

Special meeting of the European Council Thursday 23 April in Brussels

The special meeting of the European Council will start at 16.00 on Thursday 23 April.

The working session will be preceded by a minute of silence and an exchange of views with European Parliament President Martin Schulz.

The heads of state or government will then devote their discussion on what can be done to alleviate **migratory pressures in the Mediterranean**.

Indicative programme:

Thursday:	16.00	Minute of silence Exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament
	16.30	Family photo
	16.45	Working session
	± 20.00	Press conference

Full media programme

[Video message - President Tusk calls a special European Council on migratory pressures](#)

[Invitation letter by President Tusk to the special European Council meeting of heads of state or government](#)

- *Media accreditation:* <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/accreditation/>
- *Press conferences by video streaming:* <http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>
- *Video coverage in broadcast quality and photos in high resolution:* <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>

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

Migratory pressures in the Mediterranean

The **heads of state or government** will discuss what member states and the EU institutions can do together to alleviate the dramatic situation in the Mediterranean.

The discussions are expected to focus on how to save lives, which could include fighting human trafficking, strengthening the EU operations at sea, preventing illegal migration flows, and assisting the most affected EU member states and cooperating with the countries of origin and transit.

The European Council will build on the Council discussions by foreign and home affairs ministers held in Luxembourg on 20 April. Furthermore, the Commission and the European External Action Service are expected to present options for immediate action.

On Monday 20 April a **joint Council session between foreign and interior ministers** discussed migration issues, following recent events in the Mediterranean. Ministers agreed to reinforce the fight against trafficking of human beings, to strengthen EU action to save lives at sea as well as enhance support for countries on the front line, by sharing the resettlement of refugees. In addition, diplomatic action will be undertaken to do more to resolve the root causes of migration, including conflicts, poverty and human rights violations. At the meeting the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos, also presented a 10 point plan of immediate actions to be taken in response to the crisis situation in the Mediterranean.

The situation in the Mediterranean is not new. **The fight against illegal migration has long been a priority for the European Union.** At the European Council meeting in June 2014 leaders agreed on guidelines in the area of freedom, security and justice. These guidelines highlight the need to address the root causes of illegal immigration and tackling of illegal migration flows. However, there are no quick solutions to the root causes of migration. There are multiple causes, such as conflict, economic hardship and human rights violations. Simple solutions do not exist.

The EU is active in supporting member states in helping to manage external borders, including those in the Mediterranean. Over the last 5 years, the EU has disbursed about €3.5 billion to member states through various solidarity mechanisms (external borders fund, European return fund, European refugee fund, European integration fund).

The EU's border mission, Operation Triton, has already assisted the region in rescuing some 7,800 migrants in the central Mediterranean since it was deployed a few months ago.

[Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council on 20 April 2015- Outcome of the meeting](#)

[Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council on 20 April 2015- Ten point action plan on migration](#)

[Council webpage on illegal immigration](#)

[Commission press release on the extension of Operation Triton - 19 February 2015](#)