Whereas:

1. The Secretary-General of the Council is fully responsible for administering the appropriations under Section II — European Council and Council — of the general budget of the European Union, and takes all necessary steps to ensure their sound management. He implements the appropriations in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Union.
2. Given existing budgetary constraints, and in order to facilitate planning of budgetary expenditure of Member States and the General Secretariat of the Council, it is necessary to specify the criteria, limits and practical arrangements for the reimbursement of delegates' expenses by the General Secretariat of the Council.
3. The appropriations in Section II — European Council and Council — of the budget under 'meetings and conferences' are intended to cover the refund of travel expenses incurred by the Presidency and delegations at meetings of the European Council and the Council and meetings held within the European Council and the Council framework,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

<sup>108</sup> OJ L 315, 2.12.2009, p. 55.

<sup>109</sup> OJ L 325, 11.12.2009, p. 49.

## *Article 1*

### *Principles*

1. Travel expenses incurred by delegates of Member States shall be charged to the general budget of the European Union (Section II — European Council and Council), subject to the conditions and limits set out below, as long as the travel actually took place to attend:
  - (a) a meeting of the European Council or the Council or one of its preparatory bodies;
  - (b) a meeting in the framework of the activities of the European Council or the Council;
  - (c) a meeting of an intergovernmental conference with a view to revising the Treaties or the accession of a State to the European Union, or of one of its dependent bodies;
  - (d) any meeting other than those mentioned under (c), held within the framework of the Treaties and which is considered to be inextricably linked to the work of the European Council or the Council and aimed at giving major political impetus to the development of the Union.
2. The list of meetings for which travel expenses may be reimbursed is in Annex I to this Decision. This list shall be regularly updated.
3. The reimbursement of delegates' travel expenses referred to in paragraph 1 is based on an allocation of the appropriations under Section II — European Council and Council — of the budget heading 'meetings and conferences' of the general budget of the European Union.

## *Article 2*

### *Reimbursement of expenses*

1. Expenses arising from transport undertaken in order to participate in meetings mentioned in Annex I shall be reimbursed in conformity with the implementation rules of this Decision, independently of whether such sessions or meetings are held at the Council's headquarters.

## *Article 3*

### *Annual envelopes*

1. Each Member State is entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses up to a fixed annual envelopes for delegates' travel expenses equal to the percentage of the budgetary appropriations under Section II — European Council and Council — of the budget heading 'Meetings and conferences' of the general budget of the European Union, established in Annex II to this Decision. The annual envelopes shall enable each Member State to decide on the extent of its representation at the meetings referred to in Article 1.

The percentage shall be multiplied by 1,5 for Member States holding the Presidency of the Council in any given year. The other Member States percentages will be adjusted accordingly.

2. In the event of accession of a new Member State the list and the percentages contained in Annex II shall be revised.

## *Article 4*

### *Procedure for implementing the annual envelopes*

1. The General Secretariat of the Council shall advance the annual envelopes to the relevant national administration. The advance payment shall be made in two instalments: 40 % of the amount on 30 January and 60 % on 15 July of each year, in euro.

Should the European Union budget not be adopted at the time of a payment, the provisional twelfths procedure shall apply.

2. In the first fortnight of December of the budgetary year in question, the Member States shall provide to the General Secretariat of the Council an estimation of the envelope expenditure.
3. In the two months following the end of the budget year in question, each Member State shall provide the General Secretariat of the Council with a statement showing how the envelope for delegates' travel expenses allocated to it has been used. Member States must present supporting documents for each declared amount.

The General Secretariat of the Council shall check the statement and verify the Member State's use of its appropriation.

4. Unused sums and amounts for which no supporting documents have been provided shall be deducted from the amounts to be advanced in the next instalment.
5. The General Secretariat of the Council shall keep lists of attendance at meetings for which travel expenses are to be defrayed from the Council and the European Council budget.

#### *Article 5*

##### *Exceeding and underuse of the six-monthly provision for interpreting*

1. Under the terms of Decision 111/2007 of 23 July 2007 concerning interpreting for the European Council, the Council and its preparatory bodies, the General Secretariat of the Council provides delegations with an estimate of costs for interpreting for meetings, every six months.
2. If the estimated total costs for interpreting exceed the provision available for a given language for the six-month period in question, the delegation(s) concerned may cover the exceeding amount by requesting a transfer from its envelope for delegates' travel expenses to the relevant language envelope.
3. If it appears that the estimated cost of interpreting for a given language is less than the provision available for the current six-month period, the General Secretariat of the Council shall transfer 66 % of the unused amounts to the envelope for delegates' travel expenses after the end of the first 6-month period of the year concerned, and before the end of the second six-month period of the year concerned. The transferred appropriations shall be used according to the terms of the present Decision.
4. The transferred amounts shall cover only expenditure incurred in the current financial year.

## *Article 6*

### *Final provisions*

1. Decision No 32/2011 of 25 February 2011 concerning reimbursement of travel expenses of delegates of Member States is hereby repealed and replaced by this decision.
2. The implementing rules of the previous Decision 32/2011 (doc. SN 1704/11) apply to this Decision.
3. This Decision shall enter into force on 1 July 2013.

Done at Brussels, 12 June 2013.

*Uwe Corsepius*

## ANNEX 1 TO ANNEX V

### Meetings giving entitlement to reimbursement

1. (i) European Council meetings;
  - (ii) Council meetings;
  - (iii) joint Council meetings;
  - (iv) working parties and committees in the list of committees and working parties involved in the Council's preparatory work established by Coreper (including joint working parties and committees) <sup>(110)</sup>. This list is regularly updated by the Secretariat in the light of the operation of the Council <sup>(111)</sup>; the following Committees set up by the Treaties are excluded from this list (travel expenses are met by the European Commission):
    - (a) Economic and Financial Committee (A.2)
    - (b) Employment Committee (A.3)
    - (c) Social Protection Committee (A.7)
    - (d) Economic Policy Committee (A.11)
- and, if the meetings are held alongside Parliamentary sessions in Strasbourg:
- (e) Working Party on General Affairs (B.1);
  - (v) Biennial ministerial meetings of the WTO;
  - (vi) Summits or ministerial level meetings (bilateral or multilateral) between the European Union and third countries, wherever they take place. The reimbursement is strictly limited to the principal meeting.
  - (vii) Intergovernmental conferences and their dependent bodies.
  - (viii) Meetings of a task force or similar body with representatives of the Member States established at the request of the European Council.

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110 In the framework of bilateral and regional fishing agreements which are the exclusive competence of the Community, the Working Party on External Fisheries Policy (F.24) is required to participate in the meetings referred to in the Annex. In such cases, only applications for the annual meeting of the agreement in question, or alternatively for the meeting considered most important, give entitlement to reimbursement.

111 Current version: see ST 5581/13 of 22 January 2013.

2. Other meetings (in Brussels and elsewhere)

- (i) Meetings in the country of the Presidency: meetings of working parties or committees traditionally held in the country of the Presidency are eligible under this decision, up to a limit of fifteen meetings.
- (ii) COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) meetings: only the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) and the Working Party on Legal, Administrative and Financial Questions (JAF) are eligible for the reimbursement arrangements.
- (iii) Bilateral and regional fishing agreements (external fisheries policy meetings) — list subject to changes:

Regional

NAFO — Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization

ICCAT — International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas

SEAFO — South-East Atlantic Fisheries Organization

NEAFC — North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission

NASCO — North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

IOTC — Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

IATTC — Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

GFCM — General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

SWIOFC — South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission

SIOFA — Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement

SPRFMO — South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation

WCPFC — Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

Bilateral (EU and country below)

Cape Verde	Mauritius
Comoros	Micronesia
Côte d'Ivoire	Morocco
Faroe Islands	Mozambique
Gabon	Norway
Greenland	Peru
Guinea	Russian Federation
Guinea-Bissau	São Tomé and Príncipe
Iceland	Senegal
Kiribati	Seychelles
Madagascar	Solomon Islands
Mauritania	

## ANNEX 2 TO ANNEX V

Share of each Member State in the budgetary appropriations under the heading 'Meetings and conferences' expressed as percentages

Member State	Share
Belgium	0.22 %
Bulgaria	4.64 %
Czech Republic	3.07 %
Denmark	4.53 %
Germany	1.95 %
Estonia	6.53 %
Greece	2.55 %
Spain	5.58 %
France	1.18 %
Croatia	2.66 %
Ireland	2.30 %
Italy	4.52 %
Cyprus	4.68 %
Latvia	5.39 %
Lithuania	4.90 %
Luxembourg	0.32 %
Hungary	3.58 %
Malta	3.07 %
Netherlands	0.52 %

Austria	3.33 %
Poland	2.96 %
Portugal	4.97 %
Romania	4.84 %
Slovenia	2.66 %
Slovakia	2.84 %
Finland	7.61 %
Sweden	5.13 %
United Kingdom	3.47 %

## APPROACH TO INTERPRETING

### A. Meetings of the European Council and the Council

Full interpreting will be provided for meetings of the Council and the European Council and will be financed entirely from the Council budget.

