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(OR. en)

PRESSE 54
PR CO 54

OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3645th Council meeting

General Affairs

Art. 50

Luxembourg, 16 October 2018

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

P R E S S

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none

¹ • 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**Brexit negotiations: preparation of the European Council (Art. 50) of 17 October 2018**

The Council, meeting in an EU27 format, was informed by the Commission's Brexit chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, about the most recent talks with the UK, including his meeting with UK Secretary of State Dominic Raab. During the meeting, Michel Barnier explained that despite intense negotiating efforts, some key issues remain open, in particular the backstop to avoid a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Ministers discussed the state of negotiations and the way ahead in preparation for the summit of EU27 heads of state and government which will take place the following day. During the meeting, ministers reiterated their willingness to continue working towards a deal and reconfirmed their trust in the negotiator. However they also underlined the need to be prepared for all eventualities.

All the withdrawal issues need to be covered in the withdrawal agreement, which should be agreed in good time to be ratified before the withdrawal date of 29 March 2019. An agreement on a future relationship can only be negotiated and concluded once the UK has become a third country. However, an overall understanding on the framework for the future relationship will be set out in a political declaration accompanying and referred to in the withdrawal agreement.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED
