

Special meeting of the European Council

Wednesday, 16 July in Brussels

*The heads of state or government will meet on Wednesday 16 July 2014, for a special meeting of the European Council, to discuss further **appointments** following their decision to propose Jean-Claude Juncker for Commission President.*

*The European Council will also have an exchange of views with the Commission President-elect, Jean-Claude Juncker, on the European Union's **priorities in times of change** that will guide the work of the EU over the next 5 years.*

*In light of the latest developments the leaders are expected to address the situation in **Ukraine**, and in the **Middle East**.*

Indicative programme:

17.15	Arrival of participants
18.00	Exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament
18.30	Working session
+/-19.30	Dinner of heads of state or government
Time TBC	Press conference

[Invitation letter](#)

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

Appointments

Following the decision to propose Jean-Claude Juncker to the European Parliament as the next President of the European Commission, the heads of state or government will discuss the appointment of other top positions, including a new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and a new President of the European Council.

At the last European Council meeting on 26-27 June 2014, President Van Rompuy was asked to start consultations with EU heads of state or government to this end.

The current President, Herman Van Rompuy, was appointed on 19 November 2009 and he took office when the Lisbon Treaty came into force on 1 December 2009. His first term ran until 31 May, 2012. On 1 March 2012 he was appointed for a second term starting on 1 June 2012 and ending on 30 November 2014.

According to the Treaties (Article 15.5), the European Council elects its President by a qualified majority for a period of two and a half years, renewable once.

The European Council appoints by qualified majority, and with the agreement of the President of the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Article 18.1). His or her term of office is 5 years, in line with that of the other Commissioners.

The High Representative chairs the Foreign Affairs Council, is responsible for coordinating the EU's common foreign and security policy, and contributes to the development of that policy. The High Representative is also a Vice-President of the Commission and ensures the consistency of the Union's external action.

EU leaders appointed Catherine Ashton as High Representative in November 2009. She will step down when the current Commission's term ends on 31 October 2014.

Additional background:

The European Commission is composed of 28 Commissioners, including its President and the High Representative. Each EU member state nominates its candidate for the position of Commissioner. These names are submitted to the incoming President of the Commission who is responsible for the internal organisation of the Commission. The list of nominations is then, in agreement with the President-elect, adopted by the Council.

The President, the High Representative and the other members of the Commission are also subject, as a body, to a vote of consent by the European Parliament. On the basis of this consent, the whole Commission will finally be appointed by the European Council, acting by a qualified majority.

EU priorities

The heads of state or government will have an exchange of view with the Commission President-elect, Jean-Claude Juncker, on the European Union's ***priorities in times of change*** that will guide the work of the EU over the next 5 years.

For more details, see [Strategic agenda for the Union in times of change](#).

Ukraine

The EU heads of State or Government are expected to exchange views on the situation in Ukraine in the light of the latest developments.

At its meeting on 26-27 June, the European Council expressed its regret that the cease-fire had not led to the full cessation of military hostilities and it called upon the Russian Federation to actively use its influence over the illegally armed groups and to stop the flow of weapons and militants across the border, in order to achieve rapid and tangible results in de-escalation. The European Council underlined its commitment to reconvene at any time for further significant restrictive measures. At the same time, the Council continues to closely monitor the situation in eastern Ukraine. The Foreign Affairs Council meets on 22 July.

For more details, see [European Council conclusions](#), and [factsheet](#) on EU-Ukraine relations.

Middle East Peace Process

The leaders are expected to address the situation in the Middle East, and in particular in relation to the developments in regard to the deteriorating situation in the south of Israel and the Gaza Strip.

The EU has strongly condemned the indiscriminate fire into Israel by militant groups in the Gaza Strip and deplored the growing number of civilian casualties caused by Israeli retaliatory fire. The EU continues to call on all sides to exercise maximum restraint to avoid casualties and re-establish calm. To this end the EU calls on parties in the region to do their utmost to achieve an immediate ceasefire.

Resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a strategic priority for Europe. The EU's objective is a two-state solution with an independent, democratic, viable Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel and its other neighbours.
