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to: Delegations

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Subject: 18 month programme of the Council (1 January 2013 - 30 June 2014)

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Delegations will find attached the final version of the 18 month programme of the Council, prepared by the future Irish, Lithuanian and Greek Presidencies and the High Representative, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Council.

## INDEX

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>GENERAL AFFAIRS .....</b>	<b>16</b>
EUROPE 2020 .....	16
MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK.....	16
ENLARGEMENT.....	17
NON-EU WESTERN EUROPE .....	19
REGIONAL POLICY .....	20
INTEGRATED MARITIME POLICY .....	21
INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES .....	22
<b>FOREIGN AFFAIRS .....</b>	<b>22</b>
FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY.....	22
COMMON COMMERCIAL POLICY .....	29
DEVELOPMENT POLICY .....	30
HUMANITARIAN AID .....	32
EUROPEAN CONSULAR COOPERATION.....	34
<b>ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS.....</b>	<b>35</b>
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS .....	35
Economic policy .....	35
Financial services .....	37
Taxation .....	38
Export Credits .....	39
BUDGET .....	39
Own resources.....	39
Protection of the European Union's financial interests .....	40
<b>JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS.....</b>	<b>40</b>
HOME AFFAIRS .....	41
Free Movement of EU Citizens.....	41
External Borders Management.....	41
Visa Policy .....	42
Legal Migration and Integration of third country nationals.....	42
Illegal immigration.....	43

Asylum .....	43
Internal security.....	44
Fight against organised crime .....	45
Fight against terrorism .....	46
Customs cooperation.....	47
JUSTICE .....	47
General issues .....	47
E-Justice .....	47
Fundamental rights and Citizenship.....	48
Protection of the most vulnerable .....	48
Rights of the individual in criminal proceedings.....	49
Mutual recognition in criminal and civil matters.....	50
Minimum rules.....	51
Civil Law.....	51
Justice for growth.....	52
CIVIL PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT.....	52
EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF JHA.....	54
<b>EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS .....</b>	<b>56</b>
EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY .....	56
Employment/Labour market issues.....	56
EU Funds in the Employment and Social Sphere.....	57
External dimension of EU Employment and Social Policies.....	58
Labour legislation.....	58
Health and safety at work.....	59
Social policy issues .....	59
Discrimination.....	61
European Year for Reconciling Work and Family Life.....	61
HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS .....	62
Public Health.....	62
Foodstuffs.....	64
<b>COMPETITIVENESS (INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND</b>	
<b>SPACE) .....</b>	<b>64</b>
Competitiveness.....	64
Single Market.....	66

Consumer Affairs .....	67
Better regulation.....	67
Industrial policy .....	68
Small and medium sized enterprises .....	69
Research and innovation .....	70
Intellectual property .....	72
Customs Union.....	73
Competition.....	74
Technical harmonisation .....	75
Space .....	75
Tourism .....	76
<b>TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATION AND ENERGY .....</b>	<b>77</b>
CROSSCUTTING ISSUES .....	77
TRANSPORT .....	78
Horizontal issues .....	78
Aviation.....	79
Land transport .....	80
Maritime transport.....	81
TELECOMMUNICATION .....	82
ENERGY .....	84
<b>AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES .....</b>	<b>86</b>
AGRICULTURE .....	86
Animal health and veterinary issues .....	87
International issues.....	89
Forests .....	89
Phytosanitary issues .....	90
FISHERIES .....	90
<b>ENVIRONMENT .....</b>	<b>91</b>
Environment governance .....	92
Biodiversity .....	93
GMOs.....	94
Climate Change.....	94
<b>EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE, AUDIOVISUAL AND SPORT .....</b>	<b>95</b>
Education and Training.....	96

Culture.....	98
Audiovisual Policy.....	99
Youth.....	100
SPORT .....	102

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**PROGRAMME OF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES**

**PREPARED BY THE IRISH, LITHUANIAN AND GREEK  
PRESIDENCIES**

with the President of the Foreign Affairs Council

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 Irish, Lithuanian and Greek Presidencies, covering the period January 2013 to June 2014. 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 Italian, Latvian and Luxembourg 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 with the President of the Foreign Affairs Council with regard to that configuration's activities during that period and in close cooperation with the Commission and the President of the European Council.

