

MEMO: INFORMAL MEETING OF EU FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTERS (GYMNICH)

EU foreign affairs ministers meet informally once every 6 months in the member state which holds the presidency of the Council of the EU. The meeting is chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and hosted by the foreign minister of the country which holds the EU Council presidency. The duration of the meeting is two days (usually a Friday and Saturday). The name Gymnich originates from an ancient German castle where the first meeting was held during the German Presidency of the Council of the EU in 1974.

The Gymnich format is used for informal meetings with an agenda but where no conclusions are adopted. Their informal nature provides an opportunity for in-depth and free discussion on topical subjects on the European foreign policy agenda. The meetings are also the starting point for discussions on topics to be put on the agenda of formal meetings (Foreign Affairs Council, European Council).

Other participants at the meeting are the European Correspondents from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of each member state accompanying the ministers, and representatives of the European Commission and European Parliament (Committee on Foreign Affairs – AFET).



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