



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 17 June 2011**

**11447/11**

**POLGEN 100**

**NOTE**

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from:	The future Polish, Danish and Cypriot Presidencies
to:	Delegations
Subject:	18 month programme of the Council (1 July 2011 - 31 December 2012)

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Delegations will find attached the final version of the 18 month programme of the Council, prepared by the future Polish, Danish and Cypriot Presidencies.

Contributions regarding the External Relations activities of the Foreign Affairs Council have not been communicated by the President of this Council formation.

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**PROGRAMME OF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES**  
**PREPARED BY THE POLISH, DANISH AND CYPRIOT PRESIDENCIES**  
**and in close cooperation with the Commission and the President**  
**of the European Council**

**INTRODUCTION**

This document sets out the Council's work programme as established by the future Polish, Danish and Cypriot Presidencies, covering the period July 2011 to December 2012. It is presented in two parts. The first part contains the strategic framework for the programme, setting it in a wider context, and specifically within the perspective of more long-term objectives running into the subsequent three Presidencies. For this reason, in accordance with the Council's rules of procedure, the future Irish, Lithuanian and Greek Presidencies have been consulted on this section. The second part constitutes the operational programme setting out the issues which are expected to be addressed during the 18 month period. In line with the Council's Rules of Procedure, this part was prepared in close cooperation with the Commission and the President of the European Council, however the President of the Foreign Affairs Council has not communicated contributions with regard to this Council formation's activities.

The three Presidencies will make every effort to ensure a smooth and efficient functioning of the new rules and provisions introduced by the Lisbon Treaty and to use to the full all the possibilities it offers. This implies a very close cooperation between the three Presidencies and between them and the President of the European Council and the High Representative. At the same time, the Presidencies will rely very much on a mutually beneficial cooperation with the Commission and are looking forward to the input provided by the Commission on the basis of its respective work programmes. They will also work very closely and constructively together with the European Parliament, whose role has been greatly enhanced by the Treaty of Lisbon.

## PART I

### STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

1. The three Presidencies will assume their function in a period which will still be marked by the consequences of the financial, economic and sovereign debt crisis. Consequently an important part of the action of the EU during that period will aim to equip the EU and its Member States with the means to thoroughly recover from the crisis and to return to sound macro-economic conditions. In this context, a key challenge will be to pursue budget consolidation and to create the best possible conditions for a sustainable long-term growth and high employment. At the same time the after effects of the economic crisis on the employment situation and the social sphere need to be addressed effectively. In order to ensure the solidity and sustainability of the Euro area and to enhance competitiveness across the EU, a strengthened economic governance framework, which aims at better coordinated and converging economic policies, will need to be implemented and fine-tuned.
2. The need to respond to the crisis, while at the same time laying the foundations for future growth, represents a good opportunity to foster a comprehensive revitalisation of EU policies - a revitalisation that should ensure that the EU achieves the long-term policy goals that have been formulated in the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Most of the efforts will have to be made at national level and will require further structural reforms in Member States. The EU will monitor these developments and contribute to the set objectives through its policies.
3. Throughout the 18 months, the negotiations on the new Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF), which will determine the funding of EU policies from 2014 onwards, will be a key priority. The aim will be to match the content and resources of the new MFF with agreed priorities of the EU and to promote in an adequate manner the economic, social and territorial cohesion within the Union as well as to reflect the new areas of competence introduced by the Lisbon Treaty.

4. During that same period a number of important multi-annual EU programmes, policies and funds, which are designed to contribute to future growth and prosperity in the EU, are to be negotiated .
5. In order to maintain and strengthen its influence and role in a world which is characterised by a shifting balance of power, the EU will need to reassess its efforts and action with regard to its external relations. At the same time, the EU will have to respond to global challenges and developments such as environmental degradation, climate change, resource scarcity, pressure on biodiversity, international migration, poverty and the challenge of feeding a rapidly growing global population and of accommodating their legitimate material development needs.
6. During the 18-month term, the following areas will be of strategic importance for achieving the EU's long-term goals by 2020 and to enhance its role on the international stage.
7. Over the last years, Europe has gone through a severe economic crisis, entailing negative growth rates, rising unemployment and increasing pressure on public finances and on social cohesion. With a view to overcoming the consequences of the crisis, efforts will be enhanced in order to recreate sustainable public finances, remedy structural weaknesses and improve competitiveness within the Union. Implementing exit strategies, including fiscal consolidation, will remain high on the agenda. The need for reinforced economic policy coordination and enhancing **economic governance** will be further addressed and implemented.

8. In order to ensure that the EU will emerge stronger from the crisis by strengthening its international competitiveness, the **Europe 2020 Strategy** will need to be implemented in an efficient way by Member States and the European Institutions. The focus will be on a smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. In this context, the Union will promote a new source of growth such as intellectual capital and a green, more resource efficient, and knowledge-based economy that is able to respond to long-term economic and social challenges and challenges which are related to climate change, energy sufficiency and the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity. The Euro Plus Pact will achieve a new quality of economic policy coordination, with the objective of improving competitiveness, employment, fiscal sustainability and financial stability. Continued efforts will be made with regard to all aspects of the Single Market and the small and medium sized enterprises which are the backbone of the European economy. Efforts will also be made towards developing a dynamic digital single market. Future economic success will not be possible without increasing investments in research and innovation, education and training. To this end the Union will have to pursue its efforts with regard to the implementation of the "knowledge triangle"-concept and the creation of a true European Research Area, which allows for a reduction of policy fragmentation and the free movement of researchers. Developing a strategic and integrated approach to innovation and optimising the synergy between the European, national and regional policies as well as ensuring a better involvement of stakeholders in the innovation process and supporting the full use of Europe's intellectual capital are important in this context.
  
9. One of the main activities during the 18-month term will be the negotiations on the new **Multi-annual Financial Framework** which need to be concluded before the end of 2012 in order to allow for a timely adoption and implementation of EU policies, programmes and financial instruments. The MFF will have to reflect in a balanced way the needs of existing policies, respond to the new challenges and underpin the priorities arising from the Europe 2020 Strategy. The new MFF will also address the new policies introduced by the Lisbon Treaty.

10. The development of the EU also depends on its acceptance by **citizens**. In the coming years a new focus on policies which are beneficial to citizens will therefore be vital. These policies, which cover a wide range, will need to take account of the necessary adaptations to a changing international environment as well as of societal challenges such as the demographic change and social cohesion.
11. Against this background the implementation of the social component of the Europe 2020 Strategy and addressing **societal challenges** will be of great importance in order to achieve inclusive growth. The social and economic well-being of citizens also depends on the investment in human capital, which aims to enhance the access to quality education, to upgrade professional skills and to strengthen lifelong learning, in order to increase employability and inclusive labour market participation. In this context the elaboration and implementation of actions related to youth employment and mobility deserve special attention.
12. The European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 will draw attention to the immense demographic challenges our societies are confronted with and will hopefully bring about a sense of urgency for immediate action and trigger a reflection on the necessary responses to the far-reaching societal challenges raised by ageing populations.
13. The Union will also need to be more visible and effective when it comes to policies and living conditions which affect citizens' every day lives. In the field of health, the EU Health Strategy, the new Public Health Programme and the innovation partnership on healthy ageing will respond to the demographic change, health determinants, innovations in healthcare aimed at sustaining healthcare systems and alleviating global health threats.
14. Promoting food quality and safety as well as safety in relation to consumer products are important areas where the action at the level of the Union represents a direct and genuine added value for European citizens.

15. Being aware of its common cultural heritage, the Union will continue to give particular attention to culture. Its action in this area will also help promote active citizenship, promote creative and cultural industries and at the same time enhance cultural governance.
16. Achieving **sustainable growth** requires an integrated approach with respect to policies on climate change, transport, agriculture, environment and energy, aiming at **resource efficiency**. To this end efforts will continue to promote a competitive Union based on low carbon and greening economies.
17. In line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, one of the fundamental objectives over the coming years will be the promotion of green growth through a sustainable and efficient use of resources. This approach and related governance issues will also be promoted and defended at international level in the most important fora such as the Rio + 20 Summit.
18. In the field of environment protection, the EU will renew its Environmental Action Programme In this context special emphasis will be given to biodiversity issues at European and international level, aiming at a significant improvement of the status of biodiversity with new targets to be implemented by 2020 and 2050.
19. In the area of international climate change negotiations, the three Presidencies will continue to work on the follow-up to the agreement on climate change reached in the UNFCCC Conference in Cancun and will prepare the forthcoming Conference in Durban. The Union will deploy all its means and endeavours to contribute to achieving an international climate change agreement for the period post 2012. The adoption and further work on the EU Climate Change Adaptation Strategy will complement the work on climate change mitigation.

20. Efforts to combat climate change are closely linked to energy and transport policies. On the basis of a number of policy initiatives, including actions under the EU flagship initiative on resource efficiency, the Energy Efficiency Plan, the Energy Roadmap 2050, and the 2050 low carbon economy roadmap and the White Paper Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area, the Union will further discuss ideas and actions with a view to reducing emissions by 80-95% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels.
21. Energy infrastructure, security and efficiency, renewable energy, the internal energy market and the external action in the field of energy will continue to be cornerstones of EU level activities. In the light of the nuclear accident in Japan, the review of the safety of nuclear plants will be of major importance.
22. In the area of **Justice and Home Affairs**, the **implementation of the Stockholm Programme** will remain a key priority for the Union. The overall challenge will be to ensure respect for fundamental freedoms and integrity while guaranteeing security. The priorities of the Stockholm Programme will be reflected in all action taken. Furthermore, the situation in the Southern Mediterranean will effectively be dealt with. The achievement of a consolidated European area of justice with mechanisms that facilitate access to justice, allowing citizens to benefit from their rights throughout the EU, data protection and the fight against all aspects of organised crime are constant concerns and will remain in the focus of the Union's policies.
23. The Union will also pursue the implementation of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum with a view to developing a forward looking and comprehensive European Immigration Policy and will work towards the completion of the Common European Asylum System by the end of 2012.
24. Work on improving the European response capacities to face disasters and crises, both in the EU and in third countries, will be taken forward, taking into account the necessary balance between prevention, preparedness and response.

25. The EU remains an anchor of stability and prosperity that continues to attract European countries. A gradual and well managed **enlargement process**, based on agreed principles and the Copenhagen criteria, allows all countries concerned to reap benefits. Against this background, the negotiations underway will be pursued and the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries will be further advanced.
26. Within the framework of the **neighbourhood policy**, the EU will further develop and consolidate its relations with the countries to the East and to the South of the Union, with the aim of contributing to the stability and prosperity of these regions. In this context, the implementation of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy will also be pursued.
27. During the coming years, the Union will also face manifold challenges regarding its **role in the world**. The balance of economic and political power in the world will continue to undergo fundamental changes. Emerging powers will challenge the transatlantic relationship as the centre of gravity on the global scene, thus also affecting the Union's political weight and role in the world.
28. To be able to exert influence that reflects its weight, the EU must have a coherent and consistent policy in its external relations. To this end the Union will make full use of the new structures, tools and possibilities established and provided for by the Lisbon Treaty such as the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service.
29. As the world's largest trading area, the Union needs to play an even more central role in the regulation of economic, financial and trade issues in the G20, the WTO and other relevant multilateral fora.

30. As the world's largest donor of development aid, the EU is well placed to promote European values and interests, to contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth, and to continue to implement the international financing for development agenda and further enhance the effectiveness of EU aid. The EU will continue to promote the Millennium Development Goals with the ultimate goal of eradicating poverty by 2015. In this context, the EU will continue to pursue the reform and strengthening of its Development and Humanitarian assistance policies.
31. It will be vital for the Union to develop further its strategic partnerships with key players in the world, which will remain a useful instrument for pursuing European objectives and interests. It will also be important to further develop regional frameworks and strategies in order to ensure the EU's continued role in solving regional and global challenges, while promoting growth, prosperity and security. In this context, the transatlantic relationship will continue to be a key element of EU's external policies in order to be able to face new challenges such as the emergence of new global players.
32. The European Union will also, in line with the UN Charter, continue to play an undeniably important role in the area of security, crisis management and combating global terrorism.