The three Presidencies will make every effort to ensure a smooth and efficient functioning of the work of the Council. 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 enhanced by the Treaty of Lisbon.

## PART I

### STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

1. The period of the Trio Presidency will come at the end of the current legislative cycle, with the European elections taking place in May 2014 and the current Commission concluding its mandate later the same year. As such, the legislative process will intensify in speed and a high number of proposals will be under negotiation. While the three Presidencies will advance work as much as possible in all areas, the main objective for the next 18 months will be to strengthen the Union's capacity to respond to the current economic, financial and social challenges.
2. The Council, in close collaboration with the President of the European Council and the Commission, has, over the past three years, devoted most of its time to fighting the challenges of a financial, economic and sovereign debt crisis. Tools and mechanisms have been developed in order to create the conditions for recovery and re-launch of growth, investment and employment. Efforts should now focus on full and rapid **implementation** of the framework that has been put in place. In order to foster economic growth and employment, while deepening the Single Market and strengthening the Union's competitiveness in the global economy, the following areas will be of strategic importance over the period.



3. Ensuring the financial stability of the euro area and of the EU as a whole remains a central concern for the coming period. The Council will work in close coordination with the President of the European Council, the Commission and other institutional actors, to tackle the economic and fiscal crisis and to strengthen the **Economic and Monetary Union**. Guided by the orientations set out by the European Council, the Council will devote all efforts to reaching agreement on the legislation required in order to complete the banking union, which is essential to the better functioning of the EMU and in order to restore confidence in the European economy. Seeking to ensure fiscal consolidation and better co-ordination of the Member States' economic policies, the Council will work to ensure the effective implementation of the Union's enhanced **economic governance** mechanisms. The Presidencies will prioritise legislative proposals aimed at ensuring further integration, competitiveness and efficiency of the EU financial markets, enhancing transparency of the financial sector and consumer protection. Coherence will be ensured with the report on the EMU, presented in December 2012 by the President of the European Council in close cooperation with the Presidents of the Commission, the Eurogroup and the European Central Bank.
  
4. The EU's future **budgetary and policy framework for 2014 to 2020** is the basis for the work of the Union in the coming years across all policies. Agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework itself and on the related implementing regulations will be a key priority, in order to ensure a timely and smooth start of all relevant multi-annual programmes. These regulations will set out the detailed spending priorities and modalities in a wide range of sectors directly related to the jobs and growth agenda, including networks (Connecting Europe Facility), research and innovation (Horizon 2020), support for SMEs (COSME) and student mobility (Erasmus for All). Cohesion Policy will remain an important instrument for further stimulating growth across the Union and thus reducing disparities between the levels of development of European regions. Trio partners will aim to finalize the reforms of the CAP and the CFP, securing the economic and social viability of these vital sectors and a balanced territorial development, while contributing to global food security and ensuring the long-term environmental sustainability of these policies.

5. Europe needs to return to strong and sustainable growth. In light of the Commission's macroeconomic forecast, the Council will need to intensify efforts to deliver on the commitments made in the European Council's **Compact for Growth and Jobs**. This agenda will be mainstreamed across the Council's work. Synergies will be sought with the Europe 2020 strategy and the European Semester. The Presidencies will work at a rapid pace and will keep a close eye on progress, to ensure delivery of operational results during the period.
6. The effective management of the **European Semester** will contribute to these efforts. The Council will work to ensure that the European semester process helps promote growth friendly fiscal consolidation, structural reform, and the fight against unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. The Presidencies will endeavour to further improve the effectiveness of the process, on the basis of lessons learned from the first two cycles of the European semester. Throughout the process, the headline targets of the **Europe 2020 strategy** will be kept in mind and will guide the action of the Council.
7. Boosting **employment** and social inclusion are necessary preconditions for sustainable growth. Building on the Employment package, beyond the focus on job creation, the mobility of workers and the financial sustainability of the social security systems will also be addressed by the Council during the period. Tackling the major problem of youth unemployment represents a key priority. The approach to it will be multifaceted and wide-ranging, including the proposed Youth Guarantee, and in line with the overarching role of education in equipping all citizens with the skills they need in the labour market. Efforts to tackle the social consequences of the crisis and to fight poverty and social exclusion in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy will be stepped up.

