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# Work programme for the Swedish Presidency of the EU

## 1 July – 31 December 2009

REGERINGEN

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During the autumn the Presidency will have **close cooperation** with all institutions and Member States. The Presidency will also make itself readily available to the European Parliament for dialogue and discussion on the Council's work.

## Concluding comments

*"Now it is Sweden's turn to wear the captain's armband. Our ambition is to achieve results on a range of issues with the whole of Europe's best interests in mind. We will do this via an open and efficient Presidency that focuses on the citizens." Minister for EU Affairs Cecilia Malmström*

Europe is facing two overriding challenges: the global economic crisis and efforts to halt climate change. During its Presidency, Sweden will work hard to make progress on these and other important issues. The day-to-day EU work must be **open**, **effective** and **results-oriented**: open through transparency and accessibility, effective by moving these issues forward and results-oriented by taking action so that objectives are fulfilled and unexpected events are dealt with.

## PART 2 – Priorities within each Council configuration

## 1. Horizontal issues for a better EU

*GAERC – General affairs*

The General Affairs Council deals with cross-sectoral EU issues and prepares European Council meetings. Several of the future challenges facing the EU will be in focus during the autumn: how growth and employment are to be handled in the long term, how continued EU enlargement is to advance according to set principles and requirements, how the EU is to develop in a sustainable manner and how macro-regional cooperation can be developed through a Baltic Sea Strategy. The General Affairs Council is responsible for overall issues that will need to be dealt with if the Treaty of Lisbon enters into force.

***The EU Baltic Sea Strategy - a macro-region within the EU***

One priority issue for the Presidency is to adopt a **Baltic Sea Strategy** for the EU. The EU Baltic Sea Strategy is to link EU initiatives, policy instruments and existing resources in a cross-sectoral manner so as to benefit the Baltic Sea region, its environment and economic development. The Commission's proposal will be discussed at a ministerial conference in September at the same time as the Strategy is considered by the Council. The intention is to agree on **Strategy** at the European Council meeting in October.

***Continued enlargement***

**Enlargement** is the EU's primary instrument for creating stability, democracy and prosperity in Europe. The continued enlargement process is of strategic importance to ensure peace and progress in an open, united Europe. It is of central importance that the EU stands by its commitments and the established principles in the area of enlargement. The pace at which closer ties with the EU are made will be determined by the progress of reform in each country and their adjustment to EU legislation.

Without lowering the requirements of EU membership, the Presidency foresees that **Croatia's** negotiations with the EU could enter a final stage during the autumn. The Presidency is aiming for continued progress in **Turkey's** accession negotiations. A solution to the **Cyprus issue** would have a positive impact on Turkey's EU integration process.

The Commission's assessment of the **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**'s reform progress presented in the autumn progress report will form the basis of any decisions on additional steps in the country's EU integration process.

The Presidency will work for further concrete progress concerning the membership perspective for the potential candidate countries of the **Western Balkans**. Membership applications from the region will be submitted to the Council for decisions on tasking the Commission with beginning an evaluation (avis) according to established procedures. The Presidency will act to support the reform process in Kosovo.

*A strategy for growth and jobs for the coming decade*

The Lisbon Strategy is the EU's common framework for creating sustainable growth and increased employment. The aim is to create macroeconomic stability, strengthen competitiveness by investing in research and education, improve the business climate, implement the internal market, improve the way the labour market functions and strengthen social cohesion. Work will begin during the autumn to determine how the strategy for growth and jobs is to be designed for the coming decade. The Presidency's ambition is for the future strategy to be focused and deal with the largest challenges in the longer term: to convert the EU to an eco-efficient economy so as to meet the environmental and climate objectives, to strengthen the EU's global competitiveness through open trade systems, to combat the effects of an ageing population and to restore sustainable public finances. Based on contributions from several Council configurations, the General Affairs Council will prepare the European Council's discussion and conclusions regarding the focus of the future strategy.

*A sustainable Europe*

Sustainable development means that living standards are improved while ensuring that future generations are given the same opportunities to a high quality of life and well-being. The **EU Sustainable Development Strategy** emphasises the link between environmental, social and economic issues. Based on a proposal from the Commission and other considerations, the Presidency will follow up the EU Sustainable Development Strategy so that in December, the European Council will be able to adopt a **roadmap for the future.**

*Transparency in the EU*

Transparency is a fundamental condition for confidence in public administration and its legitimacy and efficiency. The **Regulation on access to documents** applies to all documents held by the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament. It means that, in principle, citizens have the right to examine documents, or parts of documents, as long as the information is not covered by confidentiality. The Presidency intends to promote transparency in the EU with the objective of **concluding negotiations** on a revision of the Regulation on access to documents.

*More for the money*

The **EU budget** should be adapted according to current needs and **future challenges**. It requires reforms and reprioritisation of common expenditure. The Presidency is prepared to initiate a debate on this as soon as the Commission's report on the budget review is presented. Discussions on matters such as the future cohesion policy will continue within the framework of the budget review.

*Important meetings:*

- Ministerial Conference on the EU Baltic Sea Strategy and macro-regional strategies, Stockholm, 17–18 September.
- Local and regional support to the Lisbon Strategy, Göteborg, 10–11 November.
- High-level conference on gender equality, economic growth and employment, Stockholm, 15–16 October.
- Conference on Cohesion Policy and Territorial Development, Kiruna, 10–11 December.

## 2. The EU as a global actor

*GAERC - External relations*

The EU currently plays a very important role in promoting peace, democracy, human rights and development in different parts of the world. Preparedness to deal with the unexpected and coordinate EU actions in crisis situations will be crucial to the success of the Presidency. It is important to use all of the EU's instruments, from civilian and military crisis management operations to dialogue and diplomacy within the common foreign and security policy, and trade and development policy initiatives. An aim for efforts during the presidency is to work for an effective and coherent external policy aimed at strengthening the EU as a global actor.

***Relations with neighbouring countries***

Priority will be given to work to develop the **European Neighbourhood Policy**. Particular attention will be paid to the implementation of the **Eastern Partnership**. The Eastern Partnership aims to strengthen and deepen the EU's relations with six neighbours to the east, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, and to promote these countries' integration with the EU in important areas such as trade, migration and legislation. The Presidency intends to work to ensure that the implementation of the Eastern Partnership gathers momentum and is consolidated via, among other things, the new multilateral cooperation, negotiations on association agreements and free trade, and steps to facilitate the mobility of people.

Negotiations between the **EU** and **Ukraine** on an association agreement, including free trade issues, will be a priority and an important part of the planned summit. The Presidency will also work for deepened cooperation with the EU's neighbours in the **Mediterranean region**, both via commitment to EU negotiations with these countries and within the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean.

The EU will also be strengthened as a global actor by progress in the enlargement process and has a significant strategic interest in a solution to the **Cyprus issue**. The **Western Balkans** will be important, with the focus on the EU integration process of those countries. It is crucial to strengthen forces for political reform in **Bosnia-Herzegovina**. The Presidency will work to strengthen the reform process in **Kosovo** and the country's relations with the EU.