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## **PART II**

### **OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME**

#### **GENERAL AFFAIRS**

##### **Europe 2020 Strategy**

1. Europe is living through testing times and will have to deploy all efforts in order to overcome the numerous challenges which it is facing. It can succeed and strengthen its economic weight if it acts in a coordinated manner and addresses in the coming years its shortcomings and difficulties and uses its assets in a focused manner.
2. To this end, the European Council adopted in June 2010 the Europe 2020 Strategy which sets out a strategic vision for Europe's social market economy for the next decade. Europe 2020 shows the way to turn Europe into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy, delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion and boosting the EU's competitiveness in a globalised world. To deliver rapid and sustainable results, stronger policy coordination and consistent policy approaches are required.
3. Under the new Strategy, Headline Targets, which have been set by the European Council, will guide the efforts of the Member States in achieving their individual national targets. National Reform Programmes will be submitted to peer review and multilateral surveillance. Each January, the Commission will present an Annual Growth Survey which will be the main input for discussions at the Spring meetings of the European Council. The Annual Growth Surveys will include both a review of progress and a forward-looking part proposing strategic policy guidance for Member States. The three Presidencies consider the successful implementation of this strategy as a core task in the coming years. They will accordingly work closely together to ensure the follow-up to the second Annual Growth Survey in the relevant Council formations and a smooth implementation of the European Semester during the first half of 2012.

## **Multiannual Financial Framework**

4. The Union's present Multiannual Financial Framework will expire in 2013. Negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework, together with a review of relevant policies and legislative instruments must be concluded in good time in order to enable the future programming of the Union's activities. In view of the complexity of these negotiations, a strict timetable will therefore need to be respected. Work on the MFF package including the Regulation laying down the Multiannual Financial Framework post-2013 and related acts will hence be at the core of activities of the General Affairs Council.
5. The Commission's proposals will be presented in June 2011. The three Presidencies will work on the basis of a common methodology, including for dealing with the European Parliament, aiming at reaching an agreement in order to allow for the timely adoption of the Regulation establishing the Multiannual Financial Framework.

## **Cohesion policy**

6. Cohesion Policy will remain an important instrument for stimulating development across the Union and thus reducing disparities between the levels of development of European regions - thereby laying the ground for the balanced and sustainable economic, social and territorial development of the EU as a whole. It is also an important tool for the implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy, accelerating the potential of growth.
7. The main objective for the Council is to reach a timely agreement with the European Parliament on the legislative package that will cover the post-2013 period. The work on the relevant Regulations will be closely linked to the negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

8. The Presidencies will take forward work on the future of the policy with special regard to its structure and the simplification of its rules and procedures in order to increase its efficiency and effectiveness. They will carry forward work on the revised Territorial Agenda of the EU and mainstream the territorial dimension of the Cohesion Policy, as provided for by the Lisbon Treaty.
9. In terms of urban development, the three Presidencies will continue work on the implementation of the Leipzig Charter and the Toledo Declaration. Priority topics will include the urban dimension of Cohesion Policy, integrated urban regeneration, urban-rural linkages, urban dimension of climate change and demography challenges.

### **Macro-regional strategies**

10. The three Presidencies will focus on the implementation of the Baltic Sea Region and Danube Region Strategies, as well as on the review of the Baltic Sea Strategy. The challenge will be to implement these Strategies in an integrated approach, whilst respecting the individual circumstances of each Member State involved. Socio-economic, transport, cultural and environmental developments aspects of the regions will be key issues in this regard. The Strategies should be complementary to already existing EU policies.

### **Outermost regions**

11. The three Presidencies will work for the development of Outermost Regions, for the benefit of the whole of the European Union. Work will focus on initiatives in the Outermost Regions that have an added value for the EU, namely in the field of research and innovation, renewable energies, biodiversity, agriculture, fishing, health, information and communication technologies, cultural industries, maritime affairs and territorial cooperation.

## Enlargement process

12. The three Presidencies acknowledge that enlargement remains a key policy, which reinforces peace, democracy and stability in Europe and serves the strategic interests of the European Union. They are therefore determined to pursue the enlargement agenda, ensuring a coherent implementation of the renewed consensus on enlargement, as defined by the December 2006 European Council and on the basis of all relevant European Council and Council conclusions.
13. As regards **Croatia**, following the conclusion of the accession negotiations, the Accession Treaty will have to be signed and ratified with a view to welcoming Croatia as a new member of the European Union.
14. On the basis of the outcome of the screening process, substantive negotiations will have to be conducted with **Iceland**. The Trio will endeavour to keep a sustained pace in these negotiations, provided that Iceland is able to comply with the requirements set in the Negotiating Framework, to fulfil its obligations under the EEA Agreement and to meet the negotiating benchmarks.
15. Negotiations with **Turkey** will enter a decisive stage. All possible efforts will be made to give to these negotiations a new impetus, to encourage Turkey to continue its reform process, advance the fulfilment of negotiating benchmarks, meet the requirements of the Negotiating Framework, respect its contractual obligation towards the EU and its Member States and make progress on the issues covered by the declaration of the European Community and its Member States of 21 September 2005. The European Union will also continue to call upon Turkey to actively support the ongoing negotiations for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions on Cyprus and in line with the principles on which the Union is founded.
16. Particular attention will be paid to the European perspective of the **Western Balkan countries**. The Stabilisation and Association Process, in line with the Thessaloniki Agenda, will remain the relevant framework in this respect.

## **EFTA**

17. In the context of the Union's important relations with Switzerland, it will fall to the three Presidencies to monitor the efficiency of the financial mechanisms 2009-2014 as well as to negotiate the new Financial Contribution.

## **Integrated Maritime Policy**

18. The Union's Integrated Maritime Policy aims to raise the visibility of Maritime Europe and to promote and facilitate the sharing of information, the exchange of best practices, the exploitation and reinforcement of synergies and to encourage dialogue with and among stakeholders on maritime governance and sectoral policies affecting the oceans, seas and coasts.
19. The three Presidencies will take forward the work on the overarching objectives, priorities and goals of this policy as set out in the Commission's Blue Paper of 2007 and confirmed in the Progress report of 2009 where six strategic orientations were clearly highlighted. The proposal for a Regulation establishing a programme to support the further development of an integrated maritime policy from 2011 to 2013 is expected to be adopted by the Council and the European Parliament in 2011. On the basis of this Regulation, existing actions undertaken by the EU can be extended and completed. The Presidencies will seek to finalise work on the proposal for a legislative act setting a framework for Maritime Spatial Planning expected to be submitted by the Commission in 2011.

## **Statistics**

The three Presidencies will continue the work for the provision of high quality, reliable and relevant official European Statistics and stress the importance of compliance with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. The Presidencies will encourage statistical initiatives that underpin the development, implementation and monitoring of Community policies. Recognizing the need to balance the new data needs against the increasing resource constraints, the Presidencies will emphasize the necessity of a continuous focus on simplification and reprioritization initiatives, as well as of the reduction of the response burden, in order to streamline the European Statistical System. To achieve this, the Presidencies will draw attention to developing structures and production processes of statistics which will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the production of European Statistics. Promoting a more cost-efficient statistical production system, the Presidencies will encourage initiatives strengthening cost-awareness and cost-transparency of the European Statistical System.

## **G20**

20. The three Presidencies will continue the current practice to discuss in the GAC the priorities not covered by the ECOFIN Council, which the representatives of the EU and the EU Member States members of the G20 promote at G20 Summits.

## **EEAS organisational issues**

21. The EEAS came into being end 2010/beginning 2011 with the appointment of the top management and the merger of the staff coming from the Council Secretariat and the Commission. The EEAS is a step change in European external action and will make it more comprehensive and more coherent.
22. From an organisational point of view, the EEAS should be fully set up by mid-2013. Until that date there are still some commitments in the legal decision of the establishment of the EEAS which the HR has to put forward to the Council and the European Parliament: a report on the functioning of the EEAS by end 2011, which prepares for the review of the EEAS decision in 2013. Also the possible review on the decision on the chairmanship of the Council Working groups could fall into the mandate of the trio presidency.

## **ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**

### **Economic governance**

23. During the next 18 months, the Council will continue work to strengthen fiscal sustainability, growth potential and the financial stability in the EU and euro area. Laying the foundations for sustained growth and jobs in the future will remain a priority. This will require continuing structural reforms to enhance the potential growth rate of the economy, while sustaining the fiscal consolidation efforts. It will also involve an enhanced framework for economic policy coordination in the EU and in the euro area, including the strengthening of the stability and growth pact and the new framework for addressing macroeconomic imbalances.

24. The three Presidencies will ensure the implementation of the legislative framework in the area of enhanced fiscal discipline and macroeconomic surveillance. In parallel, the necessary work related to the adoption of the European Stability Mechanism will be taken forward with a view to its completion within the timeframe agreed by the European Council in December 2010.
25. In this context, the three Presidencies will work on laying the grounds for future growth and employment by engaging in medium to long-term structural reforms aiming at boosting competitiveness, productivity, growth potential, social cohesion and economic convergence as part of the Europe 2020 strategy.
26. It will also be essential to monitor Member States efforts to return to sustainable public finances. Sustained fiscal consolidation should come hand-in-hand with better quality and stronger efficiency of public spending, with a priority given to growth-enhancing measures. Consolidation and a strengthened Stability and Growth Pact will ensure macroeconomic stability and sustainable public finances, which are prerequisites for long-term growth.
27. In the new framework for broader economic surveillance, more attention will be given to the surveillance of macroeconomic imbalances and divergences in competitiveness within the EU.

28. The ex-ante coordination of these policies will be facilitated by the newly established European Semester, which will integrate the surveillance of structural reforms and the existing processes under a strengthened Stability and Growth Pact and the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines. National Reform Programmes and Stability and Convergence Programmes will be presented simultaneously. Within this framework, the three Presidencies will follow an integrated approach, ensuring that Member States address their structural and macro-economic challenges, while returning to sustainable public finances. The long term goal will be achieving fiscal consolidation while ensuring a better quality and stronger efficiency of public spending, with priority given to growth enhancing measures. The three Presidencies will be the first that will have to run a full European Semester after the expected final agreement on the framework for economic policy coordination in the summer of 2011.

### **Budget**

29. The three Presidencies will ensure that the annual budget procedure is carried out successfully, within the new budgetary and financial framework provided by the Lisbon Treaty, and avoiding links with unrelated issues. Sound financial management of EU funds will be a priority, notably by working towards an agreement on the revision of the Financial Regulation and by analysing the implementation of the budget on the basis of the annual report of the Court of Auditors.

### **Own resources**

30. Work will also commence on the Commission's proposal on "own resources" expected mid-2011, taking into account the close link with the next Multiannual Financial Framework post-2013.

## Financial services

31. The completion and consolidation of the reform of the financial sector will remain a priority. Focus will be on the ongoing, extensive reform of the financial services regulation, which will help prevent a recurring crisis and will ensure the stability of the EU financial system. The emphasis will be on continuing the implementation of measures to promote the integrity and transparency of the financial sector and to safeguard against system-wide threats and excessive risk-taking. The introduction of the new Crisis Management Framework and the strengthening of the capital and liquidity requirements would be considered as priorities, in addition to proposals that aim at increasing market transparency and consumer protection.
32. The Council will also monitor the functioning of the newly established European framework for macro- and micro-prudential supervision. The European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB) is responsible for the macro-prudential oversight of the financial system and will monitor and assess potential threats to financial stability. The European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs) for banking, insurance and securities will contribute to a more effective and consistent level of regulation and supervision of financial institutions.
33. In this context, it will be important to ensure a global level playing field for operators in the financial markets and services. The introduction of any new measure in financial markets and services should be well coordinated with other key players in the market, including within the G20 framework, to promote globally stable and competitive markets.

## **Direct and indirect taxation**

34. The three Presidencies will build on the efforts of the previous Presidencies to finalise the work related to the review of the directive on taxation of savings and the negotiations of anti-fraud agreements with third countries, notably Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Switzerland.
35. As regards tax policy coordination, the Council will discuss tax policy issues, in order to ensure the exchange of best practices, avoid harmful practices and fight fraud and tax evasion. The Council will also examine legislative proposals tabled by the Commission regarding tax policy coordination and taxation of the financial sector.
36. The three Presidencies will continue to support the work of the Code of Conduct Group on business taxation on tax measures that constitute harmful tax competition.
37. In the area of indirect taxation, the three Presidencies will continue to work on the modernisation of the rules on the common system of value added tax as well as on the area of excise duty. The elaboration of a future VAT strategy to modernise the current system, the reduction of administrative burdens and combating fraud, will be the main priorities. Focus will be set on the simplification of the VAT system and to reducing the operational costs for operators and tax administrations. Special attention will be given to reducing the VAT compliance cost, in order to increase the competitiveness of European companies, especially SMEs
38. The review of the Directive on the taxation of energy products and electricity will be undertaken on the basis of the Commission proposal.