8. Twenty years after its creation, the **Single Market** is a cornerstone achievement of the Union, and yet its potential is not fully tapped. Progress towards the completion of the Single Market will create thousands of new jobs and will generate significant growth in the EU. The Council will therefore work towards agreeing the remaining proposals under the first Single Market Act (SMA I) and will work to progress proposals under the recently announced second Single Market Act (SMA II) as well as the follow up on the implementation of the Services Directive and the Single Market governance in general.
9. Industry has a key role to play for the recovery of economic growth and jobs. Innovation, better market conditions, access to finance and skills are the basic pillars of the updated policy for the re-industrialization of Europe. The Council will work to improve the competitiveness of EU industry, in particular the competitiveness of SMEs, the backbone of the European economy, including through the modernisation of the EU's State Aid regime.
10. The **Digital Single Market** and the implementation of the EU's Digital Agenda offer huge potential for the jobs and growth agenda, fostering cross border commerce and the development of new IT industries. In the context of the midterm review of the Digital Agenda, which will be conducted by the Council in 2013, while forcefully pursuing the rapid rollout of high-speed broadband across the Union and creating the necessary framework conditions, there is also a need to focus on public acceptance and confidence in the new technologies, as well as on network security and data protection.
11. **Research and Development** and **Innovation** are essential aspects of the EU's competitiveness and potential for sustainable growth. To this end, the Council aims to conclude negotiations on the EU's Horizon 2020 programme and will also work to advance the completion of the European Research Area. The modernisation of Europe's copyright regime, while ensuring a high level of protection of Intellectual Property Rights and taking into account cultural diversity, will also contribute to promoting cross-border trade. The Council will also continue its work on realising the full potential of key enabling technologies, nanotechnology, cloud computing and high speed computing.

12. Creating the right regulatory framework for fostering the competitiveness of European businesses is also a key element in the efforts to stimulate growth. In this context the Presidencies stress the need to reduce the **regulatory burden** with specific focus on SMEs and micro-enterprises, including by facilitating their access to funding.
13. With regard to the energy policy, the three Presidencies will contribute to the creation of necessary conditions to facilitate development of the new European wide energy infrastructure. Building on European Council conclusions of February 2011, the completion of the internal energy market by 2014 and the commitment that no EU Member State should remain isolated from the European gas and electricity networks after 2015 will stay at the cornerstones of EU level activities. Special attention will be given to the potential of smart grids, smart metering and renewable energy. As internal and external markets are intertwined, the Presidencies will also continue to enhance Member States' cooperation as regards the external dimension of the EU energy policy.
14. Investment in a modern **transport** infrastructure can not only provide immediate benefits in terms of jobs but is crucial to the EU's competitiveness, the completion of the single market and the long-term sustainability of the Union's economy. Sustainability of connectivity, security and safety of means, fair competition and market access, new technologies and mobility will be high on the transport agenda. In particular work will be actively carried forward on the revision of the current Regulation on TEN-T Guidelines as well as the 4<sup>th</sup> Railway package, the airport package, the roadworthiness package and the maritime transport package.
15. The field of **environment and climate change** presents particular importance as regards green growth and resource efficiency, as well as ensuring a high level of environmental protection. The Council will continue its work on the further development of the green economy in Europe; in this context, it will prioritise the conclusion of the 7<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme. Europe will continue to play its leading role at global level on climate change issues, including in the framework of the United Nations.

16. The Stockholm Programme, which sets out the Union's priorities in the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) area for the period 2010-14, will provide the overarching framework for the continued development of an area of **freedom, security and justice**, which remains a key objective of the EU. The management of borders and migratory flows will be addressed alongside measures strengthening the freedom of movement within the Union and initiatives easing access to justice for citizens and businesses. Setting the framework for the next multiannual JHA programme covering topical issues related to migration, security and justice will also be a priority. Setting future broad policy objectives in the area of migration, security and justice will also be a priority.
  
17. In these difficult times, there is a need to increase awareness about the added value of the Union, to increase democratic accountability and to involve **citizens** more closely in all aspects of the functioning of the European construction. The Presidencies will promote such actions in 2013 as part of the European Year of Citizens.
  
