

GENERAL AFFAIRS Council (Article 50) **Monday 25 September in Brussels**

Chair: Estonian Deputy Minister for EU Affairs Matti Maasikas

Commission representatives: (tbc) First Vice-President of the Commission Frans Timmermans and Brexit chief negotiator Michel Barnier

Starting at 15:00, the Council, in an EU27 format, will discuss the **state of play of the Brexit negotiations**, with the **fourth round of talks with the UK** being launched the same week. The Commission's chief negotiator Michel Barnier will inform ministers of the progress of the negotiations so far.

Ministers will also begin **preparations for the European Council (Article 50)** of October 2017 by examining an annotated draft agenda for the summit.

A presidency press conference will be held at the end of the meeting (+/- 17:30).

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Council meeting webpage:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/gac/2017/09/25-art-50/>

Press conferences and public events by video streaming:

<http://video.consilium.europa.eu/en/webcasts>

Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery on:

<https://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu/permalink/98316>

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

State of play of Brexit negotiations

The Commission's chief negotiator Michel Barnier will inform ministers of the progress of the negotiations so far. Ministers will have the opportunity to exchange views on the state of play. This debate comes four months after they authorised the beginning of the talks and adopted negotiating directives for the Commission (the EU negotiator) on 22 May 2017.

The European Council guidelines

The framework for negotiations and the **overall EU positions** and principles for the talks are set out in the European Council guidelines of 29 April 2017. The European Council stated that the EU27 will maintain its unity and act as one during the negotiations.

In the guidelines the leaders reiterate their wish to have the UK as a **close partner** and state that any future deal will need to be based on a **balance** of rights and obligations and ensure a **level playing field**. It is stressed that the **integrity of the single market** must be preserved, which means the four freedoms are indivisible and there can be no **cherry-picking**: a non-member cannot enjoy the same rights and benefits as a member.

The guidelines also set out the **phased approach** for the negotiations. The first phase of the talks aims to provide as much **clarity and legal certainty** as possible and to settle the disentanglement of the UK from the EU. When the European Council deems **sufficient progress** has been achieved in the first phase, negotiations will proceed to the next phase.

An agreement on a **future relationship** between the EU and the UK can only be concluded once the UK becomes a third country. However, discussions on an overall understanding of that future relationship could start during a second phase of the negotiations.

The negotiating directives

The Council, meeting in an EU27 format, adopted a decision authorising the opening of Brexit negotiations with the UK and formally nominating the Commission as EU negotiator on 22 May 2017. The Council also adopted a set of negotiating directives for the first phase of the talks.

These negotiating directives prioritise issues identified as necessary for an orderly withdrawal of the UK. This includes **citizens' rights, the financial settlement and the situation in Ireland**, as well as other situations in which there is a risk of legal uncertainty as a consequence of Brexit.

Preparation for the European Council (Article 50) of October 2017

Ahead of the meeting of **the European Council (Article 50)** to take place on 19 or 20 October 2017, the Council will discuss the annotated draft agenda for the summit. In their meeting in October, EU27 leaders are expected to review the **state of the negotiations with the UK**.

In the margins of this meeting, Estonian Prime Minister Jüri Ratas will inform the EU27 heads of state or government of the political discussion regarding the relocation of the two EU agencies currently based in the UK (European Medicines Agency and European Banking Authority). This political discussion will be organised in the margins of the General Affairs Council (Article 50) on 17 October.

[European Council \(Article 50\) of 19 or 20 October 2017 - Annotated draft agenda \(XT 21065/17\)](#)

[Relocation of the UK-based EU agencies](#)

Timeline

23 June 2016	UK referendum. UK citizens vote to leave the EU
29 June 2016	Informal meeting of EU27 heads of state or government Statement
15 December 2016	Informal meeting of EU27 heads of state or government Statement (including institutional set-up for negotiations)
29 March 2017	UK formally notifies the European Council of its intention to leave the EU
29 April 2017	Special European Council (Article 50): adoption of guidelines European Council (Article 50) guidelines for Brexit negotiations
22 May 2017	General Affairs Council (Article 50) Council decision authorising the opening of negotiations with the UK Brexit: Negotiating directives - 22 May
19 June 2017	First round of negotiations with the UK
20 June 2017	General Affairs Council (Article 50)
22 June 2017	European Council (Article 50)
17-20 July 2017	Second round of negotiations with the UK
28-31 August 2017	Third round of negotiations with the UK

[Brexit - background information and full timeline](#)

[Negotiation documents for the Article 50 negotiations \(European Commission\)](#)