## **International issues**

39. At the international level, the three Presidencies will continue work on the follow-up to the agreement on climate change reached in the UNFCCC Conference in Cancun.
40. The three Presidencies will continue the current practice to discuss within the ECOFIN the relevant issues and priorities which the representatives of the EU and the EU Member States members of the G20 promote at G20 Summits. This ensures a coherent EU approach at the Summits.
41. Likewise, the three Presidencies will coordinate and defend EU positions and interests in IMF meetings and will be active in dealing with financial issues in other international fora, such as the ASEM and the Union for the Mediterranean.

## **EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

42. Employment and poverty reduction remain an important part of economic strategies, contributing to strong and sustainable growth. This underlines the urgent need for coherence between all macro-economic policies at all levels of governance and employment policies and recognition of their role in achieving sustainable job-creating economic growth.
43. In the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and in particular the "European semester", the Presidencies will make sure that the EPSCO Council contributes in an effective manner to achieving the objectives of the Strategy.
44. In the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy the contributions of the social partners at European and national level are important for achieving the overarching objectives. In this respect the three Presidencies aim at enhancing the role and visibility of the Tripartite Social Summit.
45. The three Presidencies will focus on various aspects of Europe's demographic challenges.

### **Employment/Labour market issues**

46. Member States' employment policies are a significant element in the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. In this context, the implementation of the Strategy's flagship initiative "An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs" will be a priority. At European level, the coordination and guidance of Member States' employment policies and their peer review are included in the European Employment Strategy, which includes as its main tools the Employment Guidelines and the country-specific recommendations (CSR) for Member States' employment policies. The Employment Guidelines, decided in 2010 and addressed to all Member States, should in principle remain stable until 2014, although these Guidelines have to be reviewed and confirmed annually. In accordance with Article 148(4) TFEU, the Council can also issue recommendations to Member States on their employment policies if considered appropriate.

## Labour law

47. As for the legislative activities, the Presidencies will start work on proposals expected to be submitted by the Commission during the period under consideration, in particular the proposal to amend several labour law Directives with a view of including seafaring workers or vessels within their scope and a possible proposal revising the Working Time Directive; a possible proposal amending the Directive on the protection of employees in the event of insolvency of their employer; possible proposals revising the Directive supplementing the Statute for a European company and the Directive supplementing the Statute for a European Cooperative Society with regard to the involvement of employees and finally a new legislative initiative concerning the Directive on Posting of Workers, with the aim, in particular, to improve the implementation of the Directive.
48. In cooperation with other policy sectors (Justice and Home Affairs/MIG), the three Presidencies will contribute to the discussions, from an employment perspective, on the proposals for Directives on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State; the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of seasonal employment and on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer.

## **Health and safety at work**

49. The Council will continue its work on the amendment of the Directive on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding ("maternity leave"), with a view to reaching final agreement with the European Parliament. The present Community Strategy on Health and Safety at Work for the years 2007-2012 will need to be renewed. Work on the new Strategy, which is expected to be presented in 2012, will be expeditiously taken forward. In 2011, the Council and the European Parliament will start discussions on amending the Directive on Electromagnetic fields (EMF) with the aim to have the new Directive adopted by April 2012.
50. In 2012, three other subjects in the field of health and safety at work are expected to be dealt with by the Council: recasting legislation on musculo-skeletal disorders at work, an initiative on tobacco smoke at work and the amendment of five Directives as a result of the adoption of the Regulation on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures.

## **Social policy issues**

51. In the area of social inclusion and social protection, the Presidencies will ensure an appropriate follow-up to the Commission's initiatives and proposals as outlined in its communication regarding the "European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion". In this context, particular attention will be paid to the issue of how best to adapt the Open Method of Coordination to the new governance of the Europe 2020 Strategy and to the assessment of the implementation of active inclusion strategies at national level. The work on the proposal amending the Regulation on the coordination of social security systems and on the implementing Regulation will be continued. The development of common principles and effective monitoring tools to combat and prevent child poverty will be on the agenda of the Council as well as the development of conditions for a better integration of third country nationals of different cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to participate actively in European economies and societies. Another important issue to be examined is the promotion of social innovation.

52. The White Paper on Pensions, to be presented by the Commission in the second half of 2011, will be a key document in promoting reflection on adequacy, sustainability and reform of national pension systems.

### **Equality between women and men and anti-discrimination**

53. Gender equality is a fundamental principle of the European Union and goes hand in hand with other strategies for growth, prosperity and welfare. Therefore, in keeping with the Treaty provisions, equality between women and men and the fight against all forms of discrimination will continue to be given both general and specific attention. Gender mainstreaming will be promoted, including within the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, which set an employment rate target of 75% for women and men. Efforts to advance gender equality will be guided by the Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015) as well as by the adapted European Pact for Gender Equality.
54. The Presidencies will in particular focus on the following themes: women and the economy, including the reconciliation of work and family life, e.g. paternity leave; female employment, including the quality of women's jobs; gender equality and management; gender and educational choices; women and the environment as well as combating violence against women. The Presidencies will continue to work on the proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Efforts will be pursued to advance the social and economic inclusion of marginalised groups in line with the commitments that the Council has made in recent years.

## **External dimension of EU employment and social policies**

55. The global financial and economic crisis has led to an intensification of international activities to address the consequences of the crisis in several policy areas, including employment and social policy. This includes enhancing policy dialogues on employment and social issues in international fora such as the International Labour Organisation/United Nations, G20 and the OECD. The International Labour Organisation's *Global Jobs Pact* is considered a central element of the global consensus on the role of employment and social policies in mitigating the impact of the crisis and as central for sustainable recovery and growth. In this regard, the three Presidencies will support actions to be taken at several levels and in different fora.

## **Demography and family policies**

56. The Presidencies will ensure an appropriate follow-up to the Commission's "Demography Update" (2011). These topics will be of a cross-cutting nature and dealt with also within other policy domains.

57. Family policies will, among other issues such as social exclusion and child poverty, be one of the topics of the Commission Communication on Demography. In this context, the Presidencies will use the "European Alliance for Families", created in 2007, which is an instrument dealing with a variety of cross-cutting subjects.

## **Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations**

58. 2012 will be the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. Throughout the year, the three Presidencies will promote active participation in society and the labour market in order to allow older people to use their full potential, by improving working conditions, health and safety at work, adapting lifelong learning systems to the needs of an ageing workforce and ensuring adequate social protection systems. The Presidencies will aim to ensure coherence between this and the 2011 European Year of Volunteering.

## Public health

59. In the field of public health, the three Presidencies will promote actions aimed at improving the health of citizens, their protection against cross-border health threats and the quality of healthcare provided. This will be done in line with the Council Conclusion of June 2006 on common values and principles in European Union Health Systems and the EU Health Strategy for 2008-2013. The three Presidencies will launch work on a possible EU Health Strategy beyond 2013 and on the third programme of EU action in the field of health.
60. Non-communicable diseases and healthy ageing, diseases without borders and innovation and best practice will be the three headlines encompassing the health priorities of the trio Presidency:
61. The three Presidencies will pay special attention to non-communicable diseases and healthy ageing. Non-communicable diseases pose an increasing challenge for the health care systems in the entire European Union. Emphasis will be given to health from early childhood, as a prerequisite and integral part of a healthy ageing process. In the area of health determinants, special attention will be given to anti-tobacco policies, nutrition and physical activity, rare diseases and alcohol related harm. In this respect, the revision of Directive 2001/37/EC concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco products (“Tobacco Products Directive”) is envisaged. The Presidencies will prepare the 5th Conference of the Parties under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, scheduled to take place in the autumn 2012. A possible Commission proposal for a revision of the EU strategy on alcohol and health could be also be discussed

62. The three Presidencies will focus on diseases without borders for the protection of EU citizens from cross-border health threats in EU and neighbouring countries. Furthermore, a discussion will be undertaken regarding the “Health Security Package” aiming at the development of a long-term solution for health security in the EU, notably by reviewing the existing structures under a possible new mandate of the Health Security Committee (HSC) and an update of the Decision 2119/98/EC on communicable diseases and Regulation 852/2004 establishing the European Centre for Disease prevention and Control and reinforcing the cooperation at EU level on serious cross-border health threats, regardless of the origin of the threat (biological, chemical, radio-nuclear etc.).
63. The issue of antimicrobial resistance remains a major concern in the EU as well as internationally. The Commission is expected to present a comprehensive strategy for reducing the antimicrobial resistance which will be followed up with concrete action during the 18 month term.
64. The three Presidencies will wherever possible cooperate with WHO and other relevant international health organisations in order to enhance efforts on important health issues.
65. The three Presidencies will focus on how innovation and best practice in the health care sector can mitigate the challenges of the demographic change in the EU Member States, talking into account the present financial situation in Europe. This offers a great opportunity to the EU’s health care industry, for which the trio Presidency will actively seek to promote an attractive business environment by making the legislative framework less cumbersome and more efficient without compromising patient safety. Innovative approaches to healthcare will be explored, as a cost effective way to meet the healthcare needs of the European citizens.
66. Furthermore, due attention will be paid to the e-health action plan on the basis of a communication and roadmap to be submitted by the Commission.
67. Spreading out best practice in the health care sector can help to close the existing health gaps when it comes to health within the European Union.

## Pharmaceuticals and medical devices

68. The three Presidencies will take forward the work on the proposals amending Regulation (EC) 726/2004 and Directive 2001/83/EC as regards information to the general public on medicinal products for human use subject to medical prescription. During the trio Presidency the Council will actively engage with the following proposals: revision of the Directive 2001/20/EC on clinical trials<sup>1</sup>, Regulation 297/95 on fees payable to the European Agency for the evaluation of medicinal products<sup>2</sup>, draft new Regulation or Directive replacing the Directives 90/385/EEC, 93/42/EEC and 98/79/EC on medical devices<sup>3</sup> and a revision of Directive 2001/82/EC on veterinary medicinal products<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, a proposal for the revision of the Directive 89/105/EEC on transparency of measures regulating the pricing of medicinal products<sup>5</sup> is expected to be submitted during the period under consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2001/20/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 April 2001 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to the implementation of good clinical practice in the conduct of clinical trials on medicinal products for human use.

<sup>2</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 297/95 of 10 February 1995 on fees payable to the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products.

<sup>3</sup> Directives 90/385/EEC, 93/42/EEC and 98/79/EEC.

<sup>4</sup> Directive 2001/82/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to veterinary medicinal products.

<sup>5</sup> Council Directive 89/105/EEC of 21 December 1988 relating to the transparency of measures regulating the prices of medicinal products for human use and their inclusion in the scope of national health insurance systems.

## **Consumer protection**

69. The three Presidencies will be dedicated to promoting a high level of protection of consumers, also with a view to reinforcing the internal market.
70. Work will be launched on two forthcoming proposals which aim at reviewing existing legislation, namely the 90/314/EC on package travel and the Directive on general product safety. The work on these proposals will continue throughout the whole period.
71. The three Presidencies will start work on proposals to be submitted by the Commission, e.g. on Alternative Dispute Resolution or European Contract Law.
72. The Communication on the new Consumer Policy Strategy 2014-2020 which will define the priorities in the field of consumer protection beyond 2013 is expected to be presented by the Commission during the second half of 2011.
73. In the field of international co-operation on protection and promotion of consumer rights, the Presidencies will aim to conclude the two co-operation agreements between the European Union and the United States of America, namely on the enforcement of consumer protection laws and on cooperation and information exchange in the area of consumer product safety.

## **Foodstuff**

74. The Presidencies will promote actions to ensure a high level of food safety and adequate information to consumers, taking into account the work conducted by the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius.
75. They will ensure the formal adoption of the Regulation on the provision of food information to consumers ('food labelling') and start work on the proposal for a Regulation on foodstuffs for particular nutritional (dietetic) uses.

## **COMPETITIVENESS**

76. In the wake of the economic crisis new impetus must be given in order to regain European competitiveness and bring the European economies back on track. The Europe 2020 Strategy has outlined several instruments to enhance European competitiveness, i.e. the Single Market Act as well as the flagship initiatives on Innovation Union, Industrial Policy in a Global Era and on the Digital Agenda. The Presidencies will make sure that the Competitiveness Council contributes in an effective manner to achieving the targets of this strategy by delivering concrete results on the European growth agenda.
77. At the Spring European Council in 2012, Europe needs to show visible progress in delivering on the Europe 2020 targets. The three Presidencies, being among the first presidencies with the responsibility of delivering on Europe 2020, consider that it will be important to establish an effective monitoring system that can help subsequent presidencies to achieve further progress.
78. Council Conclusions concerning the implementation of flagship initiatives in the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy are to be expected under the three presidencies.