The Presidency will also work for progress on issues concerning **visa liberalisation** for citizens of the Western Balkan region and visa facilitation ,with the long-term goal of visa liberalisation, for citizens of the countries covered by the Eastern Partnership.

Relations with **Russia** are strategically important. A summit between the EU and Russia is scheduled to be held in Stockholm. The ambition is a comprehensive, open dialogue and progress in the negotiations on a new, broad agreement. It is also

important to continue the dialogue on human rights, the common neighbourhood and frozen conflicts.

*Strengthened cooperation and political role in the world*

Strengthening **transatlantic cooperation** is an issue of great strategic importance, not least for efforts to achieve sustainable globalisation. The new prospects for deepened cooperation with a new administration in the USA should be utilised. The Presidency will work for political and economic cooperation to be **developed** and **deepened**, not least in the areas of climate and energy and peace and security, and for a transatlantic market without trade barriers. An EU-USA summit is scheduled to be held during the Presidency.

Relations between the **EU** and **Brazil** will be given special attention via the summit scheduled to be held in Stockholm.

EU cooperation with countries in **Asia** will be strengthened and deepened. Summits with China and India are scheduled. Negotiations on a new **framework agreement** with **China** and a **free trade and investment agreement** with **India** will be important.

The EU has taken on growing responsibility as a global actor. This can be seen, for example, in dialogue with and operations in **Afghanistan**, which will be high on the EU agenda, as will relations with **Pakistan**. It is very important that the EU further strengthens and consolidates its commitment vis-à-vis these countries, including from a regional perspective. Priority will be given to the situation in the **Middle East** and an active EU role in the peace efforts. The work for a two-state solution – with a Palestinian state and an Israeli state living in peace with each other – and respect for obligations under international law are paramount. **Iran** will require particular attention, not least with regard to the nuclear issue. There must also be a high level of preparedness for crisis management in connection with conflicts in **Africa**. The implementation of the Joint **EU-Africa Strategy** is also an important issue. An **EU-South Africa** summit is scheduled.

The Presidency intends to work for progress in the negotiations on **economic partnership agreements** with a large number of developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific region.

**International law, human rights, democracy** and **rule of law** should permeate work under the EU common foreign and security policy, including the dialogues with third countries and peace-building issues in EU cooperation with the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, and EU development policy. The Presidency will also work for greater visibility for EU policy in the area of human rights.

EU cooperation and its role in **disarmament** and **non-proliferation** have grown in recent years and will be strengthened through follow-up of the EU Strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and active efforts worldwide in cooperation with partners.

*Development of the EU's crisis management capability*

Development of the **EU's crisis management capability** is an important part of the objective of strengthening the EU as a global actor. The aim is to improve the EU's capacity to take action in crisis situations and thereby contribute more effectively to international peace and security. The Presidency will work to strengthen the usability of the EU's civilian and military crisis management capabilities, for continued **capability development** and for more effective coordination between **EU crisis management instruments**. **European armaments cooperation** must be developed to strengthen the European crisis management capability. Priority will be given to **cooperation** between the **EU** and other **organisations**, including the UN, the OSCE, NATO and the AU. Furthermore, work on **human rights**, **security** and **development** will be developed, along with EU work with mediation and **security sector reform**. The Presidency will continue the work on the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution on **women, peace** and **security.** Follow-up of ongoing **crisis management operations** will be an important part of the work of the Presidency. It will draw attention to the tenth anniversary of the European Security and Defence Policy.

*Development issues with focus on climate and democracy*

Helping to ensure that **developing countries** can effectively fight poverty in all its forms and meet the challenges that follow in the wake of the global **economic crisis** and **climate change** are decisive issues for the future. The conclusions of the Swedish-initiated *Commission on Climate Change and Development* provide an important contribution to the work to integrate climate adaptation into development cooperation and with a view to the climate meeting in Copenhagen. It is important to strengthen EU support for **democracy-building in external relations** because democratisation contributes to reducing poverty in all its dimensions. The Presidency's ambition is to create a coherent and uniform framework to make EU support for democracy-building throughout the world more effective. The Presidency will also work on specific measures to make **EU development cooperation** more **effective** and to ensure that different policy areas work together to contribute to sustainable global development, i.e. **policy coherence for development**. The **economic downturn** is hitting the poorest countries hardest, and is an example of an issue that must be tackled across several policy areas.

*Increased free trade*

Free trade and openness promote growth, employment and development. A rapid conclusion of the **trade negotiations** in the WTO (the **Doha Round**) is particularly important in light of the current economic crisis and protectionist tendencies. The Presidency will also work for progress in and, if possible, a conclusion to the ongoing negotiations on **free trade agreements** with e.g. South Korea, India, Ukraine, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Andean Community and Central America. An important issue for the future is how growth and trade issues can

better support each other. Work will focus on strengthening and **developing** the **external dimension** of the Lisbon Strategy. EU trade relations with third countries should also be included as a clear component of the successor to the Lisbon Strategy. Furthermore, the Presidency will work to ensure that **trade policy** underpins efforts ahead of the **climate meeting** in Copenhagen. The increased need for public trade financing as a result of the financial crisis should be tackled while ensuring compliance with international agreements in this area. Regulatory frameworks should be adapted to promote the spread of climate-friendly technology, particularly to developing countries.

*Important meetings:*

- Informal Meeting of Foreign Ministers ('Gymnich' meeting), Stockholm, 4–5 September 2009.
- Informal dinner for trade ministers, Brussels, 13 September.
- Informal meeting of defence ministers, Göteborg, 28–29 September.
- European Development Days, Stockholm, 22–24 October. Ministers for international development cooperation etc. to participate.
- A large number of 'third country meetings' will be held in Brussels, New York, Stockholm and a number of other locations as part of the EU's extensive cooperation with countries outside the EU and with multilateral organisations.

## 3. Reversing economic developments

*ECOFIN – the Economic and Financial Affairs Council*

Activities will be shaped by the continued management of the economic and financial crisis, including work to solve the problems on the financial market and deal with the recession and rising unemployment. The aim is to restore confidence in the financial markets and order in public finances, and to counter the negative effects of the crisis on growth and employment.

### *The economic and financial crisis*

Since autumn 2008, the European economy has been facing **challenges** the like of which have not been seen in modern times. The global economy has deteriorated markedly. Problems on the world's financial markets have made it more difficult for businesses and households to borrow money. In combination with reduced global demand and a high level of uncertainty, this has resulted in the biggest economic downturn since the 1930s.

The EU and its Member States have acted together to counter all aspects of the crisis. A number of measures have been taken to get the **financial system** working. Together with the measures implemented by the European Central Bank (ECB) and other central banks, these have helped to partially restore confidence in the financial markets. In December 2008, the European Council adopted a joint **recovery plan** aimed at mitigating the impact of the crisis on growth and employment in the EU. A range of measures have been taken in the Member States which, in combination with the fact that automatic stabilisers have been allowed to take effect, has dampend the economic downturn.

