

The European Council (composed of Heads of State and/or Governments of the Member States) defines the general political directions and priorities of the Union. It makes primarily political decisions and therefore does not act as a legislative body, although its decisions have far-reaching consequences, both for the internal functioning of the EU and its performance in the international arena. The Treaty of Lisbon introduced the post of President of the European Council (with a mandate of two and a half years, renewable once), in order to achieve stability and continuity in the work of the European Council, and a stronger representation of the Union on the international level. These functions have been performed by Donald Tusk since 1 December 2014, who succeeded Herman Van Rompuy in the post. The President of the European Council, in accordance with the Treaty of Lisbon “at his level and in that capacity” shall represent the EU in the international arena.