## Single Market

79. In 2012 the Single Market will be celebrating its 20th anniversary. The Single Market is one of the greatest achievements of the EU and remains the cornerstone of European integration. It however needs to be continuously adapted and developed in order to obtain further gains in the future, especially with regards to realising the potential of The Digital Single Market. Fraud or abuse of free movement rules need to be monitored and combated. The Single Market remains fragmented in various areas, to the detriment of businesses, in particular SMEs, and citizens. It also needs to respond to new market developments such as the emergence of the digital economy and to new challenges in the context of globalisation. The three Presidencies will continue work on the basis of the final Single Market Act, presented by the Commission in April 2011, with a view to building a highly competitive market economy by boosting competitiveness and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and at the same time providing protection to citizens, consumers and employees. They will treat as a matter of priority the initiatives presented by the Commission in the framework of the Single Market Act with a view to enable their adoption in the time for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Single Market, and emphasise the importance in the spirit of partnership and cooperation of an improved and more uniform implementation, application and enforcement of Single Market regulation. The Presidencies intend in particular to promote close cooperation between the Competitiveness Council and other relevant Council formations to ensure the overall coherence of policies and measures related to the single market.

80. The development of the services sector is crucial to the EU economy since services represent about 70% of EU's GDP. By 2012 the Commission will have completed a comprehensive review exercise on the application of the Services Directive<sup>1</sup>. The Presidencies are determined to promote the full implementation of the Services Directive and the follow-up of the mutual evaluation process that took place in 2010, so as to further enhance the functioning of EU services markets.
81. On the basis of the Commission's green paper, the discussions on issues related to gambling services, in particular with regard to online gambling, will be taken forward.

### **Better regulation**

82. Better Regulation ("Smart Regulation") will be considered as an ongoing priority. In 2007, the European Council endorsed the Commission proposal to set the objective of a 25% reduction of administrative burdens arising from EU legislation for European enterprises by 2012 and invited Member States to set their own national targets. The three Presidencies will analyse whether the target is met, with tangible effects for businesses across Europe. The overall regulatory burden, in particular for SMEs, should be reduced at both European and national levels. The Presidencies will furthermore devote particular attention to impact assessments in decision-making in particular through the implementation of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better law-making as well as the related Common Approach to Impact Assessment. Where appropriate, they will also examine progress made on ex-post evaluation and fitness checks and on consultation.
83. Importance will also be given to improving the adoption and implementation of the current simplification programme. They are looking forward to possible new Commission initiatives on better regulation and will continue to take stock by submitting progress reports or conclusions.

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<sup>1</sup> See actions detailed in the annex to the Communication - *Towards a better functioning Single Market for services - building on the results of the mutual evaluation process of the Services Directive* - COM(2011) 20 of 27 January 2011.

## **Industrial policy, including key enabling technologies and raw materials**

84. Strengthening the competitiveness of Europe is at the heart of the Europe 2020 strategy. Europe's industry, including its large corporations and many millions of SMEs, is the main driver for growth, output, jobs, innovation and export. The new integrated EU industrial policy, one of the Flagship Initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy, is about establishing the right business environment for industry to succeed. Hence, stimulating innovation, competition and investment in know how, guaranteeing a level playing field in both the Single Market and in global markets, and reducing frictions as well as transaction costs in the European economy remain crucial for Europe's competitiveness. At the same time, it has an important task in addressing the specific conditions of individual sectors, such as aerospace, automotive, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and many others, including industry-related services and the service industries in general.
85. Of particular interest are initiatives aiming to achieve a resource-efficient industry including the promotion of environmental technologies and other key enabling technologies. A report of the High Level Group on key enabling technologies is expected in July 2011 and thereafter the Commission may adopt a Communication on this issue.
86. A constant attention will be given to raw materials which are an essential part of both high-tech products and every-day consumer products. European industry needs fair access to raw materials both from within and outside the EU. The three Presidencies will work on the implementation of the March 2011 Council conclusions on raw materials, but new initiatives are not to be excluded given the crucial importance of this issue. Ensuring a secure supply chain and achieving an efficient and sustainable management and use of non-energy raw materials along the entire value chain is one the potential subjects for a European Innovation Partnership identified by the Commission in its Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative "Innovation Union" .
87. Furthermore, the framework on state-aid to shipbuilding expires on 31 December 2011 and is thus expected to be discussed during the Presidency period.

## **Small and medium sized enterprises**

88. In 2010, the Commission set up a SME Finance Forum Group to examine the access to finance for SMEs together with stakeholders from the SMEs and the banking sectors. The Presidencies will follow up on this initiative and further initiatives in this area.
89. The Commission is expected to launch further initiatives before the end of 2011, in particular with a view to strengthening the effects of the SME capital instruments in the CIP. The Presidencies will examine these proposals when they are put forward, including a forthcoming proposal for a European venture scheme and a strengthening of the RSFF as requested by the European Council conclusions from February 2011.
90. Furthermore, the Presidencies will work towards a simplified and focused successor to the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) with a clear focus on improving competitiveness and productivity of SMEs .
91. The Presidencies will take up work on a proposal which the Commission is expected to present in the fourth quarter of 2011 to reinforce support to European SMEs in markets outside the EU. This proposal is likely to include both legislative and non-legislative elements.

## Research and innovation

92. The three Presidencies will take full account of the importance of Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) in the Europe 2020 Strategy, and in particular the "**Innovation Union**" Flagship Initiative, identified as the key area in enhancing competitiveness and smart growth in Europe. Their priorities will be guided by the EU Headline target for research and development as defined by the European Council and the conclusions on innovation adopted by the February 2011 European Council. In particular, they will endeavour to make progress in the following fields:
93. On a cross-cutting basis, a strategic and integrated approach to research and innovation will be encouraged whereby all relevant supply and demand policies and instruments are designed to contribute to research and innovation in the short, medium and long term. Notably, the Commission's proposals in the area of research and innovation will be examined with the aim to promote creation of a coherent knowledge triangle based on a Common Strategic Framework including notably also the European Institute for Innovation and Technology and effective operational links towards the structural funds thus exploiting the regional dimension of RDI. A close cooperation with notably the European Parliament will be sought. With respect to the continuation of the Seventh Euratom Research and Training Programme, the Presidencies will endeavour to find adequate financing solutions for Europe's contribution to the international ITER fusion project for 2012-2013.

94. The Presidencies support endeavours for creating an environment conducive to innovation and in which ideas can be turned into commercial successes more easily, enabling SMEs to innovate and to grow, and creating more high-technology companies. Actions to this effect could include: easing access to finance for RDI purposes by companies, especially SMEs; simplifying and streamlining European programmes and procedures in RDI; making a strategic use of public (including pre-commercial) procurement for innovative products and services; and accelerating and modernising the EU's standardisation procedures. The Presidencies consider these elements as cornerstones towards frontloading growth enhancing measures. With respect to improving framework conditions for research and innovation, it is considered essential to achieve the announced ERA Framework, leading to a well functioning, unified European Research Area in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology can circulate freely. This framework should be contributing to the overall purpose of simplification and be based on the respect of subsidiarity allowing for an asymmetric, flexible and voluntary coordination of national RDI efforts such as Joint Programming.
95. With a view to maximising the impact and efficiency of resources, the Presidencies are looking forward to further developing the concept of European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs).
96. The Presidencies are looking forward to the development of a single integrated indicator on innovation, as decided by the February 2011 European Council, with a view to facilitating the monitoring, at the political level, of the progress towards the Europe 2020 goals in RDI.

## Intellectual property

97. Improving the patent system by making available to the industry, in particular to SMEs, a unitary patent protection which will be cost-efficient and will offer legal certainty is a major priority under the Europe 2020 strategy for employment and growth and will remain a priority aim for the three Presidencies.
98. Another priority will be to create the necessary conditions for the development of new business models giving legitimate access to IP-protected works across the EU. To this effect, the three Presidencies await with increased interest the forthcoming Commission proposals for the adoption of common rules on the protection of orphan works and on the functioning of collecting societies.
99. The trademark system in the EU is currently undergoing a profound review by the Commission. Any forthcoming Commission proposals amending the existing legal acts in this field will be expeditiously examined.
100. The three Presidencies will work towards strengthening IPR protection within the EU by updating and reinforcing the relevant regulatory framework and streamlining enforcement practices.

## Customs Union

101. The three Presidencies will follow closely the implementation of the Modernized Customs Code and of the e-customs Decision, in order to guarantee their practical application for economic operators by 2012.
102. A proposal for amending the Council Regulation concerning customs action against goods suspected of infringing certain intellectual property rights is also likely to be discussed during the 18-month period.
103. At multilateral level, the three Presidencies will deal with initiatives conducted by the World Customs Organization. The negotiations on the Protocol on the illicit trade in tobacco products will also be prepared with a view to its finalisation in 2012.
104. At bilateral level, important agreements with major trading partners in view of balancing security concerns and trade facilitation measures should be negotiated and concluded.
105. The new EU Customs Action Plan to combat the intellectual property infringements for the years 2013-2016 should be discussed. The three Presidencies will prepare the new decision on customs 2020 programme in order to ensure financing customs cooperation between the European Commission, Member States, candidate countries, potential candidate countries and third countries. In the context of continued work on the Eastern Partnership initiatives a strategy for cooperation with Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus in the field of customs is likely to be discussed by the Council during the 18 months period.

## Company law

106. The three Presidencies will focus on simplification, revision and possible modernisation of existing rules. This concerns the amendment of the 1st, 10th and 11th Company Law Directives ("CLDs"), and the 4th and 7th Company Law (Accounting) Directives. They will work on the Commission's proposal on the interconnection of business registers.
107. Within the process of "Rethinking European Company Law", matters such as a Statute for European Foundation, the cross-border transfer of seat and a European Company Model will be addressed.
108. Further to the review of the SE (Societas Europea) Regulation, and the future evaluation of the Regulation on the **European Cooperative Society** ("ECS Regulation"), and depending on their results, the Commission will possibly submit legislative proposals on these two matters.

## Competition

109. As a follow-up to the "White Paper on damages actions for breach of the EC antitrust rules", a communication is expected to be submitted by the Commission during the period. The proposal will build on the outcome of the consultation on the future White Paper on Consumer Collective Redress.
110. Also, the three Presidencies will do their utmost to conclude the cooperation agreements with Canada and Switzerland by the end of their term.

## **Public procurement**

111. The three Presidencies will seek to reach agreement on an appropriate legislative framework for the award of concession contracts on services (expected to be submitted mid-2011) and on the proposals for simplifying and updating the EU public procurement Directives (expected before the end of 2011) and will start work on the proposal for a Regulation on the access of third country companies and goods to the EU public procurement market (expected to be submitted by the end of 2011).

## **Technical harmonisation and standardisation**

112. In the area of technical harmonisation, the Commission intends to propose in 2011 the alignment of ten Directives - such as the Directives on pyrotechnic articles, lifts or pressure equipment - to the New Legislative Framework. The three Presidencies will work towards the swift adoption of these proposals.

113. Work will be taken forward on the legislative proposal on European standardisation for the year 2020 which the Commission is expected to submit during the first half of 2011. The proposal will underscore the importance of effective standardisation as a tool to facilitate the marketing of products in Europe. It will address the role and the financing of European standardisation bodies, the recognition of de-facto standards under certain conditions and the importance of standards in services.

## Space

114. The Presidencies will ensure the necessary follow-up to the Commission communication "Towards a space strategy for the European Union that benefits its citizen" with a view to pushing forward this important policy area.
115. Intensive work will be conducted with regard to GMES and the European Space Programme. The Galileo satellite navigation system should be brought to Initial Operational Capability by 2014/2015. A Regulation governing the initial operations of the GMES programme 2011-2013 was adopted in 2010 by the European Parliament and the Council. The GMES programme now has a
116. legal basis that makes it more than a research activity. The priority of the three Presidencies is to ensure that the programme is implemented quickly and effectively, so that it can become fully operational by 2014.
117. Work on Space Exploration will concentrate on pursuing international cooperation with all major and emerging space faring nations: the follow-up on the 1st International Platform on Space Exploration is due to take place in late 2011.

