



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 17 January 2014
(OR. en)**

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ECOFIN 37

NOTE

From: Presidency

To: Delegations

Subject: Work programme of the European Union Economic and Financial Affairs Council during the Hellenic Presidency and the draft provisional agendas for the first half of 2014

Delegations will find attached the Work programme of the European Union Economic and Financial Affairs Council during the Hellenic Presidency and the draft provisional agendas for the first half of 2014.

Work programme of the European Union Economic and Financial Affairs Council during the Hellenic Presidency and the draft provisional agendas for the first half of 2014

Greece assumes the Presidency at challenging times for the European Union. The first signs of gradual recovery of the European economy are now visible, following the coordinated efforts of the European Union to strengthen economic governance including the coordination of Members States' economic and fiscal policies. At this important juncture, the Union's biggest challenge is to foster growth, competitiveness and jobs and to ensure stability and prosperity for the European citizens. In this context, it is of vital importance that financial market fragmentation is eliminated, lending to the economy is restored and that new jobs, especially for young people, are created.

Significant decisions have been taken by the European Council on strengthening the architecture of the Economic and Monetary Union, enhancing growth and competitiveness and promoting the Banking Union. Work should continue on striking the right balance between fiscal consolidation and growth-enhancing policies in full alignment with the Europe 2020 Strategy to secure stability, promote growth and support employment.

Aiming to support growth and employment and restore confidence in the financial sector, Greece will seek to:

- building on the work of its Trio partners, further develop the framework of the Banking Union and effectively strengthen the regulatory framework of financial markets;
- ensure the smooth operation of the 4th European Semester cycle and the effective implementation of the economic governance mechanisms;

- facilitate discussions on the deepening of the EMU;
- promote dialogue regarding the financing of the economy;
- actively work on important taxation dossiers;
- ensure that the position of the EU is well coordinated and represented in the G20.

Financial Services

The Hellenic Presidency will join the efforts of previous Presidencies in a path towards a new financial supervisory framework that is gradually taking form, restoring confidence and stability in European financial markets and the banking sector and overcoming past weaknesses. The aim is to end market fragmentation and pave the way for further integration in financial markets, in a balanced and sustainable way that fosters growth and stability and promotes the single market.

a. Moving towards greater financial integration: the path to a Banking Union

Within this new financial supervisory structure, the Banking Union project is undoubtedly the decisive step towards a new paradigm. The Hellenic Presidency will build upon the completion by previous Presidencies of the Single Supervisory Mechanism legislation as well as the political agreement with the European Parliament on a single rulebook for the resolution of credit institutions in the European Union, along with a revised harmonized framework for Deposit Guarantee Schemes to boost depositor preference.

In this vein, Greece, as Presidency, will strive for the creation of a key element of the Banking Union project, the Single Resolution Mechanism for the Member States participating in the Single Supervisory Mechanism, with the aim to safeguard financial stability and breaking the link between sovereigns and banks. To achieve that goal, our main priority will be to conduct trilogue negotiations and reach a political agreement with the European Parliament within the current European Parliament term.

b. Strengthening the new regulatory framework for financial markets

The Hellenic Presidency will continue the recent work towards a more transparent and resilient European financial sector, reinforcing investor and consumer protection while promoting EU internal market integration. Within this context, the finalization of the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive and Regulation is of great importance.

At the same time, the new regulatory framework for financial markets must place the best interests of consumers at its heart in order to restore consumer confidence and foster economic growth in the medium and longer term. With this aim in mind, the Hellenic Presidency will try to reach political agreement with the current European Parliament on the revision of the UCITS supervisory framework, a new set of investment fund rules that raises standards for the benefit of consumers on areas like information about investments and standards for advice, while ensuring their safety.

In the same vein, the Presidency will strive to conclude negotiations with the European Parliament on the Payment Accounts Directive, whose goal is to improve transparency and comparability of payment account fees for the benefit of consumers, while fostering mobility and competition when switching payment accounts. At the same time, the Directive aims to facilitate access to payment accounts with basic features for the citizens of the European Union promoting both social inclusion and enhanced competition among credit institutions for the benefit of consumers.