18. The Union's **enlargement** policy continues to contribute to peace, security and prosperity in Europe. The EU will remain open towards those countries, which fulfil the criteria and are ready and willing to share our values. The Council will therefore promote further progress on the Enlargement agenda, based on agreed principles and the Copenhagen criteria, by supporting the pursuit of the negotiations underway with Iceland, Turkey and Montenegro, as well as seeking to reinforce the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries, in the framework of the Thessaloniki Agenda and in the context of the Agenda 2014.

19. The European **neighbourhood** policy is an important means of cooperation and support, by the Union, to economic, social and political reforms in countries to the East and to the South. In the context of the Eastern Partnership Summit in November 2013 in Vilnius, the Council will, on the basis of a roadmap, work towards strengthening political association with the Eastern Partnership countries and deepening economic integration, including achieving further progress in the visa liberalisation process as well as deepening sectoral and multilateral cooperation. At the same time, the Council will continue the work on supporting the democratic transition and socio-economic development of our partners of the Southern Dimension, focusing on the priorities and synergies set by the relevant Roadmap and further strengthening the role of the Union for the Mediterranean.
20. Trade is a key engine for growth and is central to the delivery of the EU's objectives for long term growth and jobs. The three Presidencies will focus on the EU's determination to promote free, fair and open trade whilst at the same time asserting its interests, in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual benefit. The Council will work to advance the EU's **external trade** agenda during the Trio Presidency, in particular taking forward trade and investment agreements with key trading partners, both bilaterally and in the multilateral context.
21. In the field of **foreign relations**, the EU will continue to work for stability and prosperity across the globe. The EU's network of strategic, bilateral and regional partnerships, and activism in multilateral fora, underpin that goal. The mobilisation of political, financial and military resources – enshrined in the "comprehensive approach" – will address threats to peace, underlying causes of instability and post-conflict endeavours. The projection of the EU's core values of human rights and democracy will remain integral to this approach.

22. The current economic crisis should not impact the Union's role as leader in **development** cooperation and humanitarian assistance. There is a need to focus on the review of Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) and the global development agenda after 2015, seeking to ensure coherence of the Union's position in these processes. In taking forward EU internal preparations for the discussion on how to shape the development framework after 2015, the Council should also not lose sight of the time that remains to make progress on delivering the MDGs.

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## **PART II**

### **OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME**

#### **GENERAL AFFAIRS**

##### **EUROPE 2020**

1. The Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is key to the economic recovery and further development of competitiveness of the European Union. The strengthened economic governance framework which has been put in place in the context of the European Semester has resulted in a better coordination and convergence of the Member States' economic policies. During the 18 months of the three Presidencies, the Council will have to deal with the third and the fourth European Semester. The three Presidencies, building on the established mechanisms, will closely coordinate among themselves in order to organise the different phases of the semester in an efficient way. Both cycles will start with the Commission's Annual Growth Survey which is the main input for discussion at the spring meeting of the European Council, while the June European Council endorses the country-specific recommendations presented by the Commission in May. As regards the European Semester 2013, the Presidencies will build on the work carried out by the Cyprus Presidency, notably the lessons drawn from the 2012 exercise.

##### **MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK**

2. Following the statement of the European Council of 23 November 2012, the three Presidencies will make every effort to contribute to reaching an agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework early in 2013.



## ENLARGEMENT

3. The three Presidencies acknowledge that enlargement remains a key policy, which serves the strategic interests of the European Union, and continues to reinforce peace, democracy and stability in Europe. 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.
4. As regards **Croatia**, monitoring of Croatia's fulfilment of all commitments undertaken in the accession negotiations will continue until Croatia becomes a full Member. Pending the successful conclusion of procedures for ratification of the Accession Treaty, Croatia will become the 28th Member State of the EU on 1 July 2013.
5. The accession negotiations with **Iceland** will continue and may reach their final stage by the end of 2013, depending on Iceland's progress in meeting the requirements for membership set out in the Negotiating Framework. Work on drafting an Accession Treaty with Iceland will begin once the accession negotiations have reached a sufficiently advanced stage.