## **Tourism**

118. The three Presidencies will pay particular attention to tourism as a new area of competence, as introduced by the Lisbon Treaty. Specifically, work will be conducted on the basis of a coordinated approach for tourism initiatives as set out in the Commission communication entitled "Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe" of July 2010 and of the Council conclusions of October 2010. The Presidencies will follow closely the implementation of the actions as set out in the Communication and invite the Commission to regularly inform Member States on the state of play.
119. Having in mind, on one hand, the enormous growth potential of tourism and, on the other hand, the number of challenges that the sector faces, the three presidencies will put emphasis, inter alia, on promoting sustainable and competitive tourism and on actions related to better integrating tourism into the various policies.

## TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATION AND ENERGY

### TRANSPORT

120. Discussions on a new European transport policy will be prominent in the next years to come, including mobility, innovation (new technologies), sustainability, strengthening of passenger rights, security and safety of means of transport and of passengers as well as the improvement of social conditions of transport workers.

#### Horizontal issues

121. The White Paper "*Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system*" - will guide the activities and priority setting of the three Presidencies. It will outline the EU transport action programme and define the overall framework for actions in the fields of transport infrastructure, internal market legislation, technology for traffic management and clean vehicles, and the use of market based instruments and incentives.

122. The Presidencies will pay particular attention to the revision of the current Regulation on TEN-T Guidelines and the examination of a report on the progress of the TEN-T priority projects and TEN-T policy and its extension to third countries. The legislative proposal is expected to introduce a dual layer approach, focusing on a core network and on the social, economic and territorial cohesion between all regions of the EU.

123. With regard to other horizontal issues, Presidencies will look at the Strategic Transport Technology Plan (STTP), which is expected to provide a strategic framework for research and technological development and deployment, based on policy needs and on a vision for an integrated efficient and environmentally friendly transport system at the 2050 horizon. The Presidencies will also consider the examination of proposals for a set of legislation introducing the deployment of new technologies across various transport modes in support of an efficient and sustainable transport system.
124. Attention will also be paid to the Commission Communication on Clean transport systems with a consistent long-term strategy on a large-scale substitution of oil by alternative fuels in the whole transport system, assessing the status and perspectives of clean systems, with a focus on alternative fuel technologies such as electric vehicles, hydrogen/fuel cells, bio fuels, natural gas and synthetic fuels.
125. Attention will be paid to the examination of a Commission Communication on passenger rights taking stock of the situation of passenger rights in all modes of transport. It could flag the possibilities for further initiatives and discuss the state of play regarding the implementation of regulations of passenger rights legislation, the increased use of new business practices and existing practices not covered by current legislation. The Commission may come forward with new proposals in this area.
126. The Presidencies will pay due attention to the recently adopted White Paper on a roadmap to a single European transport area in relation to transport, security and safety.
127. Intensive work will be conducted with regard to GALILEO with a view to preparing the exploitation phase aiming at its Full Operational Capability (FOC) in the years to come.

## **Land transport**

128. The Presidencies will continue to work on the recast of the first railway package with a view to reaching a final agreement with the European Parliament.
129. As regards road safety issues, the Presidencies will continue the work on the Directive on Cross Border Enforcement seeking to ensure its final adoption or trying to reach an agreement with the European Parliament and will launch the work on possible follow-up proposals concerning the Fourth Road Safety Programme for the period 2011-2020 and a proposal to amend the Directive on Roadworthiness Tests for Motor Vehicles and their Trailers.

## **Maritime transport**

130. It is essential to develop and secure the international competitiveness of European maritime transport. The skills and qualifications seafarers in European waters are an integral part thereof. In light of this, the Presidencies will pay special attention to the examination of a Commission proposal for a legislative package on the social dimension of shipping ("Package on a Social Maritime Agenda") covering the "human element" of maritime transport.

## Aviation

131. In this area, the three Presidencies attach the greatest importance to the full implementation of the Single European Sky II (SES II) and Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs). The SES II package aims at improving aviation performance with the adoption of a detailed set of rules, performance targets and guidance on FABs.
132. The three Presidencies will give due attention to the set of initiatives addressing the airport policy (the "Airport Package"). Particular attention will be given to the implementation of the capacity action plan and in this context airport capacity assessment methodology, the need to review the slots Regulation, the Groundhandling Directive, the collection of related data at EU level to allow for a more efficient use of airport space and improve quality and, finally, a proposal concerning the assessment and management of environmental noise.

## TELECOMMUNICATION

133. The Digital Agenda for Europe, which is one of the seven flagships in the Europe 2020 Strategy, will be implemented continuously through all three presidencies. The further development towards a fully functioning digital single market will be a key objective aiming at delivering sustainable economic and societal benefits for all in Europe.
134. The adoption of the Radio Spectrum Policy Programme defining strategic orientations for the EU spectrum policy as well as the spectrum management coordination within the digital dividend will be another main objective in order to stimulate broadband take up and roll out in Europe.
135. Based on the Commission's assessment on the need to review the universal service obligations, the Presidencies will continue work on the future of universal service in electronic communications and users' rights.
136. Secure networks and information as well as building trust and ensuring the citizens' privacy will remain continuous priorities in the digital age. In order to better respond to network and information security threats and to promote the issue of network resilience and raise awareness of best practices on these issues among EU member countries, the Presidencies will continue to work towards swift adoption of the Regulation modernising the European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA).
137. The Presidencies will give high priority to the review of the roaming Regulation on the basis of a report from the Commission in June 2011 and a proposal for a new regulation.

138. The Presidencies will support the development of cross-border e-Government services designed around users' needs and aiming to increase efficiency and effectiveness of public administrations, in line with the provisions of The European e-Government Action Plan 2011-2015.
139. In particular, a review of the eSignature Directive which provides a framework for Electronic identity (eID) and authentication as well as the review of the Directive on re-use of public sector information will be discussed on the basis of the forthcoming Commission proposals. These initiatives are essential in order to encourage the development of a dynamic digital single market.

## ENERGY

140. Taking full account of the orientations of the February 2011 European Council as well as the 2020 Energy Strategy Council conclusions, the three Presidencies will focus on the implementation of the Energy Strategy 2020, including its Infrastructure chapter and Energy Efficiency Plan. In this context, they will also address the associated financing instruments as well as the completion of its missing parts such as the Energy Roadmap 2050, in the fourth quarter of 2011, and the External dimension chapter, expected in mid 2011.
141. Regarding the Internal Energy Market, although national legislations transposing the 3rd Internal Energy Market Package should be in place in March 2011, their implementation and the completion of all the regulatory work will only have started. It will thus be vital to monitor this implementation and support all the actions that can contribute to the better functioning of the market such as the proposed Regulation for Energy Market Integrity and Transparency and legislative or policy initiatives to reinforce cooperation at the regional level (second half of 2011).
142. Priority should be given to concluding the legislative process on this legislative instrument in 2012 to trigger the necessary action on the ground in time for reaching the 2020 energy efficiency targets. The Commission intends to supplement these initiatives with adoption of new ecodesign and energy labelling measures: the launching of the Smart Cities and Smart Communities initiatives; and proposals on financing tools which will be brought forward during the budgetary discussions of 2011. On the external side this will be mirrored by the negotiation and adoption of a modernised Energy Star agreement with the US and the corresponding internal EU legislation.

143. As regards the building of the pan-European integrated market, called for by the Strategy 2020, and the corresponding Infrastructure projects for the 2020-2030 horizon, the whole framework will have to be reviewed through the adoption of a New Instrument for Energy Security and Infrastructure. This will cover the selection of projects, more efficient planning and authorization procedures, the funding available under the EU budget as well as the adaptation of networks to low-carbon energy (smart grids).
144. While the swift deployment of this infrastructure programme will support the EU diversification drive, due importance will also be given to indigenous energy sources (conventional and unconventional) and notably to renewable sources of energy. In this respect the implementation of the Directive on energy from renewable sources will be followed up with respect to the sustainability of bio fuels and to the financing and coordination with a view to achieving the 20% target and intensifying the work on the integration of renewables in power networks. This will also be achieved through regulatory initiatives on smart grids as well as on the promotion of electric vehicles. Adequate support to the continuing implementation of the SET-Plan will also play a key role for renewables and facilitate the clean use of other sources.
145. The safety of energy-related activities should not be compromised for the sake of security of supply. To that effect the Presidencies will ensure the follow-up to the 2010 Council conclusions on offshore gas and oil activities leading to the upgrade of the regulatory framework for these activities. Along the same lines, the Presidencies will work towards completing the regulatory framework for activities related to nuclear energy, as regards radioactive waste and spent fuel and the revision of the Directive setting Basic Safety Standards for ionizing radiations. The three Presidencies will ensure the follow-up to the march 2011 European Council Conclusions on the Safety of nuclear plants. A related urgent priority will be to work on an initiative leading to the secure supply of radioisotopes for medical use in Europe.

146. Regarding the external dimension of the energy policy, the Presidencies will aim to develop a framework for a more coherent, credible and consistent external action on the basis of the Commission communication on security of supply and international cooperation.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

147. During the 18-month term of the three Presidencies, the Council activity in the field of environment will reflect several intertwined key priorities.

148. The Council will have to take decisions on environmental protection and sustainable development, maintaining high quality standards. This is highly relevant as its work in this area impacts - and is influenced by - other EU strategies/policies, mainly Europe 2020.

149. With the current focus on economic and financial issues, the Presidencies will have to play a key role in the coordination of the various policies and actions, in order to continue to transform environment into an engine for employment and sustainable growth, taking into consideration that future economic growth is fundamentally dependent on ensuring the preservation of natural resources.

### **Resource efficiency**

150. The implementation of the resource efficiency flagship initiative will be a priority, covering a number of actions, including the ones for low-carbon, energy efficiency, transport, water, biodiversity and raw materials.

151. Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) are major axes of the EU Sustainable Development action and, simultaneously, they are reflected in the Europe 2020 Strategy and other strategic and longer term programmes (like, for example, the Broad Economic Guidelines for the economic policies). The Commission announced that its environmental work in 2011 and 2012 will concentrate on this particular topic. Therefore, the Presidencies will act in terms of political guidelines (Council Conclusions) and/or legislative initiatives, in relation to the European semester of the Europe 2020 strategy, the revision of the SCP Action Plan, the greening of some sectoral policies (such as the CAP), water policy, green public procurement, eco-design, waste etc.
152. Related to resources efficiency and natural resources management, water will be an area of particular interest for the Presidencies, following the work of the Hungarian Presidency. A "Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources" will be presented in 2012, in line with the "Year of the Water" 2012.

### **Biodiversity**

153. The need to make clearer the economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services is a recurrent priority, as well as that to secure sufficient funding for the implementation of biodiversity actions (especially after the positive Nagoya COP 10 decisions on the Convention on Biodiversity). Therefore, the Council will have to ensure, in 2011 and 2012, the effective implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and of the Strategic Plan of the CBD as well as the management of Natura 2000 areas, including appropriate funding.

### **Human Health and the Environment**

154. Building on the work of previous Presidencies as well as on the future Commission's proposals, the Council will address several topics, such as chemical policies, priority substances, nanomaterials, air pollution, mercury etc.

## **Environmental governance**

155. Environmental governance, both within the EU and internationally, remains a continuous concern and will therefore be another priority of the three Presidencies.
156. Among others, the Council, on the basis of relevant Commission proposals, will have to appropriately design various instruments needed to ensure the achievement of the environmental objectives.
157. At the global level, the governance discussion will concentrate on the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (UNCSD 2012 - "Rio+ 20") and will likely develop into a wider reflection on designing an appropriate and effective institutional architecture for sustainable development, taking into account evolutions on various fronts. Taking into account the international calendar, the (Environment) Council will have to debate on the EU's own Sustainable Development Strategy (apart from the work related to the Europe 2020 Strategy).
158. Another highly relevant governance topic will be the evaluation of the current (6th) EU Environment Action Program (ending in mid-2012), and its renewal. As mentioned above, the Council will have to deal with instruments such as the Action Plans for Biodiversity, water, chemicals (mercury) etc.

## **International issues**

159. The international environmental calendar will be very dense, and therefore the three Presidencies will devote many efforts to the adoption of negotiating directives and common positions and ensure effective European representation at international meetings.

160. During the period under consideration, the Council will be called to prepare a significant number of international events, several at high(est) level. The most relevant events will be:

- the 2012 "Rio + 20" Conference: this will mark the 20th anniversary in 2012 of the Rio Conference on environment and development;
- UNFCCC - UN Climate change - COP Conference of the Parties. COP17 meeting in Durban South Africa
- United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP - annual meetings of the Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environmental Forum;
- UN Commission for Sustainable Development, CSD - annual meetings (divided in review and policy years)
- UN Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD - next Conference of the Parties, COP, COP 11, which will take place in 2012, back to back with the next meeting of the Parties to the MOP Protocol on Bio safety;
- UN Economic Commission for Europe, UNECE - 2011 Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", to take place in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- Basel Convention (Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste) COP to take place in October 2011 in Colombia.
- various meetings of the body (INC) in charge for the negotiation of a new legally binding instrument on mercury that will continue during 2011 and 2012.

