

Remarks by Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis at the ECOFIN press conference

Thank you, Minister!

This is the first ECOFIN under Romanian Presidency.

I would like to wish the Presidency all the success in steering through many important files.

We are only four months from the European elections and there is indeed a need for a decisive push.

I am glad that we share many priorities. Deepening EMU, completing the Banking Union and finalising a number of files on Capital Markets Union, as well as fair and effective taxation, are just few examples.

I am also grateful to the Presidency for its support for legislative proposals in the area of sustainable finance. This political cycle may be coming to the end, but we need continuity for forward-looking policies.

Speaking of looking ahead, it emerged from discussions today and yesterday that we are entering more challenging times when it comes to economic growth in Europe and also globally.

The growth in the euro area and EU will still continue, but at a more moderate speed.

Some risks that we had identified earlier are starting to materialise. In particular, trade tensions and Brexit have added to the uncertainty.

This is why we welcome the support of the Ministers for the euro area recommendation, which sets joint policy priorities to make the euro area more competitive, resilient and inclusive.

We welcome reforms aimed at supporting public and private investment, structural reforms to improve productivity growth, business environment and quality of institutions.

It is also important to make sure that we have inclusive growth, economic growth benefits all members of society and that our tax systems are perceived as being fair and efficient.

What matters now is an effective and timely follow up on the agreed policy priorities and that the euro area recommendations are taken into account when MS are elaborating the National Reform Programmes this Spring.

The Ministers also adopted their conclusions on the 2019 Annual Growth Survey

and the Alert Mechanism Report. In both cases the Ministers broadly share the Commission's analysis.

Today we also discussed InvestEU.

Building on the success of the Juncker Plan, the InvestEU proposal will provide for a substantive investment support programme for the next Multiannual Financial Framework with a total investment target of at least EUR 650 billion by the end of 2027.

Last week, the European Parliament adopted its negotiating position on InvestEU. So our message today is that it is important for the Member States to reach a general approach in February, so that dialogues can start as soon as possible.

There is a real possibility to close this file during this political cycle. We should do so.

Finally, a couple of words on the review of the European System of Financial Supervision.

As you may recall, in September 2017, the Commission made proposals to reinforce the coordination role of the European Supervisory Authorities, or so called ESAs.

This proposal was amended in September last year to strengthen the supervisory framework in the area of anti-money laundering (AML) and terrorist financing.

Today's discussion showed that on substance there is a lot of support for both parts of the proposal but we saw different views on what is procedurally the best way to bring this forward.

We will now discuss this with the Presidency and the European Parliament and I am confident a pragmatic approach can be found.

Thank you.

Main topics and media events 21 January – 3 February 2019

Overview of the main subjects to be discussed at meetings of the Council of the EU over the next two weeks.

Foreign Affairs Council, Monday 21 January 2019

Foreign ministers will discuss the action plan against disinformation, preparations for the EU – League of Arab States ministerial meeting and the 22nd EU – ASEAN ministerial meeting.

EU-ASEAN ministerial meeting, Monday 21 January 2019

The EU-ASEAN ministerial meeting will bring together EU foreign ministers and their counterparts from the 10 ASEAN member states. They will discuss EU-ASEAN relations as well as regional and international issues.

EU-African Union ministerial meeting, Monday 21 & Tuesday 22 January 2019

Foreign ministers from the EU and the African Union will discuss political and economic aspects as well as cooperation to support multilateralism

Economic and Financial Affairs Council, Tuesday 22 January 2019

The Council will discuss InvestEU, a programme to support investment in the EU, and the follow-up to the December European Council, as well as the ongoing reform of the European system of financial supervision. It will also adopt conclusions on the Commission's annual growth survey and approve a draft recommendation on the economic policies of the euro-area.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council, Monday 28 January 2019

The Council will exchange views on the post 2020 Common Agricultural Policy's reform package and EU plant protein plan, and will be informed about the presidency' priorities and programme.

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[Weekly schedule of President Donald Tusk](#)

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Council endorses agreement to make Europe's electricity market more competitive and consumer-centred

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Indicative programme – Foreign Affairs Council meeting of 21 January 2019

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