The main task of the Presidency is to pursue the EU's work to get the **financial market working** and **counter** the **economic crisis**. This involves **following up** the measures taken on the financial market, including the **guarantee programme** for banks and managing impaired assets. It also involves following up and **assessing** the **stimulus measures** taken by the EU and its Member States and initiating a discussion on how the **balance** can be restored in **public finances**.

The priorities for activities in the ECOFIN Council reflect the need for a wide range of measures in this policy area. The Presidency is **prepared** to take further initiatives that are necessary to counter the economic and financial crisis.

The economic crisis is a global one. One important forum for discussion and decision-making on global responses to the crisis is the **G20**, which is composed of countries that account for 85 per cent of total global production. In the second half of this year the G20 will among other issues handle the questions of increased resources for international financial institutions. The Presidency will work in the ECOFIN Council to establish a joint EU position ahead of the G20 meetings.

*Supervision and regulation of the financial markets*

Experience of the financial crisis has shown that supervision and applicable legislation need to be improved. It is important to strengthen the current regulatory framework and create a robust system aimed at preventing crises from arising on the financial market in the future. The proposed new **structure** for **supervision** of the **financial sector** in the EU aims to enhance the chances of discover risks that can jeopardise financial stability. The changes aim, *inter alia*, at improving coordination, cooperation and exchange of information between authorities at both macro and micro level.

The Commission's proposals involve strengthening supervision at both of these levels. In this context, the establishment of a **joint EU body** for **macro-financial supervision** is proposed. Another proposed component is three **EU authorities** for **micro-financial supervision**. These authorities will be given appropriate competencies and they should in particular ensure the improved functioning of the supervision of cross-border financial groups in Europe. The intention during the Presidency is to reach political agreement on the proposals.

*Public finances that are sustainable in the long term*

In times of crisis it is particularly important to use resources correctly and keep **public finances in good order**. It is also important that the measures implemented to offset short-term problems do not run counter to what is desirable in the longer term.

**Sustainability and quality in public finances** are a priority issue. Budgetary discipline with a view to achieving good order in public finances promotes healthy economic development. It is therefore important to apply the **Stability and Growth Pact** correctly and responsibly. There is also a need to formulate a strategy for how Member States can reverse their large public finance deficits and how we can prepare ourselves to meet the challenges that await us in the future. Not least we must make progress in efforts with regard to how we meet the long-term challenges to the economy such as the **ageing population** and financing of our welfare systems.

The EU's policies to promote growth and employment in the Member States in the long term are gathered in the **Lisbon Strategy**. The Finance Ministers will evaluate key aspects of the Strategy within their area of responsibility and discuss the design of this policy beyond 2010.

The Presidency also plans to hold an exchange of experiences and knowledge concerning **practical budgetary work**. This aims to strengthen the budget process in the EU Member States, which is part of long-term efforts to improve quality and sustainability in public finances.

*Climate*

A high priority issue is helping to ensure that the international climate negotiations are taken forward. A decisive issue in this is the **financing** of emissions reductions and **climate adaptation**. Economic instruments such as carbon dioxide taxes and emissions trading play a key role in efforts to resolve problems in the area of climate. In order for the EU to be able to achieve its climate and energy policy objectives and convert to an eco-efficient economy, economic instruments must be designed appropriately. The Presidency will therefore initiate discussions on how we can best use **economic instruments** such as those mentioned above **in climate policy**.

*Other issues*

One important task is to ensure that the Council and European Parliament agree on the **annual budget for 2010**. Work to create an **internal market for payments** within the EU will also be pursued. Other important issues on the agenda include harmonised rules for **invoicing** in the area of **VAT**, **Good Governance** in **Tax matters** (particularly work on taxation of savings income) and **combating tax fraud**.

*Important meetings:*

- Informal ECOFIN meeting, Göteborg, 1–2 October. Governors of the EU Member States' Central Banks will also attend.
- Informal meeting of the Financial Services Committee (FSC), Stockholm, 10 July.
- An informal meeting of ministers responsible for eGovernment and an eGovernment conference, Malmö, 18–20 November.

## 4. A more secure and open Europe

*Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA)*

The globalisation of recent years has brought change and positive developments for society as a whole. Increased mobility and new technologies provide great opportunities, but also bring challenges. Smoothly functioning cross-border cooperation is important in order to handle modern migration flows efficiently and promote the positive effects of migration. Cooperation across borders, both between Member States of the EU and between the EU and the rest of the world, is also necessary to be able to effectively combat such issues as cross-border crime. The Presidency comes at an important time. A new strategic working programme (the Stockholm Programme) is to be produced for the entire policy area. An important component in the future programme is striking a better balance between measures to safeguard security and measures to preserve the rights of the individual.

*Citizens' rights*

Creating greater legal certainty is of major importance to the everyday lives of many citizens. If **civil law** problems arise when people move within the EU or have property in another Member State, this can in practice interfere with free movement. It is important to begin negotiations on a **regulation concerning Succession and Wills**. The regulation will include rules on a European certificate of succession and on the national law that is applicable. A review of the **Brussels I Regulation** concerning jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgements in the area of civil law is also due to be undertaken. One important legal project concerns **e-Justice**, with the ambition of opening a European Internet portal by the end of the year. It will be possible to use the portal to search for information on legislation and judicial processes in the Member States.

Cooperation within the EU in the **area of criminal law** is based on the Member States' trust in each another's legal systems. The principle of mutual recognition and enforcement of each other's judgments and decisions is of fundamental importance. Confidence-building measures are necessary for this system to become more effective. For example, the rights of a person suspected of a crime must be strengthened. Negotiations will take place in the second half of the year on **minimum rules** on the **right** of a **person suspected of a crime** to **interpretation** and **translation**. The Presidency will also work on issues concerning support and information for victims of crime, regardless of the EU Member State in which the crime was committed, and negotiate Council conclusions on a **coordinated strategy** for **support** for **victims of crime**.

*The fight against crime*

European cooperation is crucial in combating cross-border organised crime. Cooperation must be developed among law enforcement actors including national police, customs and prosecutors on the one hand, and the European body for prosecution cooperation, **Eurojust,** and the European Police Office, **Europol** on the

other. The basis for this work is more effective exchange of information and the Presidency will present a proposal on a **strategy for the exchange of information**. A proposal will also be presented on making **accreditation of forensic laboratories** for DNA and fingerprint processing obligatory throughout the EU. The Member States' **border controls** are also an important tool in the fight against cross-border crime. The new **Schengen Information System** will be essential in international cooperation among law enforcement authorities and for border controls, and the Presidency will give priority to this work.

An increased exchange of information among authorities in the EU Member States is necessary to combat crime. The Presidency intends to work to ensure that this is matched by mechanisms that handle information in a legally certain matter while safeguarding the privacy of the individual.