## Climate change

161. The negotiations on an international climate change regime for the period after 2012 will be at a crucial stage, with far-reaching consequences for the effectiveness of multilateral governance, during the entire period. The positive momentum from the Cancun Conference at the end of 2010 has to be preserved in order to obtain and implement a global, comprehensive and legally-binding agreement.
162. The three Presidencies undertake to co-ordinate the EU's position effectively throughout the whole process, in particular the preparation of the Conference of the Parties in November/December 2011 in Durban/South Africa (UNFCCC COP 17/Kyoto Protocol MOP 7) and the subsequent COP 18/MOP 8 at the end of 2012.
163. The work within the EU, both regarding mitigation and adaptation, context is as important as the work in the international framework. On the basis of the 2050 roadmap towards a low carbon economy presented by the Commission, the EU has to develop a strategic perspective. Due consideration will be given to fixing intermediary stages towards reaching the 2050 objective. This has to be done in close inter-relation with the EU 2020 Strategy and its flagship initiative on resource efficiency. The implementation of the EU's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions requires consistent orientations of other EU policies (like energy, transport, agriculture). The Presidencies will help ensure that a comprehensive new adaptation strategy to climate change is developed by the end of 2012.

164. The Presidencies will also organise the appropriate follow-up to a number of important legislative reviews and reports in the climate policy area. Themes to be examined range from the monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions to the containment, recovery and use of fluorinated greenhouse gases. In relation to the 2009 Climate/Energy legislative package, the Commission is expected to provide reviews in 2011 on the greenhouse gas impacts of indirect land use change linked to biofuels and of land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF). Depending on developments in international fora, it might become necessary in 2012 to discuss the EU's approach on shipping emissions. The effectiveness and adequacy of the EU's current greenhouse gas reduction commitment till 2020 and the possibility of moving to a more ambitious commitment will be examined in the light of international negotiations and the analysis of economic impacts in the EU.

## AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

### AGRICULTURE

165. The main focus will be on the reform of the Common Agriculture Policy for the period after 2013. The three Presidencies will give priority to the examination of the Commission proposals (expected in the second half of 2011) with a view to achieving decisive progress, which also depends on the progress made in the negotiations on the post 2013 Financial Perspective that are conducted in parallel. The aim is to enable timely implementation of the reformed instruments for the period of the next Financial Framework starting in 2014.
166. Simplification will be kept on the agenda with a view to cutting red tape in the administration of farm payments and other CAP instruments and to repealing obsolete legislation. Furthermore the Presidencies will seek to achieve an agreement with the European Parliament on the definition, description, labelling and protection of aromatised wines.
167. Work on the Agriculture Product Quality Package, for which the Commission has tabled its legislative proposals in December 2010, will be carried forward with a view to adopting new legislation in parallel with the negotiations on the reform of the CAP. Based on the Commission's expected report on organic farming, the discussion of this dossier will also be carried forward, possibly leading to proposals for modification of the relevant legislation.
168. The Council will take forward work on the adaptation of agricultural legislation to the Lisbon Treaty, in particular concerning the delegated and implementing powers of the Commission (Articles 290 TFEU and 291 TFEU) and on the identification of the issues foreseen by the Treaty for decision by the Council under Article 43(3) TFEU.

169. During 2011, the Commission is expected to put forward a legislative proposal on the electronic identification of bovine and on beef labelling.
170. Regarding the WTO/DDA negotiations, the Presidencies remain committed to a successful, ambitious, balanced and comprehensive outcome to these negotiations, for which the elements relating to agriculture in a possible final agreement should remain within the framework of the CAP.

### **Animal health and veterinary issues**

171. Particular efforts will be made as concerns the work in the field of animal and public health: Work will be undertaken on a series of major legislative proposals, encompassing new framework legislation ("Animal Health Law"), as well as the revision of a substantial number of legislative acts regarding specific animal diseases.
172. This package will be accompanied by the review of current rules on expenditure in the veterinary field and an overhaul of EU legislation regarding official controls, including veterinary border controls of animal products and live animals from third countries.

### **Phytosanitary issues**

173. A proposal for a new Seed Law will be submitted to the Council in the mid of 2012. It will respond to the need for a more modern and simple regime to replace the present 12 basic Directives from the 60's and 70's.

174. In 2012 the Commission will present a new plant health strategy replacing the current EU Common Plant Health Regime (Directive 2000/29/EC). The objective of the new strategy will be to react to recent challenges such as globalisation and climate change in order to protect the territory of the EU from the introduction and spread of harmful organisms.
175. The Commission is expected to present by the end of 2011 a report on the establishment of a European Fund for minor uses of plant protection products, possibly accompanied by a legislative proposal
176. It is equally foreseen that a modification proposal on the protection of plant variety rights will be presented to the Council in 2012.

### **GMOs**

177. On GMO cultivation, the Commission is expected to continue work towards a complete implementation of the December 2008 Council Conclusions concerning the EU policy in this field.
178. The Council will continue to work on the Commission proposal for a regulation giving Member States the possibility to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of GMOs in their territories.

### **Forests**

179. Regarding the issue of forests, the three Presidencies will focus on sustainable forest management and its important contribution to a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, as well as to mitigating the impact of and adapting to climate change. In addition, the Presidencies will devote special attention to the possible adoption of a pan-European legally binding agreement on forests.

## **International issues**

180. The EU will continue to play a leading and effective role on the international scene. To this end the EU's position in the relevant international fora will be well prepared in Council, taking careful account of the expert input which each Member State is able to provide. On the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation in particular, the Presidencies will continue to make every effort to ensure that the EU and its Member States can effectively contribute to the work on FAO reform within the FAO governing bodies and on global governance for food security within the Committee on World Food Security in FAO, bearing in mind the increasing normative role of FAO.

## **FISHERIES**

181. In the fisheries sector high priority will be attached to the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. The three Presidencies will make every effort to achieve agreement on the three legislative proposals (the basic Regulation; the common market organisation and the successor to the European Fisheries Fund which runs out at the end of 2013) during the 18 month period.
182. The Communication on the reformed international dimension of the CFP covering Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and the Fisheries Partnership Agreements (FPAs) will also be examined in detail.
183. The three Presidencies will pay special attention to a number of multi-annual management and recovery plans, in particular those for cod and bluefin tuna, and, in the Baltic Sea, for cod, salmon and pelagic stocks.

184. Effort management will be addressed as well, including the revision of effort for deep-sea species and in Western waters.
185. The setting of the TACs and quotas for 2012 and 2013 is an annual exercise to which great importance will be attached and which will be steered in a responsible and efficient manner.
186. Shark finning remains a sensitive issue and the revision to the existing Regulation will be examined.
187. Bilateral and multilateral negotiations (including on the costal agreement on mackerel, the agreement with Norway and negotiations at ICCAT), which are of major importance for the EU fisheries sector, will also be high on the agenda, especially in the final months of 2011 and of 2012. A number of Fisheries Partnership Agreements will be up for renewal, including notably those with Mauritania and Greenland.

## **EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE, AUDIOVISUAL AND SPORT**

188. The policy areas of the Education, Youth, Culture, Audiovisual and Sport are highly relevant to the lives of ordinary EU citizens. These sectors are of increasing importance for the future growth, economic prosperity and social cohesion of the EU. The need to equip all EU citizens with the education and skills needed for the 21st century labour market has become a centrepiece of the Europe 2020 strategy. At the same time, dealing with the crippling problem of youth unemployment is high on the agenda of the EU.
189. A key challenge for the three Presidencies will be to examine and reach agreement, together with the European Parliament, on the future EU funding in these sectors.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

190. In recognition of a key contribution to employability, competitiveness and innovation whilst promoting social cohesion and inclusion, education now finds itself securely anchored in the new *Europe 2020* strategy for jobs and growth. The three Presidencies will work closely together to ensure that European cooperation in the field of education and training plays a full and active part in setting Europe on the path to economic and social recovery.

### Europe 2020

191. A continuing task for the Presidencies will be to monitor education's contribution to the *Europe 2020* strategy and its associated flagship initiatives, particularly in the light of the two targets set in this field by the European Council, namely reducing the early-school leaving rates to less than 10%, and increasing the share of 30-34 years old having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40%. They will continue to contribute to defining and strengthening the link between the "Education and Training 2020" strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training and the broader *Europe 2020* strategy. The first progress report under the new strategic framework will be considered for adoption in early 2012. In particular, the priorities agreed under the first "Education and Training 2020" work cycle will be reviewed and the main priorities set for the second work cycle (2012-2014).

## **Lifelong Learning and Mobility**

192. Attention will focus during the early part of the term on competences which support lifelong learning and mobility, especially on language competences, while one dossier certain to dominate the agendas of all three Presidencies is the successor to the current Lifelong Learning Programme, which will expire at the end of 2013. All three Presidencies will ensure a thorough examination by the Council of the Commission proposal for a new programme expected during the final quarter of 2011. Since one of the essential components of the Lifelong Learning Programme is mobility, consideration will be given to the Commission proposals on the creation of European benchmark on mobility and employability as well as on languages.
193. Within the lifelong learning framework the Presidencies will have continued focus on Vocational Education and Training as reflected in the Copenhagen Process and more recently in the Bruges Communiqué.

## **European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning**

194. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is regarded as having the potential to make a significant difference in terms of promoting lifelong learning, facilitating mobility and enhancing skills throughout Europe, by enabling comparisons with equivalent qualifications in other Member States. Evaluation of the implementation phase of the EQF is scheduled to take place during 2012 in preparation for the drafting of a report to the European Parliament and the Council by the Spring of 2013 on the progress made so far and implications for the future.

## **Non-formal and Informal Learning**

195. The Presidencies will in particular work on a Commission Proposal for a Council Recommendation to increase opportunities for non-formal and informal learning and to strengthen provisions for the recognition and validation of such learning within national qualifications frameworks. In this context, the importance of ensuring life-enhancing learning opportunities for young people with disadvantaged backgrounds will continue to be emphasized.

## **Higher education**

196. The three Presidencies will endeavour to address some of the key challenges facing higher education, i.a. the need for more young people to enter and complete higher education, the increasing global competition to attract the best students in view of Europe's interest to improve its position in key strategic areas such as research and innovation. The modernisation of universities is of major importance in this regard. The Presidencies will accordingly give due attention to the follow-up to the communication on the modernisation of higher education which the Commission is expected to present in the second half of 2011.

197. In parallel with moves to promote a strategic innovation agenda in association with the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, further efforts will be made on the education side to reinforce interaction between the three sides of the knowledge triangle: education, research and innovation.

198. In the broader context of the Bologna Process, a ministerial conference that is to be held in April 2012 will consider the establishment of a new work plan and the setting of novel priorities for the period 2012-2015. The Bologna follow-up Group as well as the Bologna Board will also meet later in 2012, in order to develop a coherent work plan, which will be implemented for the period 2012-2015.

### **Schools**

199. Counterbalancing some of the more skills- and employment-related issues covered during their 18-month term, the three Presidencies will also promote the subject of education for democratic citizenship. Taking as a starting point one of the eight key competences defined in the 2006 Recommendation - *Social and Civic Competences* - it will consider how education can contribute to promoting and advancing the concepts of democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and respect for civil and human rights as well as equitable access to education.

### **Entrepreneurship**

200. At all levels of education, the Presidencies will also promote the concept of entrepreneurship. The purpose is to support European and national efforts to foster creativity and entrepreneurship in education. The overall aim is to enhance Europe's ability to participate in a knowledge based and innovative economy. This priority is in line with the flagship initiative under Europe 2020 "An Agenda for new Skills and Jobs".

