

October 2015

## Outlook for the 15-16 October 2015 European Council

*The 15/16 October 2015 European Council is expected to focus on migration, following up on progress made since the 25/26 June 2015 European Council and on the results of the Eastern Mediterranean - Western Balkans route conference. It will also examine the European Commission's Draft Action Plan on support of refugees and migration management, and consider the creation of a European coast-and border-guard. The implementation of the [results of the extraordinary, informal European Council of 23 September 2015](#), such as increasing financial assistance to EU external relations initiatives and to United Nations' programmes, will also be examined. EU Heads of State or Government are also expected to hear an update on the various issues surrounding the planned (in/out) referendum in the United Kingdom and a progress report on the follow-up of the five Presidents' report on 'Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union'.*

### Migration

According to the [annotated draft agenda](#) of the 15/16 October 2015 European Council, the Heads of State or Government will hold a 'substantial discussion on migration in all its aspects.' The European Council is [expected to take stock of the process](#) since the June 2015 European Council, to prepare the [11/12 November 2015 Valetta Summit](#) and to discuss the follow-up to the Western Balkans route high-level conference.

The [Valletta Summit will be held together](#) with African and other key countries and address issues such as the root causes of migration, establishing and organising legal migration channels, enhancing the protection of migrants and asylum seekers, tackling the trafficking of migrants and improving cooperation on return and readmission.

The [Declaration of the High-level Conference on the Eastern Mediterranean - Western Balkans Route](#) of 8 October 2015 highlights the key actions to be taken: 'Support to Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey'; 'Support to affected transit countries'; 'Cooperation to fight organised crime responsible for migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings'; 'Addressing the root causes of forced displacement'; 'Engagement with countries of origin of irregular migrants'. Several of these key actions specify in greater detail issues raised during previous European Council meetings held in [April](#), [June](#) and [September](#) 2015. A new commitment is to 'step up the efforts in the fight against terrorism and violent extremist groups, including in particular against ISIL/Da'esh'.

When addressing the European Parliament in Strasbourg, on 6 and 7 October 2015, [European Council President Donald Tusk](#), Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel and France's President Francois Hollande respectively [stressed](#) the importance of Turkey in addressing the migration crisis. The European Council is expected to discuss and build upon the European Commission's [Draft Action Plan on support of refugees and migration management](#). This plan outlines a series of actions to be implemented as a matter of urgency by both the European Union and the Republic of Turkey. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan [supported](#) the draft action plan in principle during his visit to Brussels on Monday 5 October 2015.

[Reporting to Parliament on the 23 September informal meeting of Heads of State or Government on migration](#), President Tusk underlined that 'solidarity requires mutual understanding and respect' and 'when someone says that they have no intention of observing European law, for example Dublin or quotas, they undermine the essence of solidarity and our community. Observing rules will always mean sacrificing part of our interests. I would like to dedicate these words to the Hungarians and the Italians, to the Slovaks and the Greeks.'

In their [statements to Parliament on the current situation in the European Union](#), both Chancellor Merkel and President Hollande emphasised the need for greater solidarity among Member States and supported the establishment of a European coast and border guard. The European Council is expected to support this idea and to enlarge the mandate of [Frontex](#), the EU agency responsible for European border management, to organise joint return operations on its own.

## Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union

The European Council is expected to briefly revert to the deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) following the presentation of the [Five Presidents' report](#) last June, and to possibly discuss the next steps, which aim at further strengthening the EMU in the short-to long-term.

Against this background, the Commission has already [planned](#) to table three specific initiatives by the end of 2015, in line with the Five Presidents' report. Firstly, a strengthened economic governance framework will be presented on 21 October 2015. During the European Semester, a Communication will specifically aim to reinforce the implementation of the Macro-Imbalance Procedure (MIP) as well as increasingly focus on matters of employment and social dimensions. The Commission will also table a proposal for the review of the six- and two-pack. Both initiatives are partly in-line with the European Parliament's [resolution](#) of June 2015, which outlines challenges and recommendations on reforming the economic governance framework.

Secondly, a roadmap for a more efficient external representation of the EMU will be issued in October 2015. This would strengthen the position of the euro area in relation to multilateral financial institutions such as the IMF. At the same time, this would reinforce democratic accountability and legitimacy before the EP.

Thirdly, further efforts will be put into the completion of the banking union. To this end, establishing a pan-European Deposit Guarantee Scheme in the longer term is deemed crucial to preventing capital flight and deposit outflows. As a first step, the Commission will propose a re-insurance system at EU level for national deposit guarantee schemes. In addition, special emphasis may be placed on a bridge financing mechanism for the Single Resolution Fund (SRF), which will not be operational with full financial capacity until 2023. In this respect, full transposition of both the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive and Deposit Guarantee Schemes Directive, as well as ratification of the inter-governmental agreement on the SRF by all Member States by the end of the year should also be brought to attention, in line with the Ecofin Council [conclusions](#) of 6 October 2015.

Lastly, EU leaders are likely to welcome the [action plan](#) for the establishment of a capital markets union presented by the Commission in late September 2015. The plan outlines a series of measures to reinforce capital markets across the Union with a view to boosting investment for EU businesses - in particular, for SMEs and start-ups in innovative industries and infrastructure projects.

## Referendum in the UK

According to the [annotated draft agenda](#) President Tusk will also inform EU leaders about the state of play on the (in/out) referendum and indicate his intentions for the process ahead. At the [25/26 June 2015 European Council](#), United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron outlined his vision on renegotiating his country's relationship with the EU. Mr Cameron [stated](#) that he is looking for reform in four particular areas: sovereignty, fairness, competitiveness and immigration. As Heads of State or Government made the commitment in the June 2015 European Council Conclusions to revert to the matter in December 2015, the main discussion is expected to take place then.

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