Sweden, in cooperation with other Member States, will take the initiative for a proposal on the **transfer of proceedings**, which means that a person suspected of a crime in one country can be brought to trial in another country. The reason for transferring proceedings is that they should be conducted where it is most appropriate to do so, such as in the country where the suspect is domiciled or the country where the suspect is already on trial for other crimes.

The Presidency will also work to develop the exchange of knowledge concerning crime and methods to prevent it, particularly the kind of crime that affects the daily lives of citizens. Initiatives will be taken to strengthen the **European Crime Prevention Network** (EUCPN).

Other important issues for the second half of this year include tightening EU regulation of **sexual exploitation of children and child pornography** (including 'grooming') and **combating human trafficking**. New framework decisions on these issues will be negotiated. Furthermore, the EU is expected to adopt an action plan on cooperation with countries of origin and transit concerning trafficking in human beings. A ministerial conference on trafficking in human beings will be held in Brussels with representatives from all EU Member States, Russia, Ukraine, the Western Balkans and the USA.

The terrorist attacks in recent years both in Europe and around the world have led to increased **EU cooperation against terrorism**. The Presidency will continue this work on the basis of the action plans adopted in the EU. New experience, knowledge and best practice must have an impact on this cooperation. Lessons can be learnt from the successful national projects to develop preventive measures against radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremist groups.

*Enhanced capacity to prevent and manage crises and disasters*

EU's capacity to manage **crises** and **disasters** has improved in recent years, but there is a need to develop this cooperation. The Presidency will pursue to create a safer EU by reducing the risk of crises and disasters and adapting its capacity to manage them. Measures are taken to develop the  the Member States' and the EU's work to

**prevent** crises and disasters. Efforts to increase the EU's capability and strengthen cooperation to prevent and manage major CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) incidents are part of the ambitions in the area of civil protection. The Presidency will discuss the Commission communication on **measures to prevent terrorism** in the area of CBRN. The objective is to agree on the way forward in this field.

*A common asylum and migration policy*

The EU has decided to introduce a common **asylum system** that is transparent and legally certain. The Presidency's ambition is to contribute to further harmonisation of the asylum legislation. In the second half of this year the draft directive aiming to create a more **uniform reception of asylum-seekers** in the EU will be renegotiated. The draft contains provisions on access to the labour market for asylum-seekers. In order to maintain the credibility of the asylum system, there should be legally certain provisions on returning those whose asylum applications are rejected to their country of origin. At the same time support is required for the reception of refugees in regions outside the EU. An important example of such support is the **joint EU resettlement programme**.

The EU should take steps to become more attractive for **labour migration**. The work to formulate common rules will continue in the second half of the year. The links between **migration and development** are crucial to a sustainable and long-term policy. The positive effects of migration on development in the countries of both destination and origin and on the migrants themselves will be promoted in cooperation with third countries. This will take place within the framework of the **EU Global Approach to Migration**, under which partnership with third countries is an important tool in the implementation of these efforts.

Cooperation at EU level is also of vital important to **visa policy**. Common rules are needed to facilitate contacts between people. The Presidency wants to help ensure the smooth introduction of the **Visa Information System** (VIS) in December 2009. The VIS will facilitate the examination of visa applications by introducing a fingerprint and photo requirement. A decision will be taken in 2009 on a common code on visas.

*Integration strengthened through exchange of knowledge and experience*

Effective integration policy is needed to ensure the rights of the individual and realise the potential of migration. The starting point for EU cooperation on integration policy is the principle of the national competence of the Member States. Member States' **integration policies** should be strengthened through an active European exchange of knowledge and experience built on the common basic principles for integration. EU cooperation is to contribute to an ambitious policy in the Member States in line with the Council conclusions on integration of November 2008. The Presidency intends to work to identify comparable indicators at European level to monitor the results of the integration policies.

*Important meetings:*

- Informal meeting of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs, Stockholm, 15–17 July. The meeting will be devoted to discussion of a new strategic working programme for justice and home affairs cooperation for the period 2010–2014.
- Conference: 'Justice in the EU – from the Citizen's Perspective', Stockholm, 22–23 July. The conference will look at the individual's access to justice in the EU.
- Conference: 'Labour Migration and its Development Potential in the Age of Mobility', Malmö, 15–16 October.
- Ministerial conference: 'Towards EU Global Action against Trafficking in Human Beings', Brussels, 19–20 October. Participants will be present from the EU, ENP countries, Russia, the USA, etc.
- Conference: 'Integration of New Arrivals – Incentives and Work in Focus', Malmö, 14–16 December.

## 5. Full employment and good health

*The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)*

Full employment for both women and men and reduced exclusion via continued structural reforms will be the focus of the work. Good health is crucial for both economic and social reasons. These objectives are necessary for the EU to be able to deal with short-term challenges in the form of rising unemployment and long-term challenges such as globalisation and the ageing population of the EU. The Presidency's work in the areas of labour market, social, health care and gender equality policy will be guided by this.

### *Towards full employment andmore inclusive labour markets*

Work forms the most important basis of economic and social welfare for both the individual and society as a whole. In the short term, measures to increase employment are crucial. In the longer term it is necessary to utilise the labour force potential of the entire EU and get more Europeans into work. The EU cannot afford to have people remain outside the labour market. A stable foundation must be built to consolidate the labour markets and social security systems in Europe. In the current economic situation we cannot mitigate the effects of rising unemployment in the short term by locking people into a system that involves permanent exclusion. The Presidency will work to find solutions that alleviate the negative effects of subdued growth in employment and that enable continued reforms to create stronger and more inclusive labour markets. An active labour market policy and an active social insurance policy are important elements in this. In the second half of this year the Presidency will work to ensure that the EU acts coherently and responsibly to safeguard Europe's employment and welfare system in the long term. The Presidency will pursue the objective of **full employment and more inclusive labour markets** in work within the EPSCO area. The aim is to adopt conclusions on the new EU strategy for growth and employment for the next ten years (i.e. the next Lisbon Strategy) ahead of the European Council.

### *Promoting good health*

The good health of EU citizens is extremely important. Preventive measures are needed. The negotiations on the **patient mobility directive**, which aims to increase patients' possibilities to seek out and receive health care and dental care in another EU country, is an important priority in the second half of this year. Other important issues to be negotiated during the Presidency are the conditions for the reimbursement of patients who receive cross-border care and the areas for future cooperation between EU Member States in the field of health care. Another important issue for patients is strengthening **eHealth cooperation** in the EU.

The EU must be ready to deal with current health challenges. One such challenge is **antibiotic resistance**. The problem of bacteria that can no longer be treated with antibiotics is growing throughout the world. Without access to effective antibiotics, common illnesses can become a deadly threat. The Presidency's ambition is for a

decision to be taken on seeking out innovative ways to ensure the development of new antibiotics. The outbreak of **influenza** A (H1N1) will need to be dealt with during the Presidency. An expert conference will be held, at which EU communicable disease experts will discuss their experiences and the need for further measures.