## YOUTH

201. Within this area, the overall theme for the three Presidencies will be youth participation which is one of the eight fields of actions set out in the Council Resolution of 2009 on the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018).
202. During the first six months the focus will be on "youth and the world", with a special focus on increasing cooperation between young people from the European Union and youth from Eastern Europe and Caucasus countries with particular regard to youth mobility through non-formal education and volunteering. "Youth and the world" is one of the eight fields of actions set out in the Council Resolution adopted in 2009. It has important links with the Europe 2020 flagship initiative "Youth on the move".
203. In addition, promoting youth participation in volunteering and highlighting global participation will be important elements in the context of the European Year of Voluntary Activities 2011 and the EU-China Youth Year 2011. During the middle six months the focus will be on "innovation and creativity" and its role in stimulating youth participation. Particular attention will be paid to talented youth and work will seek to build on various initiatives launched during the European Year on Creativity and Innovation. During the final six months, the focus will be on youth participation and on social inclusion. "Participation" and "Social Inclusion" are two other of the eight fields of actions set out in the 2009 Council Resolution. In addition, activities linked to the flagship initiative "Youth on the move" will be promoted in the context of the European Year for Active Aging and Solidarity between Generations 2012.
204. A key priority for all three Presidencies will be the future shape of the "Youth in Action" Programme which is the EU spending programme in the field of youth. The midterm evaluation of the existing programme, adopted in April 2011, will inform the work on the Commission's proposal for a new programme expected towards the end of 2011. Reaching an agreement on the proposal will be a key objective for 2012 for the new programme.

## CULTURE

205. In accordance with the recommendation of the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014, adopted by the Council in 2010, the three Presidencies will devote a significant part of their agenda to the next generation funding programme in the area of culture, and also, if appropriate, to the successor to the Europe for Citizens programme, on the basis of the Commission proposal expected by the end 2011.
206. Specific emphasis will be put on examining how to maximise culture's input into the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy. In this context, as well as in the context of the Work Plan, the Presidencies will highlight the importance of cultural competences for the development of Europe's intellectual capital. Synergies between education and culture will also be examined.
207. The three Presidencies will also follow up a planned Commission communication on the cultural and creative industries. These industries are a principal driver of creativity and innovation and constitute an important part of the "Innovation Union" and "An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era" flagship initiatives.
208. This period is also likely to see the submission of a Commission proposal for a decision on the European Capital of Culture beyond 2019. This will be the trigger to start discussions which will look at the future development of this well-known EU cultural initiative. The preservation and protection of the cultural heritage of Europe is an overarching theme.
209. The three Presidencies wish to develop a strategic approach to culture in external relations, thus enhancing cooperation in this field in order to promote cultural diversity and to ensure the visibility of culture in international decision making. Particular attention will be given to the Eastern Partnership and Mediterranean countries.

## AUDIOVISUAL POLICY

210. The principal focus of the Presidencies will be the next generation of two funding programmes in the audiovisual area. Firstly, the MEDIA programme, which is the main financing instrument in the field. Secondly, the possible continuation of the current MEDIA MUNDUS programme, which is the first international cooperation programme for the audiovisual industry. The three Presidencies will seek to reach final agreement on the Commission proposals, which are expected to be presented to the Council towards the end of 2011.
211. New digital technologies allow cultural and creative content to be distributed in a quicker, cheaper and wider manner. On the other hand, Europe needs new business models to remunerate fairly the authors and creators, thus preserving cultural diversity. A strategy on how to use the opportunities and face the threats which the digital revolution has created is outlined in the Digital Agenda for Europe. In light of this, the three Presidencies will begin work on some of the objectives of the Digital Agenda.
212. The three presidencies will respond to the Commission Communication on digitisation and digital preservation, which is expected to be published in 2011 and which will give an overview of the progress on digitisation and digital preservation in the Member States, as well as an update on the development of Europeana - the EU public digital library - and on the findings of the "Comité des Sages", the reflection group on digitisation established in 2010. The three Presidencies also look forward to the Green Paper on Creative Content On-Line. On the basis of an expected proposal from the Commission the three Presidencies will give priority to reaching agreement on the sustainable financing of Europeana.

213. The three Presidencies also look forward to the Green Paper on opportunities and challenges of online distribution of audiovisual works and other creative content, and will ensure that the work on audiovisual matters is appropriately linked to the work in the copyright area on issues such as rights clearance, licensing systems and orphan works.
214. Regarding cinema, the focus will be on digitalisation of European cinema which will be the subject of a planned Commission Recommendation, and on rules on State aid to cinematographic and other audiovisual works with a view to the renewal in 2012 of the Commission's Cinema Communication.
215. If Europeana, the EU public digital library, is to fulfil its potential to become a point of reference for the public in terms of European cultural on-line heritage, it will be necessary to reach agreement on the sustainable financing of the project. The three will also address issues such as rights clearance, licensing systems and orphan works.
216. A Commission report on the implementation of the EU's regulatory framework for audiovisual services, the Audiovisual Media Services (AVMS) Directive will also be addressed by the Council.
217. The three Presidencies will also address the Commission's Report on the application of the Recommendation on the Protection of Minors as well as the proposal on the Safer Internet Programme.
218. A report by the Commission on media literacy in the Member States is also expected.

## SPORT

219. In response to the Commission Communication on developing the European dimension in sport, the Council established in May 2011 an EU Work Plan in the field of sport for 2011-2014. The EU Work Plan sets out various priority areas and a provisional timetable for actions.
220. Against this background, the three Presidencies will address threats to the integrity of sport as well as the social, societal and economic dimensions of sport as its overall priorities. In line with the Lisbon Treaty it is important for the EU to strengthen its role in the international fight against doping in sports, notably through enhanced coordination before meetings of WADA (World Anti-doping Agency).
221. In addition, issues arising from the recreational use of doping, which not only harms the image of sport, but also poses a serious threat to individual health will be addressed. Consequently the Presidencies will promote the role of sport as health enhancing physical activity, by recommending coordinated policies and best practices. Other issues that need to be examined are match fixing, quality of life and health enhancing activities as well as volunteering, especially for senior citizens and, possibly, improvement of the evidence base of sport policies.
222. The Commission is expected to submit a proposal regarding possibilities for financing sports projects at EU level for the period post 2013.

## **JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**

### **HOME AFFAIRS**

#### **General**

223. Work in the area of Justice and Home Affairs will continue within the framework of the Stockholm Programme. Four overarching principles will define activities in this area:

- Coherence of actions and policies among the area of JHA and other EU policies, notably as regards fundamental rights and migration policy and developments in the policy areas of trade, foreign affairs and development.
- Increased cooperation and complementarity among action taken at the national and action taken at the EU level.
- Necessary flexibility to respond timely to emerging challenges and changing trends in migration flows.
- Enhanced solidarity among Member States, including sharing of responsibilities as outlined in the Stockholm Programme.

#### **Free Movement of EU Citizens**

224. During the coming 18 months, efforts to monitor the full implementation and application of rules on the free movement of EU citizens and their family members will continue. Monitoring trends, exchange of information, as well as combating of systemic fraud and abuse will remain key objectives.

## External Borders

225. Work will be taken forward on the integrated border management system in order to better manage migration and to protect external borders more efficiently, through the further development of the common visa policy, as well as through the development of the "smart border" concept. Work will focus in particular on the immediate follow-up to Council Conclusions on activities to better handle the situation in the Southern Mediterranean and also the possibilities which new and interoperable technologies offer for improving border control, in a cost effective manner while facilitating the movement of *bona fide* travellers. A "needs based" approach will be developed, within a spirit of solidarity, and by drawing on the lessons learnt in the development of existing systems.
226. The three Presidencies will seek to promote improved effectiveness of existing border control instruments by ensuring the adoption and implementation of the FRONTEX Amendment Regulation by making necessary amendments to the Schengen Borders Code, and by providing ongoing support to the work of FRONTEX.
227. The legislative instruments underpinning the development of an entry / exit system, a Registered Traveller Programme, and the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) will be initiated.
228. The successful enlargement of the Schengen zone as well as improvements in efficiency of the Schengen evaluation process remain key goals. The three Presidencies will also work towards the finalisation of the SIS II project as scheduled, and taking also into account the assessment of progress achieved. Fully establishing and bringing into operation the IT Agency will remain a key objective.

## Visas

229. The three Presidencies will pursue the development of the common visa policy by taking forward the visa liberalisation dialogues with relevant third countries, which meet the relevant conditions, concluding visa facilitation agreements where appropriate, and the roll out of the VIS. The three Presidencies will endeavour to strengthen local Schengen Cooperation taking into account, *inter alia*, the challenges of implementing the Visa Code. Furthermore Regulation (EC) no 539/2001 will be kept under review and updated as necessary and appropriate.

## Legal Migration and Integration of third country nationals

230. The development of a common immigration policy, capable of responding to future demographic challenges and to the needs of the labour markets of individual Member States will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy. This will take place in full respect of the principle of "Union preference" and in conformity with the competences of Member States.

231. During the next 18 months the Council will focus in particular on the finalisation of the legal instruments required for the purpose of implementing the **Policy Plan on Legal Migration**. A strategic debate on the consolidation of legislation in this area will be initiated.

232. In the area of **integration** the priority will be the further development of the EU's integration agenda, in line with the objectives set out in the Stockholm Programme. The aim is to provide support to Member States' integration policies aimed at maximizing the benefits of immigration and promoting social cohesion. In this context, work on the development of the coordination mechanism and of core indicators, as tools to measure the effects of integration efforts at the national level and the development best practices will be taken forward.

233. The three Presidencies will also continue to address challenges in relation to social cohesion, democratic values, equal rights and participation by further exploring the links between general integration efforts and the prevention of radicalization and extremism. Against this background, the Council will also examine the upcoming Communication by the Commission on Integration.

### **Illegal immigration**

234. The three Presidencies will promote more effective action to **combat illegal immigration** as a central element of the **Union's common immigration policy**. The focus will be in particular on the development of an **effective strategy on readmission** and the further development of the **common policy on return** with a tangible output in a manner which takes account of the needs of Member States and is consistent with full respect of fundamental rights, freedoms and human dignity.

235. This will include taking forward negotiations on **readmission agreements** in the context of the development of a comprehensive strategy on readmission, which will include a practical cooperation and a common approach towards third countries which do not cooperate on return and readmission. It will also include the development of a common policy on return which will include promoting voluntary return. In this context, the Commission evaluation of readmission agreements will be a starting point for the discussions in the Council.

236. Tackling the challenge of **unaccompanied minors** will remain on the focus. The implementation of the Action Plan on Unaccompanied Minors will be a priority in this context.

## Asylum

237. The three Presidencies are committed to finalising the **Common European Asylum System** by 2012, based on common protection standards resulting from fair and effective asylum procedures, capable of preventing abuse, and in accordance with the commitment set out in the Stockholm Programme.
238. The three Presidencies are also committed to promoting effective solidarity with the Member States facing particular pressures, paying special attention to Member States facing such pressures. This will include developing practical mechanisms for the voluntary and coordinated sharing of responsibilities between the Member States and supporting capacity building. The European Asylum Support Office will constitute a key element in strengthening solidarity and practical cooperation between the Member States, as well as in the further development of the external dimension of asylum (resettlement and Regional Protection Programmes).
239. Overall, the promotion of greater coherence of policies and actions among migration and other relevant policy areas, including employment, trade, external and development policies, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of all the policies concerned, will be key objective. Progress will be reviewed in the report on the follow-up of the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum and related aspects of the Stockholm Programme as well as the mid-term review of the Stockholm Programme.

## Internal security

240. In the next 18 months, the Council will pursue the implementation of the Internal Security Strategy. In this context it will establish, in close consultation and cooperation with the European Parliament, the **European Information Exchange Model (EIXM)**, setting out the necessary information exchange in the framework of the European internal security. This work will be based on the Commission's Communication on Data Protection and the subsequent proposal for a new legal act, the future communication on EIXM, as well as on reports on the implementation of the "Swedish Framework Decision" and of the Prüm Decisions. Furthermore, the implementation of the Prüm Decisions will be closely monitored, in order to ensure that all Member States set up the databases and that all necessary connections for the exchange of DNA, dactyloscopic and vehicle registration data are put in place.
241. Regarding **Passenger Name Records (PNR)**, the Council will, in cooperation with the Commission and the EP, continue its work on the conclusion of PNR Agreements with Australia, Canada and the United States and the adoption of a Directive on the collection and use of PNR data.
242. The Council will examine the upcoming evaluation Report on the application of the **Data Retention Directive** and if appropriate, the legislative proposal for the revision of the Directive.
243. In the coming 18 months, the Council will assess the EU **Drugs Strategy** on the basis of the mid-term review, and with a view to adopting, by the end of 2012, a new **Drugs Strategy** for 2013-2020 and an Action Plan for 2013-2016. In the meantime, actions to implement the current Strategy and the 2009-2012 Action Plan will continue, on the basis of the accepted approach which addresses both the drugs demand and the demand for and the supply of drugs. The Council will also look at the issue of illegal production and trafficking of synthetic drugs and address the issue of control of new psychoactive substances and tackling new psychoactive substances. The legal acts concerning precursors will be revised.