6. Continued efforts will be made to pursue the accession negotiations with **Turkey** and to give these negotiations a new impetus by further encouraging Turkey to continue its reform process and to advance in the fulfilment of negotiating benchmarks, meet the requirements of the negotiating Framework, respect contractual obligations towards the EU and all its Member States, and make progress on the issues covered by the declaration of the European Union and its Member States of 21 September 2005. The positive agenda with Turkey will also be pursued, with a view to supporting the negotiation process, in line with the Negotiating Framework and the relevant Council conclusions. The European Union will continue to call upon Turkey to actively support the negotiations for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions on Cyprus and in line with the principles on which the Union is founded.
7. Following the launch of accession negotiations with **Montenegro** in June 2012, and on the basis of the outcome of the screening process, substantive negotiations will be pursued. The three Presidencies will endeavour to maintain a sustained pace in these negotiations, based on the new approach, provided that Montenegro is able to comply with the requirements set in the Negotiating Framework.
8. Accession negotiations with the **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** may be launched, depending on a decision of the Council and an endorsement by the European Council. The start of accession negotiations with **Serbia** will depend on further progress in the reforms process, in line with the Council Conclusions of December 2011 and of February 2012, depending on a decision of the Council and endorsement by the European Council.
9. By making solid progress in economic and political reforms and by fulfilling the necessary conditions and requirements, the **remaining potential candidates in the Western Balkans** can achieve candidate status, according to their own merits, with European Union membership as the ultimate goal.

10. Particular attention will be paid to the European perspective of the **Western Balkans**. The Stabilization and Association Process, in line with the Thessaloniki Agenda, will remain the relevant framework in this respect. Furthermore, the Council will pursue the objectives of the "Agenda 2014". The key principles of this initiative are good neighbourly relations, regional cooperation and reconciliation, as well as inclusiveness, avoiding the creation of 'black holes' in the region. The essence of the Agenda 2014 is predominantly political, aiming at accelerating the enlargement process in the Western Balkans, while enhancing the competitiveness of the region and better connecting the region to the EU and the neighbouring countries. To mark the political commitment to the European integration of the Western Balkans, an EU-Western Balkans Summit ("Thessaloniki II"), will take place in the first half of 2014.

#### **NON-EU WESTERN EUROPE**

11. The EU will further develop its very close relations with its **neighbours in Western Europe**, in particular with a view to ensuring a homogenous and simultaneous application and interpretation of the evolving EU *acquis* by all participants in the internal market. Furthermore, it will explore possibilities to extend cooperation in areas of common interest. In particular, the EU will undertake a review of the functioning of the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA) and develop perspectives for future relations with Switzerland, and European countries of small territorial dimension, namely Andorra, Monaco and San Marino. Negotiations on new financial contributions from the EFTA countries aimed at reducing economic and social disparities within an enlarged EU will also be on the agenda.

## REGIONAL POLICY

12. Proposed expenditure on cohesion policy (under the Cohesion Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund) will, on the basis of the Commission's proposals, amount to over one third of the EU Budget for 2014-2020. Cohesion policy will continue to concentrate resources on improving economic, social and territorial cohesion, including cross-border links, and will play a pivotal role in delivering the Europe 2020 strategy.
13. The negotiations with the EP and the final adoption of the Cohesion Policy legislative package (6 regulations in total) are expected to be concluded during the Irish Presidency. The timely adoption of the package remains of great importance, as its rules must be in place for the beginning of the next financing period 2014-2020. Upon adoption of the Cohesion Policy legislative package, the Council will also examine the Commission proposals for the relevant accompanying delegated acts and the Schemes in favour of Territorial Development.
14. The Commission is also expected to publish the Sixth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion in the first half of 2014.
15. The issue of boosting the regional development process in the context of European competitiveness and diminishing regional disparities should be further addressed. Furthermore, work should be carried forward in order to promote territorial cohesion and urban matters and further implement the Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020. Focus should be given on territories with specific geographical characteristics.

16. As regards Macro-regional Strategies, the Commission is expected to report to the Council in June 2013 on the implementation of the Danube Region Strategy. On the basis of these results and the results of the implementation of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy, the Commission is also expected to present, in June 2013, its overall assessment of macro-regional strategies. The Council may be invited to adopt conclusions on the broader concept of macro-regional strategies, further to the Commission's recommendations.
17. If the European Council mandates the Council to establish an EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, the Council will, on the basis of a Commission communication, ensure the appropriate follow-up.