### B. Preparatory bodies meeting with full interpreting

A maximum of 20 preparatory bodies will meet with 23/23 interpreting financed entirely from the Council budget.

### C. Other preparatory bodies

Interpreting will be available on request on the following basis.

- (i) Delegations that wish to avail themselves of active or passive interpreting for their official language(s) in a preparatory body must indicate their requests for the following 6-month period by 15 October and 15 April each year.
- (ii) The cost of requests will be set off against annual envelopes of more than EUR 2 million <sup>(112)</sup> (in two 6-monthly instalments) for each language under the Council budget.
- (iii) Requests for passive interpreting will be charged up to a maximum of 50 % of the cost of active interpreting depending on whether such requests can be covered within the possibilities offered by the Interpretation DG and do not require additional interpreters.
- (iv) The Commission's DG Interpretation will provide a maximum of 11 teams to the Council on any given day <sup>(113)</sup>.
- (v) The Secretariat will provide member states with a monthly statement of estimated interpreting costs for their official language(s).

112 The envelopes will be adapted annually in line with the heading 5 ceiling, plus adjustments for inflation.

113 Of these 11 teams, two will cover full interpreting, and nine will cover preparatory bodies where interpreting is available on request.

- (vi) Should the cost of requests exceed the amount available under the budget, the member states concerned <sup>(114)</sup> undertake to make an advance payment to the Council Secretariat in the first 3 months of each 6-month period in order to cover such requests.
- (vii) Should the cost of requests for a particular language be less than the envelope set aside, a transfer of 66 % of the unused amounts will be made at the end of each 6-month period <sup>(115)</sup> to the envelopes for Member States under the budget line for delegates' travel expenses <sup>(116)</sup>. A delegation may request that these funds from the first semester are not transferred and use them for interpreting in the second semester.
- (viii) Should difficulties arise because of shortages of booths or interpreters, the Secretariat and the Presidency, in liaison with DG Interpretation, will seek a satisfactory solution with the delegations concerned, in keeping with the principle of equal treatment of official languages.
- (ix) An amount of EUR 3 million will be set aside under the budget as a reserve to cover meeting cancellations and other contingencies.

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114 Member states sharing the same official language will apportion costs between them on the basis of the relative size of their population officially using the language (Decision 85/2005 of the DSG of the Council).

115 These transfers will be based on the estimated interpreting costs referred to in point (v).

116 For member states sharing official languages, the same key as for point (vi) above will be used for calculating transfers to the envelopes for member states under the budget line for delegates' travel expenses. Any such transfers may only be used to cover expenditure incurred in the current financial year.

## FINANCIAL PROVISIONS FOR INTERPRETATION

DECISION No 111/07

OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION/  
HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY  
CONCERNING INTERPRETING FOR THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL AND  
ITS PREPARATORY BODIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION/ HIGH  
REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY,

Having regard to the Council's Rules of Procedure of 15 September 2006, and in particular Article 23(5) thereof,

Whereas:

1. The Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union/ High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (hereafter Secretary-General/High Representative), assisted by the Deputy Secretary-General, is fully responsible for administering the appropriations under Section II — Council — of the general budget of the European Union, and takes all necessary steps to ensure their sound management.
2. The appropriations in Section II — Council — of the budget under Item 2202 (Interpretation costs) are intended to cover the payment for interpretation services rendered to the Council by Commission interpreters (DG SCIC).
3. Article 18(1)(e) of the Financial Regulation <sup>(117)</sup> foresees the possibility to finance specific items of expenditure with revenue from third parties in respect of services supplied by the General Secretariat of the Council GSC at their request.

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117 Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248 of 16.9.2002, p. 1), as amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1995/2006 of 13 December 2006.