Another challenge is counterfeit drugs. The Presidency will seek progress on the **pharmaceuticals package**, which includes pharmacovigilance measures. Another issue is the implementation of the **EU alcohol strategy**. The Commission is due to present its first progress report on the implementation of the strategy at national and European level. The ambition is to establish long-term prevention efforts for alcohol-related harm.

*More healthy and dignified ageing*

The growing proportion of older people is a challenge and an opportunity for all EU Member States. The Presidency's aim is to increase the opportunities for **healthy and dignified ageing** for older people in the EU. To achieve this it is important to ensure that those working with health and social issues cooperate better and place the focus on the older person. The Presidency wants to find coordination and cooperation solutions and highlight good practices in different EU Member States. With this initiative the Presidency wants to put elderly issues on the EU agenda.

*Strengthened gender equality and improved protection against discrimination*

To ensure growth and development, the EU must become better at utilising the potential of both women and men. The focus of the gender equality ministers' work will be directed at the **importance of gender equality** for **economic growth** and employment. Progress in the area of gender equality will contribute to a society characterised by social cohesion, high employment and sustainable economic growth. Other important issues include initiatives to counter men's violence against women and following up the UN action plan for gender equality, the **Beijing Platform for Action**. The Presidency will report on developments in the EU Member States over the last five years in the areas covered by the Beijing Platform for Action. The Presidency will also work for a decision to be taken on two draft directives that will create better opportunities to both **reconcile work and family life** and provide increased health and safety protection: **equal treatment of self-employed women and men** and measures to **improve health and safety in the workplace for workers who are pregnant**, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

Work to counter all forms of discrimination is a priority. The Presidency will work to ensure that decisions can be taken on the **directive on the equal treatment of persons** irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

*Important meetings:*

- Informal ministerial meeting, Jönköping, 6–9 June. The first part of the meeting, on 6–7 June, will deal with alcohol and health, antibiotic resistance and eHealth. The second part of the meeting, on 8–9 June, will focus on the theme of reducing exclusion.
- Conference: Healthy and Dignified Ageing, Solna/Stockholm, 15–16 September.
- Expert conference on antibiotic resistance, Stockholm, 17 September.
- Expert conference on alcohol, Stockholm, 21–22 September.
- 8th European Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion, 15–16 October in Stockholm
- High-level Conference on Labour Market Inclusion, Stockholm, 26–27 October.
- High-level conference on the significance of gender equality for economic growth and employment, Stockholm, 15–16 October.
- Equality Summit, Stockholm, 16–17 November.

## 6. A competitive Europe

*Competitiveness Council*

Europe has a unique opportunity to take the lead in developments towards long-term sustainable growth through adjustment to an eco-efficient economy. The prerequisites are an efficient Single Market characterised by openness, a sound business climate, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, reduced administrative burdens, common consumer protection and free trade. The resources used for research and innovation must maintain a high quality and be used more efficiently to contribute more widely to strengthening European competitiveness. A future strategy for sustainable growth and employment should build on this and, together with a global climate agreement in Copenhagen, form the basis of sustainable economic development on equal terms.

### *Economic recovery and a transition to an eco-efficient economy*

The implementation of the **economic recovery plan** will continue in the second half of this year. The plan aims to create increased demand and facilitate long-term investments with the focus on a long-term transition to an eco-efficient economy and a strengthened Single Market. Facilitating for new and growing industries will create new jobs and contribute to the EU achieving its climate objectives.

### *A future long-term growth strategy*

The Competitiveness Council will provide a contribution to the discussion on the next **Lisbon Strategy for the period 2010–2020**. The Presidency will particularly highlight the transition to an eco-efficient economy, a strengthened internal market and the external dimension as important factors in this discussion. The economy needs the Lisbon Strategy's stable long-term approach. The Competitiveness Council has a key role to play in showing leadership in the economic transition to an eco-efficient economy, in close cooperation with the Energy and Environment Council and other Council configurations.

### *An efficient Single Market*

The internal market is the foundation of EU cooperation. The common market creates conditions for growth and employment and is a model around the world. The Competitiveness Council will continue the work to strengthen the Single Market. To realise the opportunities of EU citizens and entrepreneurs it is important that cooperation between Member States, authorities and institutions functions smoothly. The aim should be for all to know, understand, apply and enforce the rules of the Single Market. One issue that will be given priority is the **recommendation** expected from the Commission on **partnerships with the Member States to implement the Single Market**. The objective is to adopt Council conclusions on the recommendation that cover how the Member States can better realise the Single Market through cooperation, education and information. The conclusions can help facilitate growth and employment and result in businesses and

consumers becoming more aware of their rights. Sound conditions for competition are important, and liberalising the state aid regulations should only be a temporary measure.

The Presidency will work towards making as much progress as possible in the negotiations on the Community patent and the European Patent Court. The creation of a cost-effective **Community patent** and a **patent litigation system** is important for the innovation climate in Europe and thus for EU competitiveness. **Effective protection of intellectual property rights** is also crucial to how well the EU can make use of existing innovation capacity.

The **Services Directive** will be implemented by December at the latest. To facilitate the free movement of services, the Member States must remove unnecessary red tape, simplify administration and strengthen consumer rights. For consumers, the Services Directive means greater opportunities to compare services across borders and protection against discrimination on grounds of nationality or place of residence. For the best possible impact on the growth of the services sector, all Member States should exchange experiences of the potential offered by the Services Directive.

The Presidency will work for an agreement on a **draft directive on consumer rights**. Harmonised consumer protection will help improve consumers' and businesses confidence in cross-border trade, with greater competition, a wider choice and lower prices as a result.

*Improving the business climate*

One major task is to make day-to-day running easier for companies, thereby guaranteeing a long-term and competitive business sector. **Better regulation** and **reduced administrative burdens**, better access to **funding for small and medium-sized enterprises** and encouraging their **participation in public procurement processes,** making it easier for **women to set up and run businesses**, promoting **innovations** and making use of the potential inherent in the transition to an eco-efficient economy will be crucial in enabling the EU to extract itself from the current economic situation. This is also important in order to generate long-term growth and ensure that a **level playing field** continues to apply to entrepreneurship in the EU. Europe must facilitate the **extraction** of its own **raw materials**. By improving **environmental criteria in public procurement**, we will contribute to increased growth.

*A competitive European research and innovation area*

Focus will be on how the EU is to use its research resources more efficiently. The objective is to agree on what research resources should be used for and how these investments could be better coordinated and managed. One important issue is the design of joint initiatives at European level, including the **EU Framework Programme for Research.** The Presidency will give priority to a discussion of how European research can best **meet future challenges** in areas such as health, energy

and climate. The development of the internal market for research and innovation, i.e. **the European Research Area** that involves both national and joint initiatives, is also high on the agenda. The Presidency will continue the work that has begun and aims to propose **governance mechanisms** for the effective use of these resources and better cooperation between policy areas, e.g. in the context of the Knowledge Triangle.

Innovations will be extremely important in transforming Europe's business sector so that it becomes more sustainable and makes use of sustainable production and consumption requirements to strengthen competitiveness. The Presidency will submit a contribution to a **European Innovation Plan**, with links to the European Research Area.

