



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

Brussels, 11 June 2021

WK 7812/2021 INIT

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WORKING PAPER

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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Working Party on Enlargement and Countries Negotiating Accession to the EU
N° prev. doc.:	ST 8536/21
Subject:	Conceptual note on political Intergovernmental Conferences in accordance with the revised enlargement methodology

Delegations will find enclosed the conceptual note prepared by the Presidency on the organisation of the political Intergovernmental Conferences in accordance with the revised enlargement methodology.

As interventions under political dialogue will be grouped by clusters, delegations are invited to inform the Presidency - **by noon on 18 June 2021 at acc@reper-portugal.be and enlargement@consilium.europa.eu** - under which negotiations chapter their Ministers would wish to intervene. In order to allow for sufficient time for interventions, those who wish to take the floor will be asked to limit their interventions to a maximum of 2 minutes and to have one single intervention.

As set out in the note, Member States can also decide to speak on behalf of others, if they so agree. Interventions by clusters are intended to ensure a more productive dialogue, but would not exclude that Ministers address other particular areas considered important.

POLITICAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCES

Revised enlargement methodology

- CONCEPTUAL NOTE -

Providing the accession process with a stronger political steer is a key element for the revised enlargement methodology. The Intergovernmental Conferences at Ministerial level will provide a stronger political steer and a forum for political dialogue on the reform process. They will also take stock of the overall accession process and set out the planning for the year ahead, including possible opening and/or closing of clusters / chapters and possible corrective measures.

Procedure for and organisation of the negotiations

The procedures for and the organisation of the negotiations will continue to apply as foreseen in the respective Negotiation Frameworks.

Intergovernmental Conferences at Ministerial level (IGCs) will, in principle, take place at least once a year, after the adoption of the Commission's annual enlargement package and the subsequent Council conclusions, and whenever deemed appropriate. All sides should ensure representation in the IGCs at the appropriate level, to allow for a productive political dialogue.

Substance

The EU will present a EU Common Position to the candidate country at the IGC. The candidate country will present its Position to the EU. When appropriate, the EU will also present EU Common Positions for opening clusters / chapters.

Format

Opening session (15 min.): political IGCs will have an opening session to allow the EU to present its Common Position and the candidate country to present its own Position.

The Presidency will present the EU Common Position and the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement will present its initial remarks. The Candidate country will present its Position to the IGC.

Member States will act in the Intergovernmental Conference in accordance with the EU Common Position.

The IGC will approve the draft Summary Conclusions of the last meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference at Ministerial level and address any other business included in the agenda.

Political dialogue (maximum 80 min.): the opening session will be followed by the political dialogue at Ministerial level to allow a stronger political steer and a productive dialogue on the reform process.

In order to allow for sufficient time for Ministers to intervene, those who wish to take the floor will be asked to limit their interventions to a maximum of 2 minutes and to have one single intervention.

Since negotiations will be organised in six clusters of chapters, in order to inject more dynamism to the process, the agenda will, in principle, follow the clusters' order:

- 1 – Fundamentals;
- 2 – Internal market;
- 3 – Competitiveness and inclusive growth;
- 4 – Green agenda and sustainable connectivity;
- 5 – Resources, agriculture, and cohesion;
- 6 – External relations.

Interventions will be grouped, depending on the state of negotiations, by clusters and Member States will be asked in advance to indicate to the Presidency under which cluster would they like to intervene. On each cluster, the interventions of Ministers will be organised by alphabetic order of Member States. Member States can also decide to speak on behalf of others, if they so agree. Interventions by clusters are intended to ensure a more productive dialogue, but would not exclude that Ministers address other particular areas considered important.

After Member States interventions, the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement will present its remarks on each cluster (2 minutes) and the Candidate country will present its position on the same cluster (3 minutes). The European External Action Service will present its remarks on cluster 6 (2 minutes).

Communication

After the IGC a press conference will be organised as per established practice (Presidency of the Council, Commissioner and Candidate Country).