Current membership of the European Council

The European Council consists of the 27 Heads of State or Government of the EU Member States, who are voting members, together with the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, who have no vote (Article 15(2) TEU). The chart shows the current members, the national office they hold and their most recent European political affiliation, as well as the year their membership of the institution began.

NB: At time of writing, Belgium and Ireland await the formation of new governments following recent elections. The Slovenian Prime Minister has announced his resignation, which was accepted by the Slovenian parliament on 29 January, and thus attends the European Council in a caretaker capacity.

Images taken from the European Council website – © European Union.
Recent developments

The length of an individual Head of State or Government’s membership of the European Council is not set down in the EU Treaties, but is instead directly linked to changes in the composition of national governments within the EU Member States. There are thus significant variations between Member States, reflecting the various electoral cycles and frequency in leadership changes in these countries. As a result, some individual Heads of State or Government may be participating in their very first meeting of the European Council, whereas others might have participated for ten years or more. In the period from February 2015 to September 2019, there were changes in membership on average every 2.1 months. Since the previous edition of this publication, in December 2019, national and European political developments have led to a number of changes in the European Council’s membership, set out below.

Changes of members and their status

- First participation in a European Council meeting
One new member is expected to take part in a European Council meeting for the first time on 20 February 2020: Robert Abela, new Maltese Prime Minister (S&D/PES), following the previous Prime Minister stepping down on 13 January 2020.

- Return to the European Council
Following the election of a new Austrian government on 7 January 2020, Sebastian Kurz returns to the European Council as Chancellor of Austria for the second time. He was previously a member from December 2017 to May 2019.

Changes in the balance between political party affiliations

S&D/PES political family: The change of Maltese Prime Minister does not affect the balance between political party affiliations in the European Council, as the new leader replaces someone from his own political party.

EPP political family: Following the election of the new Austrian Chancellor, Sebastian Kurz there is one additional representative of the EPP family among the Heads of State or Government.

ECR political family: Following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union there is one less representative of the ECR family among the Heads of State or Government.

Consequently, the European Council currently includes ten members from the EPP, seven from Renew Europe, seven from the S&D/PES, one from the ECR, and two Independent members. The Greens remain the only major political force in the European Parliament with no affiliated Head of State or Government in the European Council.

NB: The Romanian constitution requires the country’s President not to be a member of any political party. However, Klaus Iohannis, previously a member of an EPP-affiliated party, still regularly attends EPP pre-European Council meetings. With his party, Fidesz, suspended from the EPP since 20 March 2019, Viktor Orbán does not attend such meetings.