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PRESSE 7
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OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3448th Council meeting

General Affairs

Brussels, 16 February 2016

President **Bert Koenders**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

P R E S S

CONTENTS¹**ITEMS DEBATED**

European Council follow-up	3
Preparation for the February European Council	4
Preparation for the March European Council	5
Agreement on better lawmaking	6
Any other business	7
– Greek farmers' blockade on the Bulgarian border	7

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED*JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS*

– Schengen Evaluation of Austria - SIS	8
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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

European Council follow-up

The presidency informed the Council about the state of play of conclusions adopted by the European Council, notably in the field of migration.

Preparation for the February European Council

The Council examined draft conclusions for the European Council meeting to be held on 18-19 February, prepared by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, in cooperation with the Netherlands presidency and the Commission.

The European Council is due to focus on:

- United Kingdom: the European Council will discuss and try to agree a set of arrangements to address the UK reform calls with a view to its in/out referendum following UK Prime Minister David Cameron's letter of 10 November 2015
- migration: the European Council will assess the state of play of its earlier decisions and address immediate challenges
- other items: the European Council will endorse the recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area

An [annotated draft agenda](#) was discussed by the Council on 18 January 2016.

The Council also took note of a recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area and forwarded it to the European Council.

Preparation for the March European Council

The Council examined an [annotated draft agenda](#), drawn up by the President of the European Council in cooperation with the presidency and the Commission, for the European Council meeting to be held on 17 and 18 March 2016.

The European Council will focus on:

- migration
- economic items
- other items

The annotated draft agenda will serve as the basis for draft conclusions, to be prepared in the run-up to the meeting.

Agreement on better lawmaking

The Council took stock of the state of play on the interinstitutional agreement on better lawmaking.

A deal was reached on the interinstitutional agreement between the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on 8 December 2015. Its main purpose is to improve the way in which the European Union legislates, to ensure that EU laws better serve citizens and businesses.

The agreement was approved by the Council and the Commission on 15 December 2015 and by the Conference of Presidents of the Parliament on 16 December 2015. Following revision by the lawyer-linguists the text still has to be adopted formally by the three institutions. The Parliament is scheduled to vote on 9 March. The aim of the Netherlands presidency is to achieve its formal adoption by the Council around the same time. The agreement then has to be signed by the Presidents of the three institutions in order to enter into force on the same day.

Council [press release](#) on the interinstitutional agreement

[Council website on better lawmaking](#)

Any other business

– *Greek farmers' blockade on the Bulgarian border*

The Bulgarian delegation reported on the Greek farmers' blockade on the Bulgarian border.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Schengen evaluation of Austria - SIS

The Council adopted a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2015 evaluation of the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of the Schengen Information System (5864/16).
