

Priorities of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

The Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2012 will strive to conduct an open, accessible and professional Presidency dedicated to achieving results within the scope of responsibilities of the rotating Presidency of the Council as outlined in the Lisbon Treaty.

Denmark will be taking over the Presidency at a time when the EU faces its greatest challenge in its history. By putting forward an agenda focusing on concrete results for Europe, notably in the legislative process in cooperation with the European Parliament and Commission, the Danish Presidency will do its utmost to show that the EU is still capable and ready to take all the decisions needed to move beyond the crisis and demonstrate the value and necessity of European cooperation.

In close cooperation with the European Parliament, the Commission, the President of the European Council and the High Representative the Danish Presidency will focus on the following main areas in order to achieve this task:

1. A responsible Europe

The economic and financial situation and notably the European sovereign debt crisis will be high on the agenda during the Danish Presidency. The decisions of the European Council of the 9th December to strengthen fiscal discipline and ensure economic stability will be implemented in the coming months. The aim of these decisions is in line with the goal of the Danish presidency to ensure a more responsible Europe. Furthermore, the Presidency will focus on implementing the agreements taken at the summits in October 2011 as well as the recently agreed reform of economic governance where the Presidency will focus on implementing the first full European Semester under the new rules. Implementing stronger financial regulation will also be important.

The negotiations on the future multiannual financial framework for the period beyond 2013 will also be a major task for the Danish Presidency. Denmark will conduct its Presidency in an efficient manner in order to move forward the negotiations as far as possible in order to prepare for an agreement by the end of 2012. The view of the Danish Presidency is that the EU budget constitutes an important tool to finance common policies of the European Union with the aim of creating growth, jobs and competitiveness. At the same time, the EU-budget should underpin the efforts of overall budgetary consolidation in the EU and its Member States.

2. A dynamic Europe

A second objective of the Danish Presidency will be to continue the development of the single market in order to achieve its full growth potential. The single market will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2012. The Danish Presidency intends to work to move the twelve key initiatives set out in the Single Market Act forward as far as possible. Special emphasis will be on the directives on public procurement, the standardisation package, revision of the accounting standards, the venture capital proposal the common European Patent system and better enforcement of the posting of workers directive. The Danish Presidency also intends to work for significant progress towards a digital single market and will strive for concrete results in the negotiations on for instance the Roaming III regulation while furthering the negotiations on the e-Signature and PSI directives as far as possible.

The Danish Presidency sees efficient trans-European infrastructures as fundamental for the smooth operation of the single market, for the mobility of persons and goods and for the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the EU. Therefore the negotiations on the Connecting Europe Facility and the revision of sectoral guidelines will be an important issue to the benefit of well-functioning transport, energy

and ICT networks across the EU. Another area of focus will be the future Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020 with the aim to strengthen European research and innovation.

The Danish Presidency will also work towards opening new trade opportunities for European companies, both through the WTO and through bilateral trade agreements with, among others, Japan, India, Canada and Tunisia.

3. A green Europe

Economic growth and environmental protection can - and must - go hand in hand. The EU has established itself as a global leader on environment, energy and climate, but a continued effort is required to maintain this head-start. In the context of the current economic difficulties new balanced measures related to energy, climate and the environment can contribute to much needed growth and employment in Europe.

Green growth can be encouraged by integrating such efforts across a range of European policies, including the agricultural policy, the cohesion policy, transportation and the single market. In order to contribute to fulfilling Europe's 20% target of primary energy savings by 2020, the Danish Presidency will put focus on the proposal for a new energy efficiency directive as a follow up to the European Energy Efficiency Plan 2011. Furthermore, the Danish Presidency will work on establishing a long term strategy towards 2050 in the area of energy and climate, building upon the Energy Road Map and Low Carbon Economy communications. Other important issues include energy infrastructure and the proposal for setting up an information exchange mechanism with regard to intergovernmental agreements between Member States and third countries in the field of energy, the 7th Environmental Action Program and the preparation of the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development.

4. A safe Europe

European cooperation is essential in order to deal with the cross border challenges of a globalized world and to ensure the safety and interests of the European citizens.

The continued implementation of the Stockholm Programme (2010-2014) will be a key task in the area of justice and home affairs. In order to better manage migration from third countries, the importance of which has been underlined by recent developments in the Southern Mediterranean and the southern and south-eastern external borders, the Danish Presidency will continue the efforts to finalise the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) before the end of 2012 and thus aim at tangible results on the proposed amendments to the Asylum Procedures Directive, the Reception Conditions Directive, and the revision of the Dublin Regulation and the Eurodac Regulation. The Danish Presidency will also endeavour to strengthen the Schengen system, inter alia through a safeguard clause in the Visa Regulation and the establishment of the Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism. The Danish Presidency will also strive to achieve considerable progress in the negotiations on the EU PNR Directive and finalise negotiations on the European Investigation Order.

As new global powers are emerging there is a strong need for a stronger common European role on the global scene. With the establishment of the position as High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and a Common European External Action service, the Lisbon Treaty has provided the EU with a valuable new basis for achieving increased global influence. The Danish Presidency intends to support the High Representative and the EEAS in fulfilling the ambitions of the Lisbon treaty. With respect to enlargement the Danish Presidency will continue a policy based on own merits as basis for progress in the negotiations. The European Neighbourhood Policy is an important tool to ensure good and lasting relations to the EU's neighbouring countries in the new more merit-based approach. Also towards the strategic partners, the Danish Presidency will seek to support a more joint European approach, based on common values and increased trade relations.