



Brussels, 23 July 2010

**BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>**  
**GENERAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL**  
**Monday 26 July in Brussels**

*The Council, starting at 10.00, will examine a draft annotated agenda for the **European Council's** September meeting, which is due to focus on the EU's relations with its strategic partners and on economic governance.*

*The Council is expected to approve a framework for negotiations with **Iceland** on its accession to the EU, with a view to an opening of the negotiations on 27 July.*

*It will also examine the Belgian presidency's work programme.*

*On the sidelines of the Council*

*Tuesday 27 July:*

*11.00 EU-Iceland accession conference, to be followed by a press conference at about 12.00*

*15.00 EU-Croatia accession conference (at the level of deputies).*

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**Presidency programme**

The Belgian presidency will present its programme for the duration of its term of office (July to December 2010) and the Council will hold an exchange of views.

The item will be taken as a public debate which can be followed on the internet:

<http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>

The Belgian presidency intends to concentrate on the following priorities:

- overcoming the economic and financial crisis and ensuring a return to growth;
- the promotion of social progress and combating poverty and social exclusion;
- international negotiations on climate and the environment;
- justice and home affairs: the EU area of freedom, security and justice;
- the global influence of the EU and the efficiency of its external policies.

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<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office

## **EU enlargement - Iceland**

The Council is expected to approve a general position, including a negotiating framework, with a view to the opening of negotiations with Iceland on its accession to the EU.

The formal opening of the accession negotiations will take place at ministerial level at an EU-Iceland intergovernmental conference in Brussels on 27 July.

Iceland presented its application for EU membership by letter dated 16 July 2009.

At its meeting on 17 June 2010, the European Council noted that Iceland meets the political criteria for membership and decided that accession negotiations should be opened. It stated that the negotiations would be aimed at Iceland adopting the EU *acquis* integrally, and ensuring its full implementation and enforcement.

The pace of negotiations will depend on Iceland's progress in meeting the requirements set out in the negotiating framework.

## **Follow-up to the June European Council**

The Council will take stock, on the basis of an information note prepared by the presidency, of the follow-up to be given to the European Council's meeting on 17 June (*doc. [12316/10](#)*).

## **Preparation of the September European Council**

The Council will examine an annotated draft agenda for the European Council meeting to be held on 16 September, drawn up by the President of the European Council in cooperation with the presidency and the Commission (*doc. [12298/10](#)*).

The European Council is due to focus on:

- relations with the EU's strategic partners;
- economic governance: work of the task force chaired by the President of the European Council.

The annotated draft agenda will serve as the basis for draft European Council conclusions in the run-up to the 16 September meeting.

## **Other items**

The Council is expected to adopt a decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the **European External Action Service**.

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