## **INTEGRATED MARITIME POLICY**

18. The EU Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) is an important tool in meeting the objectives of Europe 2020 Strategy. The potential of Europe's oceans and seas for the EU economy, sustainability and prosperity, as well as the need for a genuine strategic approach to Europe's maritime affairs and coastal areas should be further explored. The marine and maritime agenda for growth and jobs endorsed in Limassol in October 2012 is an important step towards the further development and implementation of this innovative cross-cutting policy. Some of the important issues on the IMP agenda for the next semesters are the setting of a framework for Maritime Spatial Planning and the implementation of the Blue Growth initiative. Particular attention will also be paid to the appropriate development and implementation of integrated sea basin and macro-regional strategies, including the endorsement of an action plan for the Atlantic Strategy, and to the integration of maritime surveillance. The three Presidencies will follow-up the communications on Marine and Coastal Tourism, on Marine Renewable Energy and on Marine Knowledge which the Commission intends to submit in the first semester 2013.

## **INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES**

19. The three Presidencies will continue the work on the review of the EU Staff Regulations with the aim to come to an agreement with the European Parliament early in 2013.
20. The efficient functioning of the EEAS is a priority for the three Presidencies. In this context, the Council looks forward to examining the report on the functioning and organisation of the EEAS, which is expected in mid-2013.
21. In the context of the reform of the Statute of the European Court of Justice, the Council will strive to put in place appropriate measures to address the workload of the General Court.

## **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

### **FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY**

22. At the outset of her mandate the High Representative set three priorities for the EU's common foreign policy: first, establishing the European External Action Service; second, promoting democracy, stability and prosperity with Europe's neighbours; and third, building strong strategic partnerships with existing and emerging global players. These three priorities will continue to guide EU action in 2013-14, with the aim of ensuring the consistency and coherence of EU foreign policy, as set out in the Lisbon Treaty.
23. This work will build on the achievements of EU foreign policy in the first years of the EEAS. The EU will continue to work with its partners to address regional and global challenges, promoting EU interests and values to help to deliver a more secure and prosperous world for its citizens.

24. Supporting democratic change in the neighbourhood, especially in the **Middle East and North Africa**, remains a top priority for the European Union. The process of transition in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and other countries in the Middle East and North Africa requires our continued support and focus. The EU will step up its efforts in **Syria** to bring an end to the violent repression and promote a genuine democratic transition. We will continue to support the Joint envoy Lakhdar Brahimi and to work closely with our international partners, in particular the League of Arab States and the United Nations to deliver this. At the regional level the EU will also continue to work in the context of the Union for the Mediterranean with a focus on concrete projects.
25. The changes across the Arab world have highlighted the urgent need for progress on the **Middle East Peace Process**. The goal remains a just and lasting negotiated resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on a two-state solution. The EU will continue to work actively with the parties and within the Quartet for the resumption of substantive negotiations.
26. In the **Eastern neighbourhood**, sustained EU engagement is also critical, including through the Eastern Partnership. The implementation of the Eastern Partnership Roadmap objectives is important in order to guarantee a successful 3<sup>rd</sup> Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013 which will set the policy agenda for the next two years. In conformity with the objectives of the Eastern Partnership, the HR and the EEAS will continue to support the political approximation and economic integration of the Eastern partners with the EU. They will closely monitor domestic developments in Ukraine and Belarus, in the wake of the parliamentary elections in these countries, and also in the three countries of the South Caucasus. The settlement of the conflicts in Transnistria, Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh will remain high on the EU's agenda.

27. The EU will continue to play a central role in the **Western Balkans** where the European perspective of the countries in the region continues to act as a catalyst for both domestic reform and regional cooperation. The political dynamics in the period until mid-2014 will be dominated by important electoral processes (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania) which will be followed closely by the EU. An enhanced dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina is now a high priority with the objective of reaching an agreement as soon as possible. While the mandate of the EU Police Mission in Bosnia Herzegovina ended in June 2012, the EU involvement continues via other tools, both in the area of CFSP, with the new Law Enforcement Section (part of the office of the EUSR) and with the Pre-Accession Assistance. Operation EUFOR Althea was reconfigured on 1 September 2012 with a focus on Capacity-Building and Training. In addition, the developments on the domestic political scene will be important with a view to the country moving to an application for EU membership.
28. EULEX Kosovo will continue to assist and support the Kosovo authorities in the rule of law area.
29. In line with the principles set out in the Negotiating Framework, the EU will encourage **Turkey** further to develop its foreign policy in coordination with the EU, and to progressively align with EU policies and positions. It looks forward to further strengthening its existing political dialogue with Turkey, in pursuit of common goals, including in the neighbourhood where Turkey plays an important role.
30. Deepening engagement with the **EU's strategic partners**<sup>1</sup> also remains a key priority. The overall aim is to make these partnerships more operational, focusing on specific and current issues, based on shared interests and values.
31. Close consultation and cooperation with the **US** remains a cornerstone of our approach on areas of common interest such as the Western Balkans, the Southern Neighbourhood and the Asia-Pacific; and on global issues such as counter-terrorism, climate change, international development and non-proliferation