The Hellenic Presidency will further contribute to the ongoing overhaul of financial regulation in Europe through promoting the new framework to avoid any future manipulation of benchmarks that could undermine market confidence, with distorting effects on the real economy. Similarly, the Presidency will contribute to encouraging retail investment in long-term financing projects through the Long Term Investment Funds Regulation proposal. Reaching an agreement within the Council on the revision of the third Anti-Money Laundering Directive would also provide a strong signal for our commitment towards the sound functioning of financial markets. The update of the current payment services' regulatory framework will also be an area where the Presidency will be active as it will strive for progress within the Council regarding the revision of the Payment Services Directive as well as the recent proposal for a Regulation on multilateral interchange fees for card-based payment transactions.

In the insurance sector, work will be promoted regarding consumer protection by recommencing discussions within the Council on the revision of the Insurance Mediation Directive which aims to create common standards across insurance sales while ensuring proper advice.

European Semester

The European Semester, which is being implemented since 2011, constitutes the cornerstone of the enhanced EU framework for the integrated coordination and surveillance of the Member-States economic policy. The recent introduction of the two Regulations on economic governance (Two-Pack) has complemented the European Semester process further, leading to a more integrated and coherent approach for the evaluation of the Member-States economic policies.

In this context, the Hellenic Presidency will seek to effectively manage the fourth European Semester with the aim to ensure the credibility of the process and the systematic evaluation of reforms in EU Member States.

The February ECOFIN will adopt Conclusions for submission to the March European Council providing guidance on the implementation of priorities agreed at the December European Council on macroeconomic and fiscal matters. The ECOFIN Council in February will also adopt conclusions on the Alert Mechanism Report.

Following the adoption of the in depth reviews by the Commission, the ECOFIN in May will adopt related Conclusions. On the basis of the National Reform Programmes and Stability and Convergence Programmes submitted by the Member States in April, the Commission is expected to put forward the Country Specific Recommendations after the European elections.

The June ECOFIN will then adopt Council opinions and Country Specific Recommendations to be endorsed by the June European Council.

The Hellenic Presidency will also devote attention to the effective implementation of the commitments stemming from the Fiscal Compact and the reinforced Stability and Growth Pact.

Deepening the Economic and Monetary Union

Since the presentation of the report “Towards a genuine EMU” at the December 2012 European Council, work has progressed on the key building blocks to strengthen the architecture of the Economic and Monetary Union. Apart from the promotion of the Banking Union, discussions have focused on the ex ante coordination of major economic reforms and the setting up of Partnerships for Growth, Jobs and Competitiveness. In addition, for the first time, the social dimension of the EMU will be integrated in the 2014 European Semester cycle. Delivering on the European Council Conclusions, the Presidency will seek to further facilitate discussions on the development of the Economic and Monetary Union.

Financing of the economy

Financing of the European economy has been based to a large extent on bank financing. During the financial crisis, long-term bank financing has been significantly decreased including for exports. This, consequently, leads to the need to explore, inter alia, alternative financing sources.

Within this framework, the Hellenic Presidency intends to promote dialogue, based on follow-up actions to the Green Paper on long-term financing that the European Commission is expected to propose in relation to the long-term financing of the economy and SMEs access to financing.

In parallel, the Presidency will give impetus to discussions for the financing of growth on the basis of the recommendations of the High Level Expert Group, which were proposed following the invitation of the informal April 2013 ECOFIN Council.

In the same context and following the joint initiative of the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) on SMEs financing, the Presidency will assist the ECOFIN Council in monitoring the development of financing tools, aiming to enhance sustainable growth and promote the creation of new jobs.

Taxation

The Hellenic Presidency will seek progress on actions to fight tax evasion and tax fraud and tackle aggressive tax planning, in line with the direction provided by the European Council. In this context, the Presidency will actively pursue the adoption of the revised Savings Taxation Directive as well as the amendment of savings taxation agreements with third countries.

Moreover, the Hellenic Presidency will effectively promote work on the Directive of Administrative Cooperation in order to incorporate in the EU legislation the elements of the global standards of automatic exchange of information. Work will be pursued on the Directive for a Common Consolidated Tax Base (CCCTB) and on the agreement on the amendment of the Parent Subsidiary Directive. The Presidency will also devote attention to the work programme of the Code of Conduct Group on business taxation.