*Important meetings:*

- Informal ministerial meeting, Umeå, 14–16 October. The focus will be on issues for the future such as the continued efficiency of the internal market with external openness, the transition to an eco-efficient economy and ways of meeting future research challenges.
- Conference: 'New Worlds, New Solutions – Research and Innovation as a Basis for Developing Europe in a Global Context', Lund, 6–8 July.
- Conference: 'The Knowledge Triangle Shaping the Future of Europe', Göteborg, 31 August–2 September.
- Conference: 'Safe Products – At the Core of the EU Single Market', Solna/Stockholm, 11 September.
- Conference: 'From the Charter for Small Enterprises to the Small Business Act', Upplands Väsby/Stockholm, 4–6 October. A special workshop will take up women's entrepreneurship. Other subjects covered in workshops include eco-innovation, green public procurement and energy-efficiency measures in small and medium-sized companies.
- European Competition Day, Upplands Väsby/Stockholm, 7 October.
- Conference: 'An Eco-efficient Economy – Towards Innovative and Sustainable Competitiveness', Linköping, 2–3 November.
- Conference: 'Consumer Rights in the Internal Market', 4 November.
- International Regulatory Reform Conference, Stockholm, 11–13 November. Focus on various aspects of regulatory reform and better regulation from a business perspective.
- Conference: 'The Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights', Stockholm, 15–16 December.

## 7. Towards an eco-efficient economy – Transport, telecommunications and energy

*Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE)*

The climate challenge will be met and the EU's competitiveness strengthened by converting to an **eco-efficient economy**. In the **area of transport**, the Presidency will prioritise the formulation of EU transport policy beyond 2010, freight logistics and the introduction of new technology. In the area of **IT/telecommunications**, the focus will be on the contribution of IT to EU competitiveness. Through the use of IT, Europe can become more economically sustainable, competitive and efficient. In the **area of energy**, the implementation of the Second Strategic Energy Review will continue, with particular focus on energy-efficiency.

### *Transport policy for the future*

Globalisation requires more and new **sustainable transport solutions**. A sustainable and eco-efficient transport system will be the focus during the Presidency.

Europe needs a coherent, efficient transport system in which the various types of transport are coordinated. By getting the different parts of the transport system to **function better** together, climate impact can be reduced. The Presidency will give priority to work on the **future EU transport policy**, which includes a discussion of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), green corridors and more efficient use of air space.

Improved **logistics** and the introduction of **new technological solutions** are important tools and the Presidency will therefore prioritise the implementation of the **framework for developing Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS).** Effective logistics is based on shipping and railways being competitive. Railways and shipping will be developed through proposals on railway networks for competitive freight transport and on a European maritime transport area without borders. The transport ministers will continue this work in the autumn.

Work is progressing on regulating **passenger rights** and the Presidency will aim for agreements on regulations **on both bus and ship passengers**. Work on **Galileo**, the European civilian system for satellite navigation services, also continues as planned. In the field of aviation, a directive involving aviation security charges will be discussed.

### *Telecommunications/IT for growth and an accessible knowledge society*

IT and electronic communications are important components in increasing Europe's growth and competitiveness. IT is largely an integrated part of daily life, both for individuals and for companies, but its potential is not fully exploited. New services, such as those promoting a more ecologically sustainable society, can be developed. IT creates new opportunities for innovation and increased European

competitiveness. The Presidency intends to contribute to the focus of the future common EU policy for the information society.

The EU needs a modern, forward-looking regulatory framework for electronic communications. The Presidency will work to ensure that the revised regulatory framework for electronic communications, the **Telecom Package** is approved during the autumn.

The frequency bands that have been freed up for communications services other than TV, **digital dividends**, are well suited to mobile broadband with good coverage, which enables good communications, particularly in sparsely populated areas. If more countries managed their digital dividends in a coordinated manner, the benefits for consumers could be enormous.

*Efficient energy policy*

Energy issues will continue to be a high priority, particularly in view of the international climate negotiations. The transition to a European eco-efficient economy is necessary for competitiveness, energy security and the environment.

The **Second Strategic Energy Review** and the package of initiatives on the theme of **security of supply** presented by the Commission in November 2008 will govern this work. The energy ministers will continue to work on the EU **Energy Security and Solidarity Action Plan.** The focus during the autumn will lie on energy efficiency measures. Energy efficiency is essential, both for the climate and for secure energy supplies. The Presidency intends to work to ensure that a decision is taken on the proposed revision of the Directive on **energy efficiency in buildings**, proposed revision of the **Energy Labelling Directive** and draft Directive on **energy labelling of tyres**. The energy ministers will also discuss and contribute to the Commission's forthcoming **revised action plan on energy efficiency.**

Following this year's gas crisis, the Commission has brought forward its proposal on security of supply, including an amendment to the **Security of Gas Supply Directive** currently in force. The Presidency intends to work towards an early agreement between the Council and the European Parliament. The expected communication on the **financing of low-carbon technologies** will also be looked at during the period.

The EU's **international relations** and dialogues in the **field of energy** are growing in importance. Negotiations are expected on the **enlargement of the Energy Community** to include Moldova, Ukraine and Turkey, and on **energy cooperation** between the EU and Nigeria. The development of the **energy market around the Baltic Sea** is important. The work on the implementation of the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan will continue.

At the informal meeting of energy ministers, the transition to an eco-efficient economy will be the main theme, with particular focus on efficient energy systems.

*Important meetings:*

- Informal meeting of energy ministers, Åre, 23–24 July, partly together with energy ministers.
- Informal working dinner of transport ministers, Stockholm, 21 September, 'EU Transport Policy after 2010 – The Future of Transport'.
- High-level conference: 'Effective Bioenergy', Stockholm, 17–18 September.
- High-level meeting: 'Greater Use of Both New and Already Existing Technologies' on new technologies for safe, environmentally-friendly road transport, Göteborg, 26–27 October.
- High-level conference: 'Creating impact for an eUnion 2015' on the future information society, Visby, 10–11 November.

## 8. Using resources without using them up

*Agriculture and Fisheries Council*

The Agriculture and Fisheries Council deals with issues such as what we eat, animal health and rural development, important issues that affect the everyday lives of all EU citizens. The Presidency has three priorities: 'sustainable fisheries', 'food and climate – the global challenges', and 'sound animal husbandry and healthy animals'.

### *Long-term sustainable fisheries*

The Presidency's overall vision for **fisheries policy** is to create the conditions for using resources without using them up. The use of fish resources must be sustainable in the long term, in economic, environmental and social terms. The present situation of both fish stocks and the fishing industry show that the Common Fisheries Policy has not achieved its goals. Today's situation is characterised by overexploited fish stocks, a low level of ecological sustainability and low profitability. Every autumn, the Council takes decisions on fishing regulations for the following years, including **fishing quotas**. The ambition of the Presidency is that this decision will pave the way for sustainable fisheries.