244. **Cybercrime and cybersecurity** have been identified as a growing threat. The Council, taking account of the ongoing technologies progress, will develop a number of instruments, such as the Directive on attacks against information systems and, if appropriate, the European model of public and private agreements in this area. The strengthening of cooperation between CERT teams will also be pursued.
245. Training of relevant law enforcement and judicial authorities will be examined, including the implementation of the exchange programme for law enforcement officials. If appropriate, the Council will also examine a legislative proposal for enlarging CEPOL's scope of activity.
246. Cooperation measures to ensure the security at major sports events, such as the Euro 2012 and the 2012 Olympic Games, will be reviewed and enhanced.

### **Fight against organised crime**

247. The EU policy cycle for serious and organised crime will need to be practically implemented in the coming 18 months, with a particular focus on the "operationalisation" of the EU priorities in the fight against organised crime.
248. The Council will be invited to address a number of legal acts and policy instruments related to organised crime, such as assessing the implementation of the Council Framework Decision on the fight against organised crime, and to take forward on-going work on financial crime.
249. The adoption of the upcoming proposal for a Directive for a strengthened legal framework on confiscation and recovery of criminal assets will be pursued.

250. The fight against trafficking in human beings will be a priority for the three Presidencies. They will provide full support to the examination of the announced Commission initiatives, notably the Communication on a new comprehensive strategy on Trafficking in Human Beings and measures to protect and assist victims, the Guidelines on Consular services and border guards for the identification of victims of trafficking in human beings, as well as the report on the implementation of the 2009 Action Oriented Paper.

### **Fight against terrorism**

251. The EU policy on counter-terrorism requires sustained efforts on the four strands of work of the EU Strategy against Terrorism. In the coming 18 months, this will include the evaluation of the Council Framework Decision on terrorism, further work to prevent and combat radicalisation and recruitment and fight terrorist financing, as well as implementation of the EU Explosives Action Plan. Another area that will require enhanced efforts is the security of public transport and cargo shipments.

252. Once the Commission and the High Representative have submitted their proposal, the Council will also have to agree on the implementation of the solidarity clause.

253. The three Presidencies will actively examine the upcoming Commission Communication on the feasibility of a European Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP) and any legislative proposal that will follow.

### **Customs cooperation**

254. The Fifth Action Plan to Implement the Strategy for Customs Cooperation in the (former) Third Pillar will be presented and implemented. The three Presidencies will focus on enhancing the customs cooperation as well as finding new ways of more efficient cooperation within the home affairs area. The Trio will also coordinate joint customs operation in order to ensure better cooperation between the Member States in the enforcement area.

## **JUSTICE**

### **Fundamental rights**

255. As regards the EU's accession to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), the three Presidencies will endeavour to support the Commission in its negotiating efforts, to carry forward as readily as possible the discussions in the Council towards a decision authorising the conclusion of the accession agreement. Furthermore, they will proceed with work on any legislative proposal concerning the necessary internal EU rules which are accessory to the accession of the Union to the ECHR.
256. The three Presidencies will also endeavour to carry work forward on the upcoming Commission proposal on a legal framework on the protection of personal data.

### **Protection of the most vulnerable**

257. On the basis of an evaluation of the two existing instruments, the Council will examine a new legislative proposal for a legal instrument on minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime.
258. The Council will also examine proposals for measures concerning the mutual recognition of national protection measures issued in favour of crime victims, building on discussions which have already taken place on the Member States' initiative for a Directive on the European Protection Order.
259. Furthermore, work will be taken further on a future "Roadmap" of other measures concerning the position of victims in criminal proceedings, which have begun under the Hungarian Presidency.

260. The negotiation of a Regulation on EU hotlines for missing children will be actively supported. The three Presidencies will actively support all initiatives relating to the combat of violence against women, domestic violence and female genital mutilation, in particular its cross border aspects, taking into account also developments in other international fora, such as the Council of Europe.

### **Rights of the individual in criminal proceedings**

261. In accordance with the Stockholm Programme, the three Presidencies will endeavour to examine swiftly the Commission proposals in relation to the "Roadmap for strengthening procedural rights of suspected or accused persons in criminal proceedings", in particular, the announced measure on access to a lawyer and on the right of notification of custody to a third person in criminal proceedings, as well as the public consultation on pre-trial detention.

### **Mutual recognition in criminal and civil matters**

262. The principle of mutual recognition has been a cornerstone of judicial cooperation. The three presidencies will further pursue the implementation of this principle be further pursued, pursuant to the Stockholm Programme.

263. As regards civil law matters related to business activity, the Council will endeavour to conclude work on the revision of the Brussels I Regulation, which constitutes a pillar in the area of recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters at the European level. Work will also begin on the Regulation on improving the efficiency of enforcement of judgments by way of freezing of bank accounts.

264. The examination of the draft Directive on the European Investigation Order in criminal matters will continue. The three Presidencies will also support the negotiation of the upcoming Commission proposal for a Directive on the mutual recognition of financial penalties, including those related to road traffic offences.

265. Efforts will continue on the adoption of the Regulation on Jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and enforcement of decisions and authentic instruments in matters of succession and the creation of a European certificate of succession.
266. Particular attention will be paid to the proposal for a Regulation on conflict of laws in matters concerning matrimonial property rights, including questions of jurisdiction and mutual recognition and for a Regulation on the property consequences of the separation of couples or of registered partnerships.
267. The trio of Presidencies will endeavour to adhere to the Council conclusions on the follow up to the implementation of the mutual recognition instruments and to follow up the completion of the EJN website modernisation project.
268. With a view of implementing the European Criminal Record Information System (ECRIS) framework by April 2012, the three Presidencies will guide discussions regarding the transposition of the general technical rules into the national systems and the elaboration of the Manual for Practitioners.

### **Minimum rules**

269. The development of procedural tools needs to be accompanied by the adoption of common minimum rules, with a focus in areas on the needs of the citizens. In this endeavour, differences between the legal systems and legal traditions of the Member States will be taken into account.
270. The Council will examine the reports on the operation of the various instruments adopted in the area of judicial cooperation in civil matters, as well as any legislative proposals that will be proposed as a consequence of those reports, namely in the field of service of judicial and extrajudicial documents.

271. The Council will start work on the proposal for a legal instrument on an Optional Contract Law. In this field, the Council will promote solutions which provide added value to the functioning of the internal market.
272. The three Presidencies will foster discussions on the Commission's Communication on the training of professionals working in justice.
273. The Presidencies will streamline work on IT projects for justice in cooperation with the Commission.

### **E-Justice**

274. Given the horizontal importance of e-Justice, work will continue on technical aspects of its functioning, in accordance with the multi-annual European Action Plan for the period 2009-2013.
275. In addition, work will also continue on better access to information in the field of justice, the “dematerialization” of proceedings, as well as the simplification and improvement of communication between the judicial authorities. In addition, the three Presidencies will work on the interconnection of insolvency registers, on improving the interconnection of other registers, and making available additional functionalities in the e-Justice system.

## EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF JHA

276. Integration of JHA external elements in the other policies of the EU in order to ensure coherence of the overall policy will remain a key objective, notably ensuring coherence with other aspects of Union's foreign policy.
277. The three Presidencies will reinforce the external dimension of JHA policies in order to achieve better management of migration flows and strengthen internal and international security. The Global Approach to Migration will continue to guide the work for this purpose. The Commission's Communication on the evaluation of the Global Approach to Migration should provide useful input for further advancing and strengthening the relations with third countries on the management of migration. The Council will aim in particular to take forward efforts to address the root causes of asylum flows and illegal migration by ensuring a better coordination of EU and national efforts and, where appropriate, capacity building in third countries.
278. Efforts will also continue in the area of counter-terrorism, paying special attention to anti-radicalisation and recruitment in the regions of wars and internal conflicts. The fight against organised and transnational crime, as well as criminal and civil judicial cooperation and the protection of fundamental rights will remain key objectives. Special attention will be paid to redefining a strategy for the EU's presence in the field of civil law. In this context, actions taken by the Union and its MS in this area need to be complementary.
279. While maintaining a geographical and strategic balance, ongoing dialogues and cooperation with third country partners will continue, with a focus on the migration and asylum challenges faced by the EU, including through the Building Migration Partnership (BMP) process.

280. As regards relations with the US, cooperation will focus, *inter alia*, on mobility, security, counter-terrorism, resilience to threats and judicial cooperation. The relations with Russia will cover mobility, security and justice, judicial cooperation in criminal matters, as well as the way towards a visa-free regime, as a long term goal. Achieving a high level of data protection with both these partners will remain a key objective.
281. Cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries will also gain importance. Issues of mobility and cooperation in law enforcement will be the key elements in the dialogue with the Eastern Partnership countries. Moreover, the EU will monitor the implementation of the Action Plan of the Stockholm Programme regarding the Eastern Partnership countries.
282. The countries in the Western Balkans will be encouraged to enhance their regional cooperation, while the EU will continue to promote and assist them in the transfer of EU acquis, in view of the perspective of EU membership. Moreover, cooperation with other regions in the world with which cooperation in JHA is highly relevant, will be further developed according to needs.
283. Within the framework of the international organisations, activities will continue as regards the Lugano Convention, the Hague Conference and Unidroit. Regarding the Lugano Convention, efforts to assess the participation of third countries to the Convention will be supported.

## CIVIL PROTECTION

284. The three Presidencies will continue the work on improving response capacities of the Member States to face disasters and crises, both in the EU and in third countries, taking into account the necessary balance between prevention, preparedness and response.
285. While continuing efforts on enhancing prevention, the three Presidencies will, as a follow up to the Commission communication of 26 October 2010 "*Towards a stronger European disaster response: the role of civil protection and humanitarian assistance*", continue the work started under the previous Presidencies with a view to strengthening the European response capacity.
286. In particular, the work will focus on the assessment and possible adaptation of the main legislative instruments in the field of civil protection (the Civil Protection Mechanism and the Financial Instrument), in order for the EU to be better prepared to address major disasters around the world.
287. The progress of the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection (EPCIP) will be followed-up, including a possible revision of the Programme. The review process of the EPCIP Directive 2008/114 will start in early 2012, including considering the extension of its scope.
288. Work will also continue on CBRN-related risks. The first comprehensive report on the implementation of the EU CBRN Action Plan is expected at the end of 2011, followed by a review of the priorities for its further implementation. In addition, progress on initiatives regarding forest fire prevention and preparation and preparedness of flood risks will be closely monitored.

289. The active involvement of the citizens will also be pursued. Initiatives regarding training and the active voluntary involvement of citizens will be further developed and the implementation of the Civil Protection Modules, as well as the lessons learnt programme will be strengthened.
290. Also focus will be on integrated approach to crisis communication in order to further develop its social and technological aspects.
291. Finally, once the Commission and the HR have submitted their proposal foreseen under Article 222 of the TFEU, the three Presidencies will work on the implementation of the Solidarity Clause.

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

### EU Common Commercial Policy

292. In the aftermath of an unprecedented economic and financial crisis that has had profound adverse effects on the world economy and on world trade, the EU trade policy must continue to play an essential role as a crucial element of the external dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy, and in support of the latter's triple objectives of smart, inclusive and sustainable growth.
293. Taking into account the Commission Communication "Trade, Growth and World Affairs – Trade Policy as a core component of the EU's 2020 Strategy", the EU trade policy, based on a spirit of reciprocity and benefit, should continue to promote the enhancement of market access for services and investment, the further opening of public procurement, better protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, the unrestricted supply of raw materials and energy and the removal of regulatory barriers in third markets, including via the promotion of international standards.
294. In this respect, the conclusion of an ambitious, balanced and comprehensive Doha Development Round will remain the key priority of the EU's trade policy agenda, in the perspective of the further development and strengthening of the multilateral rules-based trading system. It is equally important to make substantial progress in, and possibly conclude, on-going FTA negotiations with key trading partners, and deepen and upgrade trade and economic relations with strategic and neighborhood partners.

295. Furthermore, the Presidencies will devote particular attention to the timely examination of proposals in the area of the EU's investment policy, including negotiations in the field of investment with main trade partners, and to initiatives on trade and development and the reform of the Generalised System of Preferences for developing countries.
296. In the framework of the EU Market Access Strategy, the Presidencies will continue to support efforts to enhance access for European companies, in particular SMEs, to third countries' markets, as well as to monitor trade barriers and protectionists measures in key markets, with the aim of triggering appropriate enforcement action.
297. Furthermore, the three Presidencies will pay particular attention to the issue of appropriate implementation of the EU's goals in the field of environmental protection and climate change, also taking into account trade in environment-friendly goods and services.
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