4. Given existing budgetary constraints as well as the limited capacity of available interpreting, and in order to facilitate planning of the interpreting capacity available to the Council, the Permanent Representatives Committee (Part II), in its 2190th meeting on 29 June 2007, agreed that the approach on interpreting agreed in 2003 should continue to be implemented largely unchanged, with a number of improvements <sup>(118)</sup>.
5. In order to put into practice this approach, it is necessary to adopt new implementing provisions for interpreting facilities needed for meetings of the European Council, the Council and its preparatory bodies,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

### *Article 1*

#### *Principles and scope*

1. For the purpose of this decision, the budgetary appropriations under Item 2202 (Interpretation costs) of Section II — Council — of the general budget of the European Union shall be used:
  - (a) to cover entirely the payment for interpreting services for meetings of the European Council and the Council;
  - (b) to cover entirely the payment for interpreting services for meetings of the preparatory bodies which are marked 'F' in the list in Annex 1 <sup>(119)</sup>;
  - (c) to cover 50 % of the payment for interpreting services for meetings of Coreper; the remaining 50 % shall be financed in accordance with Articles 4 to 6;

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118 See 11176/07.

119 This list is constantly updated and therefore not reproduced in this publication. For information, please contact the Meetings Planning Office, [conferences.programmation@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:conferences.programmation@consilium.europa.eu).

- (d) to cover, in accordance with Articles 4 to 6, payment for interpreting services for meetings of preparatory bodies for which interpreting is available on request, marked 'R' in the list in Annex 1 <sup>(120)</sup>;
  - (e) to cover payment for interpreting services for any other meeting organised by the GSC for which such payment is approved by the Deputy Secretary-General of the Council;
  - (f) to cover payments due to meeting cancellations and other contingencies; for this purpose, an annual amount <sup>(121)</sup> shall be set aside as a reserve.
2. No interpreting shall be provided for meetings of preparatory bodies or coordination meetings of officials outside the headquarters of the Council, nor for meetings of preparatory bodies marked 'N' or 'Z' in the list in Annex 1 <sup>(122)</sup>.

## *Article 2*

### *Planning*

1. Delegations wishing to avail themselves of active or passive interpreting <sup>(123)</sup> for their official language(s) in a preparatory body marked 'R' in the list in Annex 1 <sup>(124)</sup> shall indicate their requests for the coming six-month period by 1 May and 1 November each year.
2. No differentiated requests shall be made for different sub-areas of a given preparatory body, except for Member States which use more than one official and working language for which it would create difficulties to make uniform requests.

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120 This list is constantly updated and therefore not reproduced in this publication. For information, please contact the Meetings Planning Office, [conferences.programmation@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:conferences.programmation@consilium.europa.eu).

121 Since 2010 the amount is fixed to EUR 3 million.

122 This list is constantly updated and therefore not reproduced in this publication. For information, please contact the Meetings Planning Office, [conferences.programmation@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:conferences.programmation@consilium.europa.eu).

123 Active interpreting: a booth is allocated for the language into which interpreting is provided; the language in question can be listened to as well as spoken by delegates. Passive interpreting: the language in question may be spoken by delegates, but no interpreting is provided into that language.

124 This list is constantly updated and therefore not reproduced in this publication. For information, please contact the Meetings Planning Office, [conferences.programmation@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:conferences.programmation@consilium.europa.eu).

3. Newly created working parties shall in principle be subject to the 'on request' system unless otherwise decided, taking due account of the specific situation of working parties in external relations.

### *Article 3*

#### *Calculation of costs for interpreting*

1. The cost for interpreting shall be calculated on the basis of the daily rate ('pivot price') laid down in the service level agreement between the Commission (DG SCIC) and the GSC applicable for the period in question.
2. Passive interpreting shall be charged at 50 % of the daily rate ('pivot price'), unless it can be provided within possibilities offered by DG SCIC and does not require additional interpreters.

### *Article 4*

#### *Annual envelope*

The total cost of interpreting upon request, as well as 50 % of the cost for interpreting for meetings of Coreper, shall be set off against annual envelopes <sup>(125)</sup> in two six-monthly instalments for each language. The envelopes shall be increased annually in line with the estimate of the parameters for adjusting remunerations used in drawing up the budget. The GSC shall inform Member States of the amount of the provision available for each language for each six-month period.

### *Article 5*

#### *Exceeding the six-monthly provision*

1. Before 1 January and 1 July each year, the GSC shall provide delegations with an estimate of costs for interpreting for meetings of Coreper and interpreting upon request for each language for the coming six-month period, based on the programme of meetings foreseen for this period.
2. If the estimated total costs for interpreting referred to in paragraph 1 exceed the provision available for a given language for the six-month period in question, the delegation(s) concerned shall cover the exceeding amount. This amount shall be apportioned between the delegations sharing official languages in

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125 For 2017, each envelope amounts to EUR 1 970 871.

conformity with the breakdown notified by the Member States concerned. The breakdown, as notified by the Member States concerned, is set out in a decision of the Deputy Secretary-General of the Council.

