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OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3644th Council meeting

General Affairs

Luxembourg, 16 October 2018

President **Gernot Blümel**
Federal Minister for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media of
Austria

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

ITEMS DEBATED

October European Council

The Council examined draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 18 October, prepared by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, in cooperation with the Austrian presidency and the Commission.

At its meeting in October, the European Council is expected to return to the issue of migration. Chancellor Sebastian Kurz will report on the implementation of previous European Council conclusions. More specifically, as agreed in June 2018, he will report on progress on the reform of the Common European Asylum System.

The European Council will adopt conclusions on internal security, following the Leaders' thematic debate in Salzburg on 20 September.

The European Council will also discuss external relations, including the partnership with Africa and the upcoming summit with the League of Arab States.

Rule of law in Poland

As part of the Article 7(1) TEU procedure, the Commission provided the Council with an update on recent developments regarding the justice reform in Poland.

Ministers reiterated the importance of upholding the rule of law in all EU member states and stressed the need to achieve tangible progress.

The Council will come back to this matter.

Respect for EU values in Hungary

The presidency informed ministers about the next procedural steps following the triggering of the Article 7(1) TEU procedure for Hungary.

The Commission will provide the Council with a factual update on the relevant infringement procedures.

Hungary has expressed its readiness to provide a written contribution on the issues raised in the [European Parliament's reasoned proposal](#).

Next multiannual financial framework

Ministers heard an assessment from the presidency of the state of play in the examination of the Commission proposals concerning the multiannual financial framework for 2021 to 2027.

The Council took note of the [state of play report](#) submitted by the presidency. The report outlines the work carried out on the MFF since the meeting of the General Affairs Council on 18 September. Without prejudice to the ongoing discussions, it also highlights the state of play on a limited number of topics concerning horizontal issues, specific headings and own resources.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Our Ocean Conference - EU commitments

The Council approved a list of commitments for presentation by the European Union at the 'Our Ocean Conference' to be held in Bali on 29 and 30 October 2018 ([12180/18](#)).

The aim of the conference is to identify solutions and commit to actions in order to address some of the most important challenges the oceans are faced with: marine protection, marine pollution, climate change impact and sustainable fisheries. Its main deliverable is the announcement of various commitments on actions that contribute to cleaner, safer and healthier oceans, in alignment with SDG 14 of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

AGRICULTURE

Financing of rural development projects

The Council adopted conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' [special report 11/2018](#) entitled "New options for financing rural development projects: simpler but not focused on results".

The Council takes note of the Court's assessment that the new method of reimbursing the cost of rural development projects is easier for beneficiaries, but it should be more widely used.