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<sup>1</sup> The Strategic Partners are Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, USA



32. As both a strategic partner and a neighbour, **Russia's cooperation with Europe on regional as well as global foreign policy issues continues to be a high priority.** Working with Russia is central to solving the protracted conflicts in our common Neighbourhood, as well as in framing an international response on other issues such as Iran, Syria or the Middle East Peace Process. The EU will continue to engage Russia through the Partnership for Modernisation and the Northern Dimension.
33. Strengthening and expanding cooperation with **China** and **India**, especially on global and regional challenges including security issues such as anti-piracy, counter-terrorism and cyber security, will also remain high on the agenda.
34. Similarly, the EU will strengthen its cooperation with our partners in Brazil, South Africa, Japan and South Korea.
35. The E3+3 negotiations on **Iran's nuclear programme** aimed at answering the international communities concerns about the exclusively peaceful nature of the programme will remain a key priority for EU efforts and attention. Building on the meetings in Istanbul, Baghdad and Moscow, the HR, acting on behalf of the E3 + 3 group, will remain fully engaged.
36. **Global challenges** such as climate change, energy, terrorism and international crime, piracy, proliferation of WMD, disarmament and threats to cyber-security will also be critical to the EU's external affairs agenda.
37. The EU will implement the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy. The EU will pay close attention to the human rights situation in partner countries in addition to providing support through EU instruments and policies.
38. The EU Strategic Framework on **Human Rights and Democracy** will guide the EU's engagement in this area in years to come. The appointment of a EUSR on Human Rights, the first thematic EUSR, will enhance the effectiveness and visibility of the EU's Human Rights policy. In this field, the EU will work closely with partners, multilateral forums and international organisations dealing with human rights and democracy.

39. The EU will continue to focus on developments in **Afghanistan and Pakistan**. The expected changes in the international military presence will have implications for EUPOL Afghanistan as well as for our broader cooperation, inter alia with the countries of Central Asia. For Afghanistan, the focus will be on governance, policing and the rule of law - including through mentoring and training by EUPOL Afghanistan, in the run-up to 2014. As regards Pakistan, the EU will seek to develop a broader relationship with the country's civilian government and democratic institutions, through the implementation of the 5-year Engagement Plan.
40. Supporting the recent positive developments in **Burma/Myanmar** will be a priority. The EU together with international partners will give its full support to the on-going transition to democracy.
41. The EU will increase its political and economic presence in Asia and maintain regular contacts with Asian partners and Asian regional organisations, in particular ASEAN.
42. The consolidation of strategic relations with **Africa**, building on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy will continue to be a key priority. The development of the EU's relationship with the African Union will be central, including to the continued engagement on sub-Saharan African peace and security issues such as non-proliferation and disarmament.
43. Building relations and supporting positive dynamics with the **Horn of Africa** (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda) in line with the November 2011 strategy will continue to be high on the agenda of the HR and the EEAS. The reinforcement of the judiciary and maritime sectors in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, through a civilian CSDP mission with military expertise, EUCAP Nestor Horn of Africa, is an important component of this. The EU's attention will also remain on **Somalia** and the fight against piracy (EUNAVFOR Atalanta) and reinforcing support to the security sector in Somalia (EUTM Somalia).