- (a) A delegation may request, at the beginning of each six-month period, a transfer of available funds from its envelope under the budget line for delegates' travel expenses for the current financial year to the relevant language envelope(s), to cover the exceeding amount;
  - (b) Delegations shall make an advance payment to the GSC in the first three months of the six-month period in question to cover any outstanding amount exceeding the available provision.
3. The revenue resulting from the advance payments referred to in paragraph 2 (b) shall be assigned to cover expenditure under Item 2202 (Interpretation costs) of Section II — Council — of the general budget of the European Union.
4. If the actual cost of interpreting provided for a given language during a six-month period is less than the amount of the advance payment made pursuant to paragraph 2 (b), the unused amounts shall be set off against any advance payments due for the next six-month period, where applicable in conformity with the breakdown referred to in paragraph 2 (b), or, at the request of the delegation(s) concerned, be reimbursed to the Member State(s) concerned.
5. Any advance to the GSC under this Article should be paid to the bank account indicated in Annex 2.

## *Article 6*

### *Underuse of the six-monthly provision*

1. The GSC shall provide delegations with monthly statements of estimated costs for interpreting for Coreper meetings and interpreting upon request for their official language(s) for the total of the current six-month period.
2. If it appears, on the basis of the monthly statements referred to in paragraph 1, that the estimated cost of interpreting for a given language is less than the provision available for the current six-month period, the GSC shall transfer 66 % of the unused amounts to the envelope(s) available under the budget line for delegates' travel expenses for that delegation(s) for the current financial year.
3. For delegations sharing official languages, the breakdown referred to in Article 5(2) shall be used for calculating transfers to the envelopes for delegations under the budget line for delegates' travel expenses.

4. The payment of a transfer to the relevant national administration shall be made after the end of the first six-month period of the year concerned, and before the end of the second six-month period of the year concerned. The transferred appropriations shall be used according to the terms of Decision No 190/2003 of 19 September 2003 concerning reimbursement of travel expenses of delegates of Council Members. They shall cover only travel expenditure incurred in the current financial year.
5. A delegation may request that unused funds in interpreting envelopes are not transferred to its travel expenses envelope at the end of the first semester. In the case of languages shared by Member States, the agreement of all Member States concerned shall be required.

This Decision shall enter into force on 1 August 2007 and shall apply from 1 October 2007. It shall replace Decisions No 56/04 and No 133/05 of the Secretary-General/High Representative concerning interpreting for the European Council, the Council and its preparatory bodies.

Brussels, 23 July 2007

*Javier Solana*

*Secretary-General of the Council/High Representative*

## ANNEX 2 TO ANNEX VII

### **Details of the bank account referred to in Article 5(5)**

Account 310-1304700-39 at ING, Belgium

Account holder: Council of the European Union

IBAN: BE13 3101 3047 0039

BIC: BBRUBEBB

### **BREAKDOWN OF COSTS FOR INTERPRETATION FOR COUNTRIES SHARING THE SAME LANGUAGE**

DECISION No 85/05

**OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL CONCERNING THE  
BREAKDOWN BETWEEN DELEGATIONS SHARING OFFICIAL LANGUAGES FOR THE  
PURPOSE OF THE FINANCING OF INTERPRETING**

**THE DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL,**

Having regard to Article 5(2) of Decision No 56/04 of the Secretary-General of the Council/High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy concerning interpreting for the European Council, the Council and its preparatory bodies;

Whereas:

- (1) the application of Decision No 56/04 of the Secretary-General of the Council/High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy concerning interpreting for the European Council, the Council and its preparatory bodies, it is necessary to set out the breakdown between delegations sharing official languages for the purpose of apportioning interpreting costs.
- (2) The Member States concerned have notified to the General Secretariat of the Council the figures determining their respective share of interpreting costs.
- (3) Pursuant to Article 5(2) of the above-mentioned Decision No 56/04, this breakdown, as notified by the Member States concerned, shall be set out in a decision of the Deputy Secretary-General of the Council,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

#### *Article 1*

For the application of Article 5(2) and (4) and of Article 6(3) of Decision No 56/04 of the Secretary-General of the Council/High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy concerning interpreting for the European Council, the Council and its preparatory bodies, the breakdown between the delegations sharing official languages is set out as follows:

German	Austria	8.90 %
	Germany	91.10 %
Dutch	Netherlands	50.00 %
	Belgium	50.00 %
French	France	100.00 %
English	United Kingdom	93.74 %
	Ireland	6.26 %
Greek	Greece	93.9 %
	Cyprus	6.09 %

#### *Article 2*

The delegations concerned may at any time notify to the General Secretariat any changes in the breakdown set out in Article 1. In such a case, Article 1 shall be modified accordingly with effect from the first day of the six-month period following that notification.