A crucial aspect in achieving sustainability is compliance with the regulatory framework. This requires an effective control system. An effective system for controlling fisheries increases confidence in the Common Fisheries Policy and enables consumers to feel more confident that fish are caught legally. A new proposal for regulations on **fisheries controls** is currently being negotiated. The ambition is to conclude these negotiations during the autumn, focusing on appropriateness and cost efficiency.

Apart from fisheries controls, a review will be initiated of the current basic regulatory framework for the Common Fisheries Policy, and will continue until the end of 2012. The fisheries ministers will continue the discussion on the **future fisheries policy**, based on the green paper presented by the Commission.

### *Food and climate – the global challenges*

Globalisation involves a higher degree of interdependence and therefore a greater need for cross-border political cooperation. Two of the main global challenges facing agriculture are managing the impact of agriculture and climate on each other, and securing global food supplies. The agriculture ministers will discuss agriculture and climate at their informal meeting.

The **agricultural sector** is an important actor in work to do with **climate change.** Agriculture must help to reduce climate impact and adapt to changes in the climate. This is necessary in order to deal with future climate change and enable environmental and resource efficiency. The production of sustainable energy and energy efficiency measures are important aspects of these efforts. Climate change

may also lead to a change in the conditions for agricultural production in that, for example, new plant and animal diseases may emerge and water conditions will change. These are important issues to be addressed in order to ensure sustainable food security.

**Securing global food security for future generations** will be a challenge, particularly in view of the fact that the world's population is expected to double by 2050. The **Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations** (FAO) will play an important role in achieving this objective. During the autumn the FAO's highest decision-making body, the Conference, will meet. The Presidency will speak on behalf of the EU and strive to advance the work of the FAO, with the aim of securing global food supplies that are sustainably based.

**Food safety** continues to be very important. Enabling consumers to make conscious food choices for a healthy, sound lifestyle is also important. The Presidency will therefore take action to enable the Council and the European Parliament to take decisions on **novel foods**.

The EU has long had regulations on **food labelling**. This is necessary for consumers in all EU countries to be able to make conscious choices. The Presidency will take action to achieve an agreement on a **new regulation on food information** for consumers, which will improve information to consumers concerning the nutritional content of food.

*Sound animal husbandry and healthy animals*

**Sound animal husbandry** is essential for animals' wellbeing. Sound animal husbandry is also key to public health, consumer confidence and the economy of producers. A **sound animal welfare** is also important. Several proposals for new welfare legislation are in the pipeline, as regards food producing animals and animals used for scientific purposes. These issues are a priority for the Presidency. The Presidency will also continue to work on the **EU strategy for animal health**, 'Prevention is Better than Cure' which will play an important role for future animal welfare in the EU.

*Important meetings:*

- Informal meeting of agriculture ministers, Växjö, 13–15 September.
- Meeting of Directors-General for Fisheries, Ronneby, 2–3 July.
- Conference: 'Inland Water Brings Life into the Sea', Lund, 21–23 September.
- Meeting of the EFSA Advisory Forum and Meeting of Heads of European Food Safety Authorities, Stockholm, 23–25 September.
- Meeting of Directors-General for Forestry, Göteborg, 30 September–1 October.
- Meeting of Directors-General for Paying Authorities, Visby, 7–9 October.
- 'Delivering Animal Welfare Quality', Uppsala, 8–9 October.
- Meeting of Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs), Jönköping, 20–23 October.
- Conference: 'Rural Areas Shaping the Future', Uppsala, 28–29 October
- Conference: 'Climate-smart Food', Lund, 21–23 November.

## 9. A credible EU for the environment

*Environment Council*

The EU plays a key role in solving cross-border environmental problems and driving global environment efforts forward. An ambitious European environmental policy is vital for global change. The EU must be a force that is active in favour of sustainable development in the world. The Presidency will strengthen EU environmental policy and show that an ambitious environmental policy is a precondition for long-term sustainable growth.

*Uniting the world's countries behind an ambitious climate agreement*

The **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change** is the core of international climate efforts. The associated Kyoto Protocol contains commitments for emission reductions until the end of 2012. At the **Conference of the Parties** to the United Nations' Climate Change Convention in **Copenhagen in December 2009**, decisions will be taken on new commitments for the period after 2012. The EU will assume global leadership of the climate issue. The task of the Presidency, together with the EU Member States and other parties, is to work for the adoption of a new climate agreement during the international climate negotiations in Copenhagen in December. The agreement should include all the countries of the world, reduce emissions so that the 'two degrees' goal is within reach, and create the conditions for sustainable economic development.

*An eco-efficient economy gives competitive advantages*

During the autumn, the ministers responsible for environment, energy and competitiveness from the EU countries will discuss how Europe can be developed into an **eco-efficient economy.** Committed and energetic environmental efforts give competitive advantages. Converting to an eco-efficient economy means an opportunity for the EU to lift itself out of the economic crisis and could contribute to a long-term development strategy for Europe. The environment ministers will also deal with the environment section of the follow-up of the **EU Sustainable Development Strategy.** The role of cities in sustainable global development will be particularly focused upon.

*The key role of biodiversity*

**Biodiversity** is about is the wealth of nature in ecosystems, species and genetic variation. Biodiversity is essential for nature to be able to adapt to changes in habitat, particularly those changes that are caused by human beings. The threats to biodiversity and thus to the ability of nature itself to survive are as complex as ecosystems are ingenious.

The **United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** is a global agreement on the preservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The

conference of the parties in October 2010 is to evaluate whether the world has succeeded in preventing the loss of biodiversity and formulate a long-term vision for this work. In spring 2010, the EU is to formulate its own vision. The Presidency will take action to ensure that the EU begins discussions on the new global vision and to highlight the key role of ecosystems in people's wellbeing. The Presidency also wishes to draw attention to the positive economic effects of preserving biodiversity, such as the natural ability of lakes to clean waste water, and the costs of not taking initiatives.

*Strengthened policy for a neglected marine environment*

The seas are by nature international areas requiring cross-border cooperation. **The marine environment** is affected by EU policy in sectors such as agriculture, fishing, transport and industry. Emissions from agriculture and wastewater systems lead to eutrophication and emissions from industry and waste treatment plants pollute the oceans with chemicals. The situation in the Baltic Sea is particularly serious. Measures to deal with this will be discussed by the environment ministers and others as part of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy. The Presidency is also proactive in efforts to identify the Baltic Sea as a special **pilot project**, with more rapid and stringent environmental protection in implementing the **EU marine directives.** Particular attention will also be given to the implementation of the EU common maritime policy and the exchange of experience between the different coastal regions of the EU.

*Other important issues*

**Global chemical issues** have long been given priority. The Presidency will promote an active role for the EU in negotiations on **a global convention on mercury**. The Presidency will also be active in bringing about a decision on the further phasing out of substances that are also strong greenhouse gases at a meeting of the parties to the **Montreal Protocol on ozone-depleting substances**. A renegotiation of the **Gothenburg Protocol to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution** may also be put on the agenda. The renegotiation would result in reduced emissions of nitrogen oxides, which would benefit both people's health and the environment.

