EUROPEAN COUNCIL
Under the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Council became an EU institution. The treaty also created the new position of the President of the European Council. In late 2014, Donald Tusk was elected its president for a period of two and a half years.
Comprising the Heads of State or Government of the EU countries, it meets at least 4 times a year and includes the President of the European Commission as a full member.
The European Council's role is to provide the impetus, general political guidelines and priorities for the EU's development (Article 15 of the Treaty on European Union - TEU).
It does not exercise any legislative function. However, it may be consulted on criminal matters (Articles 82-83 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union - TFEU) or on social security matters (Article 48 of the TFEU) where an EU country opposes a legislative proposal in these areas.
Its decisions are taken by consensus or, where so provided by the treaties by unanimity, qualified majority or simple majority. The conclusions of European Council proceedings are published after each meeting.
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