#### *Article 3*

This Decision replaces and repeals Decision No 176/04. It shall enter into force and apply from 1 July 2005.

Brussels, 23 June 2005

*Pierre de Boissieu*

*Deputy Secretary-General of the Council*

## MEMBER STATES AND CANDIDATE STATES

## Member states

	Name in national language	English	French	Code
	Belgique/België	Belgium	Belgique	BE
	България	Bulgaria	Bulgarie	BG
	Česká republika	Czech Republic	République tchèque	CZ
	Danmark	Denmark	Danemark	DK
	Deutschland	Germany	Allemagne	DE
	Eesti	Estonia	Estonie	EE
	Ireland	Ireland	Irlande	IE
	Ελλάδα	Greece	Grèce	EL
	España	Spain	Espagne	ES
	France	France	France	FR
	Hrvatska	Croatia	Croatie	HR
	Italia	Italy	Italie	IT

	Κύπρος	Cyprus	Chypre	CY
	Latvija	Latvia	Lettonie	LV
	Lietuva	Lithuania	Lituanie	LT
	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	LU
	Magyarország	Hungary	Hongrie	HU
	Malta	Malta	Malte	MT
	Nederland	Netherlands	Pays-Bas	NL
	Österreich	Austria	Autriche	AT
	Polska	Poland	Pologne	PL
	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	PT
	România	Romania	Roumanie	RO
	Slovenija	Slovenia	Slovénie	SI
	Slovensko	Slovakia	Slovaquie	SK
	Suomi/Finland	Finland	Finlande	FI
	Sverige	Sweden	Suède	SE
	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	Royaume-Uni	UK

## Candidate states

	Original language	English	French	Code
	Türkiye	Turkey	Turquie	TR
	Поранешна Југословенска Република Македонија	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine	FY
	Crna Gora/ Црна Гора	Montenegro	Monténégro	ME
	Srbija/Србија	Serbia	Serbie	RS
	Shqipëria	Albania	Albanie	AL

## MEMBER STATES' AND CANDIDATES STATES' LANGUAGES

## Member states' languages

Language (name in the language itself)	Language in English	Language in French	ISO code
български (bulgarski)	Bulgarian	bulgare	bg
español (castellano) <sup>(126)</sup>	Spanish	espagnol	es
čeština	Czech	tchèque	cs
dansk	Danish	danois	da
Deutsch	German	allemand	de
eesti keel	Estonian	estonien	et
ελληνικά (elliniká)	Greek	grec	el
English	English	anglais	en
français	French	français	fr
Gaeilge	Irish <sup>(127)</sup>	irlandais	ga
hrvatski jezik	Croatian	croate	hr
italiano	Italian	italien	it
latviešu valoda	Latvian	letton	lv

126 In practice the term '*lengua española*' or '*español*' is used in Spanish texts — at the request of the Spanish authorities — instead of the term '*castellano*'. '*Castellano*' is the official name of the language, but it is used only to determine its place in the order.

127 The term Gaelic also occurs, but the two terms are not synonymous.

lietuvių kalba	Lithuanian	lituanien	lt
magyar	Hungarian	hongrois	hu
Malti	Maltese	maltais	mt
Nederlands	Dutch	néerlandais	nl
polski	Polish	polonais	pl
português	Portuguese	portugais	pt
română	Romanian	roumain	ro
slovenčina (slovenský jazyk)	Slovak	slovaque	sk
slovenščina (slovenski jezik)	Slovenian	slovène	sl
suomi	Finnish	finnois	fi
svenska	Swedish	suédois	sv

## Candidate states' languages

Language (name in the language itself)	Language in English	Language in French	ISO code
crnogorski/ црногорски	Montenegrin	monténégrin	(no ISO code available)
македонски јазик (makedonski jazik)	Language of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	langue de l'ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine	mk
shqip	Albanian	albanais	sq
srpski jezik/српски језик	Serbian	serbe	sr
türkçe	Turkish	turc	tr



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