*Important meetings:*

- Informal meeting of environment ministers, Åre, 24–25 July.
- High-level conference: 'Visions for Biodiversity Beyond 2010', Strömstad, 7–9 September
- High-level conference: 'European Cities and the Global Climate Agenda', Stockholm, 14–15 September.
- Conference: 'Inland Water Brings Life into the Sea', Lund, 21–23 September.

## 10. High standards promote better growth

*Education, Youth and Culture Council*

High standards of education and research, good opportunities for creativity and innovation and good living conditions for young people are vital for individual development and for sustainable development and growth in the EU. For this reason, the Presidency will focus on:
- further development of European cooperation in education,
- improving cooperation between education, research and innovation,
- drawing attention to the conditions for migrants to succeed in society through a decent education,
- encouraging and supporting children's and young people's access to culture and media and their opportunities to develop their own creativity,
- reaching an agreement on the direction of future European cooperation in the area of youth.

***Education – cooperation, modernisation and integration***

**European cooperation in the area of education** largely involves discussing solutions to common challenges and problems and exchanging information and good practices. The aim is to raise education standards and provide pupils, students and teachers with good working conditions. Within the framework of the priorities of 'Education and Training 2020', the Presidency will give priority to issues concerning the professional development of **teachers** and the role and responsibilities of school management in achieving this.

The **modernisation of universities and other higher education institutions** takes place on a continuous basis. Modern, strong and independent higher education institutions providing high standards of education contribute to strengthening competitiveness, increasing employment and achieving long-term sustainable growth. The importance of higher education institutions for research-based innovation has increased and their role in an efficient knowledge triangle (education–research–innovation) has been strengthened. The focus will be on the issue of the role of higher education institutions in promoting cooperation within the knowledge triangle.

**Education** and **social integration** are important issues both for individual Member States and for the EU as a whole. During the Presidency a discussion will be initiated at European level on several important issues related to the role of education in enabling migrants to become integrated into society.

***Youth – improved cooperation to promote good living conditions for young people in the EU***

With present demographic developments, the proportion of young people is expected to decline in the coming decades. Young people's participation in

education, the labour market and society is therefore the key not only to their development as individuals, but also to sustainable development and growth in Europe. Effective youth cooperation is even more important in the current economic crisis, which threatens to have a particularly severe impact on young people.

The most important issue during the Swedish Presidency is to determine a framework with **new common goals and priorities for youth policy cooperation in the EU from 2010.** The Presidency will emphasise the importance of promoting good living conditions and increased participation among young women and men in Europe via better cooperation.

*Culture and media – for a creative generation*

One of the major challenges in the area of culture and media is to make culture accessible and encourage talent and creativity, particularly among children and young people. New modes of media consumption and new cultural expression create both opportunities and challenges. An important task is to strengthen children and young people as media consumers. Initiatives to encourage creativity among children and young people are fundamental for an open and dynamic Europe.

For this reason the Presidency will take action to integrate a children's and young people's perspective into work to **increase access to culture, the right to cultural and innovative creativity of individuals** and the creative sector's importance for the development of society. The Presidency's ambition is to help promote a creative generation by focusing on the value of culture in schools and the potential and challenges of the media.

*Important meetings:*

- Promoting a Creative Generation – a conference on children's and young people's creativity and their use of culture and media, Göteborg, 29–30 July.
- Conference: 'The Knowledge Triangle Shaping the Future of Europe', Göteborg, 31 August–2 September.
- Conference: 'Future Youth Policy Cooperation in the EU', Stockholm, 12–14 September.
- Conference: 'The Role of VET in Meeting the Challenges of Today and Tomorrow', Stockholm, 12–13 November.
- Conference: 'Gender Differences in Educational Achievement', Uppsala, 17–18 November.
- Closing conference for the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009, Stockholm, 16–17 December.

## Annex: Planned meetings of the Council during the Swedish Presidency of the EU

### European Council

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| European Council | Brussels | 29-30 October |
| European Council | Brussels | 10-11 December |

### Meetings of the Council of Ministers in Brussels and Luxembourg

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) | Brussels | 7 July |
| ECOFIN Council-Budget | Brussels | 10 July |
| Agriculture and Fisheries Council | Brussels | 13-14 |
| General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) | Brussels | 27-28 July |
| General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) | Brussels | 14-15 September |
| Justice and Home Affairs Council | Brussels | 21-22 September |
| Competitiveness Council | Brussels | 24-25 September |
| (Possibly: Agriculture and Fisheries Council | Brussels | 28-29 September |
| (Possibly: The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) | Luxembourg | 1 October |
| Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE) | Luxembourg | 8-9 October |
| Agriculture and Fisheries Council | Luxembourg | 19-20 October |
| Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) | Luxembourg | 20 October |
| Justice and Home Affairs Council | Luxembourg | 23 October |
| Environment Council | Luxembourg | 23 October |
| General Affairs and External Relations Council | Luxembourg | 26-27 October |

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|---|---|---|
| Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) | Brussels | 10 November |
| General Affairs and External Relations Council (incl. defence and development assistance ministers) | Brussels | 16-17 November |
| Agriculture and Fisheries Council | Brussels | 19-20 November |
| Education, Youth and Culture Council | Brussels | 26-27 November |
| Justice and Home Affairs Council | Brussels | 30 November – 1 December |
| The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) | Brussels | 30 November – 1 December |
| Economic and Financial Affairs Council | Brussels | 2 December |
| Competitiveness Council | Brussels | 3-4 December |
| General Affairs and External Relations Council | Brussels | 7-8 December |
| Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE) – energy issues | Brussels | 7 December |
| Agriculture and Fisheries Council | Brussels | 14-15 December |
| Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE) – transport and telecommunications issues | Brussels | 17-18 December |
| Environment Council | Brussels | 22 December |

**Informal ministerial meetings in Sweden**

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|---|---|---|
| Informal meeting of the EPSCO Council (health ministers) | Jönköping | 6-7 July |
| Informal meeting of the EPSCO Council (employment and social insurance ministers) | Jönköping | 8-9 July |
| Informal meeting of | Stockholm | 15-17 July |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| justice and home affairs ministers | | |
| Informal meeting of energy ministers | Åre | 23-24 July |
| Informal meeting of environment ministers | Åre | 24-25 July |
| Informal meeting of foreign ministers | Stockholm | 4-5 September |
| Informal meeting of agriculture and fisheries ministers | Växjö | 13-15 September |
| Informal meeting of finance ministers | Göteborg | 1-2 October |
| Informal meeting of defence ministers | Göteborg | 28-29 September |
| Informal meeting of education ministers | Göteborg | 23-24 September |
| Informal meeting of competitiveness ministers | Umeå | 14-16 October |
| Informal meeting of ministers responsible for eGovernment and eGovernment conference | Malmö | 18-20 November |

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Swedish Presidency of the EU
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