

## What is the G20 and how does it work?

The [Group of Twenty](#) (G20) is an international forum that brings together the world's 20 leading industrialised and emerging economies. The group accounts for 85 per cent of world GDP and two-thirds of its population.

Much of the important business takes place on the sidelines and in informal meetings.

Initially attendance at G20 summits was limited to the finance ministers and central bank governors of members when it was established 17 years ago.

But since an inaugural meeting between G20 leaders in Washington DC following the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008, summits between G20 leaders themselves have become an annual event.

The first G20 summit occurred in Berlin, in December 1999, and was hosted by the German and Canadian finance ministers.

Since then there have been 20 G20 meetings between finance ministers and central bank governors, and 11 summits between heads of state or government of G20 economies.

The next summit of G20 leaders is scheduled for [Hamburg, Germany](#), on July 7-8 2017.

After the last summit in China, Germany assumed the G20 presidency in December 2016. Although Berlin hosted ministerial-level G20 meetings in 1999 and 2004, the Hamburg event will be the first time Germany has hosted G20 heads of government.

It's expected to be dominated by [climate change discussions](#) and it will also be Donald Trump's first meeting with Russian president Vladimir Putin since his election as US president.

Theresa May, France's Emmanuel Macron and Canada's Justin Trudeau will also be in attendance.

The G20 is made up of:

The final member is the European Union, represented by the European Commission, rotating Council presidency and the European Central Bank (ECB). Spain as a permanent non-member invitee also attends leader summits.

Other countries also attend summits at the invitation of the host country, while it has become customary for the Chair of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and representatives of the African Union and NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) to be present at leader summits.

Meetings tend to occur on an annual basis; however leaders met twice a year in 2009 and 2010, when the global economy was in crisis.

Next year, Buenos Aires will host the gathering as Argentina becomes the first South American nation to host a G20.

Fearing deadlock in a larger decision-making body, not all countries are invited to the G20.

The Group of Eight (G8), established as the G7 in 1976 but renamed after the admission of Russia in 1998, is an international forum for the eight major industrial economies. It comprises: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

However, since 2014 Russian membership has been suspended following the country's annexation of Crimea.

The G8 seeks cooperation on economic issues facing the major industrial economies, while the G20 reflects the wider interests of both developed and emerging economies.

The G20 has no permanent staff of its own and its chairmanship rotates annually between nations divided into regional groupings.

Germany currently holds the presidency, with Argentina to take over in 2018. Hosting the summit is an opportunity to set the agenda and lead discussions.

In 2009, when the UK held a special spring summit, then prime minister Gordon Brown orchestrated a deal in which world leaders agreed on a \$1.1 trillion injection of financial aid into the global economy. The "historic" deal was widely viewed as a success.

There are no formal votes or resolutions on the basis of fixed voting shares or economic criteria. However, the lines of informal influence in the organisation trace those of major power politics.

Former US President Barack Obama dominated the 2014 Brisbane summit, placing climate change at the top of the agenda, despite the reluctance of host nation Australia's prime minister Tony Abbott to allow the issue such pride of place.

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The first G20 summit occurred in Berlin, in December 1999 and was hosted by the German and Canadian finance ministers.

Since then there have been 18 G20 meetings between finance ministers and central bank

governors, and 10 summits between heads of state or government of G20 economies.

The next summit of [G20 leaders is scheduled for Hangzhou, China](#), from 4-5 September 2016. It is the first to be hosted by China, only the second in Asia, and has been hailed as a “milestone” in the country’s development and symbolic of its growing importance as a major power.

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