In the area of indirect taxation, the Presidency will seek progress on the Directive regarding the VAT treatment of vouchers as well as the Directive on a standard VAT declaration. The Directive on the Financial Transaction Tax, aiming to ensure the fair contribution of the financial sector to fiscal consolidation, will be taken forward. Finally, the Presidency will actively work on the review of the Directive on the taxation of energy products.

EU Budget

The Hellenic Presidency will seek to ensure the smooth implementation of the annual budget for 2014. In addition, the budgetary discharge procedure for 2012 and the budget guidelines for 2015 will be discussed at the February ECOFIN Council.

Representing the EU in the G20

The Hellenic Presidency will work on the effective and thorough preparation and follow-up in the ECOFIN of the G20 meetings of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors. In preparation of these meetings, Greece will contribute to the formulation of the EU's common position on G20 priority issues, such as economic growth and job creation, financing of long-term investments and tax transparency.

The ECOFIN will agree on the EU terms of reference for the EU participation in the G 20 meetings of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to be held in Sydney on 22-23 February 2014 and in Washington on 11 April together with the IMF/ World Bank Annual meeting on 11-13 April 2014.

Main Presidency events

The Informal ECOFIN Council will be held in Athens on 1-2 April 2014.



PROVISIONAL AGENDA
ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL
BRUSSELS – 28 JANUARY 2014

Legislative deliberations

(Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)

- **Approval of the list of "A" items**

Any other business

- **(poss.) Current legislative proposals**
= *Information from the Presidency*

Non-legislative activities

- **Approval of the list of "A" items**
- **(poss.) SSM implementation**
= *State of play*
- **Presentation of the Presidency work programme ¹**
= *Exchange of views*
- **Follow-up to the European Council meeting on 19-20 December 2014**
Implementation of the Compact for Growth and Jobs
= *Exchange of views*
- **Implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact (*restricted session*)**
= *Draft Council Decision / Recommendation*

Any other business

p.m.

¹ Public debate in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Council's Rules of Procedure

Monday 27 January 2014

15:00 Eurogroup

Tuesday 28 January 2014

09:00 Breakfast

10:00 Council (ECOFIN)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA
ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL
BRUSSELS – 18 FEBRUARY 2014

Legislative deliberations

(Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)

- **Approval of the list of "A" items**
- **(*poss.*) Proposal for a Council Directive implementing enhanced cooperation in the area of Financial Transaction Tax**
Interinstitutional file: 2013/0045 (CNS)
= *Orientation debate*
- **Savings taxation**
- **Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2003/48/EC on taxation of savings income in the form of interest payments**
= *Political agreement*
- **Single Resolution Mechanism (First reading)**
Interinstitutional file: 2013/0253 (COD)
= *State of play*

Any other business

- **Current legislative proposals**
= *Information from the Presidency*

Non-legislative activities

- **Approval of the list of "A" items**
- **Annual Growth Survey 2014: Guidance on the implementation of priorities agreed at the December European Council on macroeconomic and fiscal matters**
= *Council conclusions*
- **Alert Mechanism Report 2014**
= *Council conclusions*
- **Preparation of G20 Meeting of Finance Ministers and Governors (Sydney, Australia, 22-23 February 2014)**
= *Exchange of views*
= *Terms of reference*

- **Discharge procedure in respect of the implementation of the budget for 2012**
= *Council Recommendation*
- **Budget guidelines for 2015**
= *Council conclusions*

Any other business

p.m.

Monday 17 February 2014

15:00 Eurogroup

Tuesday 18 February 2014

09:00 Breakfast

10:00 Council (ECOFIN)

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA
ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL
BRUSSELS – 11 MARCH 2014**

Legislative deliberations

(Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)

- **Approval of the list of "A" items**
- **(poss.) Proposal for a Council Directive and Directive 2011/96/EU on the common system of taxation applicable in the case of parent companies and subsidiaries of Member States**
= *Orientation debate*
- **(poss.) Single Resolution Mechanism (First reading)**
Interinstitutional file: 2013/0253 (COD)
= *State of play*

Any other business

- **(poss.) Current legislative proposals**
= *Information from the Presidency*

Non-legislative activities

- **Approval of the list of "A" items**
- **(poss.) Implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact (*restricted session*)**
= *Draft Council Decision / Recommendation*
- **Follow-up to G20 Meeting of Finance Ministers and Governors (Sydney, Australia, 22-23 February 2014)**
= *Information from the Presidency and the Commission*
- **(poss.) Preparation of the European Council on 20-21 March 2014**
= *Exchange of views*
- **(poss.) Ex-ante coordination of major economic reforms**
= *Exchange of views*

Non-legislative activities

- **(poss.) Climate Finance**
= *Exchange of views and Council conclusions*

Any other business

p.m.

