



Press kit

**Informal Ecofin on EU competitiveness,
Meeting of EU Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors,
22nd to 24th February 2024, KAA Gent Arena**



This press kit contains information on the agenda for the Informal Ecofin, press opportunities and background information on the European issues to be discussed.



Index table

Agenda with press opportunities 4

Background Information 6

Agenda commented with press opportunities

Thursday 22 February 2024

18.20 – 19.00	Welcome reception at City Hall of Ghent (only accessible to media upon personal invitation/acceptance after inquiry) Journalists must be ready at 18.00 <i>Address: Botermarkt 1, 9000 Ghent</i>
19.00 – 19.20	Walk to Saint Bavo's Cathedral (only accessible to media upon personal invitation/acceptance after inquiry)
19.20 – 20.30	Visit of Saint Bavo's Cathedral (only accessible to media upon personal invitation/acceptance after inquiry) <i>Address: Sint-Baafsplein 1, 900 Ghent</i>

Friday 23 February 2024

08.00 – 08.45	Arrival of Ministers at KAA Gent Arena Journalists must be ready for the first doorsteps at 07.40. (only accessible to a restricted group) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handshake – As tradition requires, the hosting Minister of Finance will welcome the other EU Finance Ministers with a handshake before starting the meeting. Accredited journalists and photographers will get the chance to take photos of this moment. The handshake will be broadcast by the channels of the Belgian presidency.• Doorstep interviews – Doorstep interviews will be given by the meeting Host and Chair as well as the other Finance Ministers allowing accredited journalists to gather some thoughts and insights before the meeting starts. The doorstep interviews will be broadcast live by the channels of the Belgian presidency
09.00 – 11.30	Eurogroup meeting (limited number of photographers allowed at beginning of the meeting) Topics: Discussion on the Future of European Capital and Financial Markets, and on the overall macroeconomic developments and prospects in the Eurozone.
11.45 – 12.15	Eurogroup Press conference (press opportunity)
12.30 – 14.00	Working Lunch (not accessible to media) Topics: Future of the European Investment Bank (EIB)

14.00 – 15.00	EIB Press Conference (press opportunity)
14.45 – 16.45	<p>Working session I (limited number of photographers allowed at beginning of the meeting)</p> <p><u>Topics:</u> Deepening of the EU Capital Markets: retail investor participation in financial markets and financial literacy</p>
16.45 – 17.15	<p>Family Picture Ministers, governors and heads of EU institutions will meet to take a group picture. (not accessible to media)</p>

Saturday 24 February 2024

08.30 – 09.15	<p>Arrival of Ministers at KAA Gent Arena <i>Journalists must be ready for the first doorsteps at 08.20.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doorstep interviews – Doorstep interviews will be given by the meeting Host and Chair as well as the other Ministers of Finance allowing accredited journalists to gather some thoughts and insights before the meeting starts. The doorstep interviews will be broadcast live by the channels of the Belgian presidency.
09.30 – 11.30	<p>Working session II (limited number of photographers allowed at beginning of the meeting)</p> <p><u>Topics:</u> Future of EU competitiveness with Dr. Mario Draghi</p>
11.45 – 12.45	<p>Ecofin Press conference (press opportunity) Interpretation is provided in English, Dutch, French and German</p>

Background information

Informal Ecofin: meeting of EU Ministers of Finance and Central Bank Governors

Informal Ministerial meetings are traditionally hosted by the acting Presidency of the Council of the EU. This is the occasion for EU high level decision makers to gather in a less formal format than in the Schuman neighborhood. These meetings provide the opportunity to explore important topics, and exchange diverse perspectives on major challenges such as EU competitiveness.

At informal Ecofin meetings the Central Bank Governors are invited to join and discuss together with the Finance Ministers some pressing European financial topics. This also gives the opportunity to the Ministers and Governors to coordinate their monetary and budgetary viewpoints. The informal nature of these meetings encourages direct communication between Ministers, often allowing for a better understanding of each other's views and concerns.

The informal conclusions of these informal Ministerial meetings are a valuable input for the following day-to-day work within the EU Council in the field of finance.

Informal Ecofin on EU competitiveness

As Belgium takes on its thirteenth Presidency of the European Union, we're at a critical juncture. Challenges, both immediate and long-term, are impacting our socio-economic future. The EU is dealing with a considerable competitiveness challenge, not just in how we compete globally, but also in strengthening our internal market.

Addressing this competitiveness challenge is a top priority for the Belgian Presidency and will remain a key focus for the upcoming European Commission. As Ministers of Finance and Central Bank Governors, we will be examining how public and private financing in Europe will be organized in the coming years. Because meeting this challenge will require significant investments from both the public and private sectors. During the informal Ecofin, three major debates will be organised. There will be a debate on the future of the European Investment Bank, a debate on retail investor participation and financial literacy, and a discussion on the report on the future of EU competitiveness as is currently being prepared by Dr. Mario Draghi.

Detailed agenda

Topics Eurogroup:

Discussion on the Future of European Capital and Financial Markets, and on the overall macroeconomic developments and prospects in the Eurozone.

Topic Working Lunch:

During the Working Lunch on Friday, EU Finance Ministers will have the opportunity to discuss the future of the European Investment Bank (EIB). As current Chair of the Board of Governors of the EIB, Minister Van Peteghem will lead a debate on the future of the European Investment Bank Group. The new EIB President Nadia Calviño is invited to present her vision on the future of the EU's public lender and largest multilateral bank.

Topic Working Session I:

During the first Working Session on Friday afternoon, in the context of the deepening of the Capital Markets Union, the Finance Ministers together with the Central Bank Governors will discuss the overall financial literacy of EU-citizens and how to improve retail participation in financial markets.

Topic Working Session II:

On Saturday morning there is a working session dedicated to EU competitiveness, the overarching topic of this informal Ecofin. For this session Minister Van Peteghem invites Dr. Mario Draghi.

At her annual State of the Union on 13 September 2023, Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen tasked Dr. Mario Draghi with the preparation of a report on the future of European competitiveness.

This informal debate will give Dr. Draghi the opportunity to inform Ministers on the preparation of his report but in particular gather input from the EU Ministers of Finance.

Press conferences:

The Working Sessions of the Ministers will be closed to the media. In order to inform the press core, a designated press conference is scheduled after the conclusion of discussions of each Working Session.

During the press conferences, a summary of the discussed key points will be provided. This should allow for transparency while respecting the confidential nature of the meeting.

Website and sources

Website	www.belgium24.eu
WhatsApp	Join us on

	https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VaFqS8T4yltFsRomvU2m
X	https://www.x.com/EU2024BE
Threads	https://www.threads.net/EU2024BE
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/EU2024BE
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/EU2024BE
LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/eu2024be/
YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/@EU2024BE
Flickr	https://www.flickr.com/photos/EU2024BE/albums
Hashtag	#EU2024BE