Monday 10 March 2014

11:00 Macro-Economic Dialogue at political level

15:00 Eurogroup

Tuesday 11 March 2014

09:00 Breakfast

10:00 Council (ECOFIN)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA
ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL
BRUSSELS – 6 MAY 2014

Legislative deliberations

(Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)

- **Approval of the list of "A" items**
- **(*poss.*) Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2011/16/EU as regards mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation**
Interinstitutional file: 2013/0188 (CNS)
= *Orientation debate*
- **(*poss.*) Proposal for a Council Directive implementing enhanced cooperation in the area of Financial Transaction Tax**
Interinstitutional file: 2013/0045 (CNS)
= *Political agreement*
- **(*poss.*) Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax, as regards the treatment of vouchers**
Interinstitutional file: 2012/0102 (CNS)
= *Orientation debate / Political agreement*
- **(*poss.*) Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax as regards a standard VAT return**
Interinstitutional file: 2013/0343 (CNS)
= *Orientation debate / Political agreement*
- **Draft general budget for 2015**
= *Presentation by the Commission*

Any other business

- **Current legislative proposals**
= *Information from the Presidency*

Non-legislative activities

- **Approval of the list of "A" items**

- **Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure: In-depth reviews**
= *Council conclusions*
- **Report by the Commission on the experience acquired as a result of the operation of the EBA, ESMA and the EIOPA**
= *Presentation of the Report and (poss.) Council conclusions*
- **Follow-up to the G20 Finance Ministers and Governors (10-11 April) and IMF/World Bank (11-13 April) 2014 Spring meetings in Washington, USA**
= *Information from the Presidency and the Commission*

Any other business

p.m.

- Ministerial Dialogue with Candidate Countries

Monday 5 May 2014

13:00 Informal dialogue of representatives of the Council (ECOFIN) and of the European Parliament

15:00 Eurogroup

Tuesday 6 May 2014

08:30 Annual EIB Governors meeting

09:00 Breakfast

10:00 Council (ECOFIN)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA
ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL
LUXEMBOURG – 20 JUNE 2014

Legislative deliberations

(Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)

- **Approval of the list of "A" items**

- **(*poss.*) Proposal for a Council Directive on a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB)**
Interinstitutional file: 2011/0058 (CNS)
= *Orientation debate*

- **(*poss.*) Proposal for a Council Directive and Directive 2011/96/EU on the common system of taxation applicable in the case of parent companies and subsidiaries of Member States**
= *Political agreement*

- **(*poss.*) Proposal for a Council Directive amending 2003/96/EC restructuring the Community framework for the taxation of energy products**
Interinstitutional file: 2011/0092 (CNS)
= *Political agreement*

Any other business

- **(*poss.*) Current legislative proposals**
= *Information from the Presidency*

Non-legislative activities

- **Approval of the list of "A" items**

- **ECOFIN Report to the European Council on tax issues**
= *Endorsement*

- **Report by Finance Ministers on tax issues in the framework of the Euro Plus Pact**
= *Endorsement*

- **Code of Conduct (Business Taxation)**
- **Report to the Council**
- **Draft Council conclusions**
= *Endorsement*

- **(poss.) Climate Finance**
= *Exchange of views and Council conclusions*
- **Contribution to the European Council meeting on 26-27 June 2014 - European Semester 2014**
- a) **Draft Council Recommendations on the National Reform Programmes 2014 to each Member State and draft Council Opinions on the updated Stability or Convergence Programmes and draft Explanatory Note**
= *Approval*
- b) **Draft Council Recommendation on the implementation of the broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States whose currency is the euro**
= *Approval*
- **(poss.) Implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact (restricted session)**
= *Draft Council Decision / Recommendation*
- **ECB/Commission Convergence Reports and Enlargement of the Euro Area**
- **(poss.) SSM implementation**
= *State of play*

Any other business

p.m.

Thursday 19 June 2014

15:00 Eurogroup

Friday 20 June 2014

09:00 Breakfast

10:00 Council (ECOFIN)