44. The EU is committed to supporting the new independent state of **South Sudan** in facing its serious challenges and in consolidating its statehood. In parallel, the EU will enhance its engagement with the Government of Sudan (Khartoum). The aim is to support the co-existence and economic development of two peaceful states. Efforts to secure an inclusive, comprehensive political solution to Darfur will be sustained.
45. The implementation of the EU Strategy for Security and Development in **the Sahel** remains a priority, in the light of the political crisis in Mali and the threat to regional stability. An EU civilian CSDP Action, EUCAP Sahel Niger, to provide support for improved security coordination, training and capacity-building was launched in July 2012 in Niger. Planning for an additional CSDP operation was initiated with the objective of providing support to the restructuring and training of the Malian armed forces. . The EU will remain engaged in finding a lasting solution to the problems of Guinea-Bissau (recent coup d'état) , as well as in Zimbabwe and other countries where there are threats to stability. Electoral processes and respect for human rights and the strengthening of human rights institutions will remain priorities.
46. The EU will continue its efforts to promote peace and democracy in the Great Lakes Region, in particular in DRC where the EU is supporting present efforts to bring back stability. The EU will work together with African and international partners, in the region in order to work towards a comprehensive response to the interlinked problems of the region. Developments in the region will be kept under close scrutiny.
47. Relations with **Latin America and the Caribbean** in the context of the upcoming EU-CELAC (*“Comunidad de Estados de América Latina y el Caribe”*) Summit, scheduled to take place on 26 – 27 January 2013 in Chile, are of significant importance. The 2013 Summit, will aim at a continued strengthening of the EU-LAC relationship. The Joint Caribbean EU Partnership Strategy will allow for a broadened engagement with the Caribbean region.

48. Further action will be taken to combat **global and trans-regional threats** such as piracy (and other threats to maritime security), terrorism, threats to cyber-security and other emerging global threats. The EU is strengthening the fight against organised crime through its Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime 2011-13 and corresponding external action, thus reinforcing the link between internal and external security.
49. **Conflict prevention and peace-building** will be mainstreamed throughout the EU's external action, further strengthening and integrating the Union's crisis prevention capabilities, notably in the fields of early warning and early action. Following the June 2011 Council Conclusions on conflict prevention, work will be undertaken to strengthen the EU's mediation capacity, as an efficient and cost-effective instrument to be used in all phases of the conflict cycle.
50. On CSDP, the successful conduct of civilian missions and military operations, and the potential deployment of new crisis management missions and operations, will remain priority areas. Attention will be maintained on the strengthening of capabilities, both military and civilian. In this context, enhancing the EU's rapid response capabilities remains a priority. Cost-effective and efficient ways of cooperation will be further pursued, such as pooling and sharing of capabilities. As regards military capabilities in particular, work will focus on preparing a debate at the level of Heads of State and Government on defence. The Council will consider the Commission's proposals for new financial and legal rules for CSDP missions.
51. The Presidencies will also continue to put in place the external financing instruments (Heading 4) under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020).

## COMMON COMMERCIAL POLICY

52. Trade is one of the central drivers of economic growth, competitiveness and job creation. Fostering open markets, trade and investment are vital for reinforcing growth and economic recovery in all parts of the Union as well as with our trading partners. The European Council has on several occasions stressed the importance of trade for growth, calling for a stronger focus to be given to the growth enhancing aspects of the European Union's external policies, in order to maximise their contribution to growth in Europe, to ensure a level playing field and the opening of new markets for the EU exporters and to help shape the conditions to attract more foreign investment.
53. Trade liberalisation based on mutual interests and benefits, is a key tool to deliver on Europe 2020's objectives, in particular its triple objectives of smart, inclusive and sustainable growth. Increased efforts to boost global trade and investment flows should help strengthen sustained growth and the diffusion of green products, services and technologies.
54. Strategic partnerships with major economies are essential in promoting growth and jobs throughout the European Union. Particular attention will be paid to the trade and investment relations with major economies such as the US, Japan, India, China, Canada, Russia and Brazil. For example, FTA negotiations with both the United States and Japan as well as negotiations for a bilateral investment agreement with China may come under consideration.
55. Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs) and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) are an engine for economic integration and regulatory convergence, in particular in relation to the EU's neighbourhood countries. Progress will be pursued in opening and advancing negotiations on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements with the neighbouring partners. The finalisation of DCFTA negotiations with Georgia, Moldova and Armenia and the implementation of the DCFTA with Ukraine as well as the launching and advancement of negotiations with the Southern Neighbourhood countries which are ready will remain a priority.

56. The EU remains committed to strengthening the multilateral rules-based trading system and to the fight against protectionist tendencies. The WTO remains a crucial organisation to that end. The Presidencies will support the ongoing work with regard to the DDA negotiations in order to achieve tangible progress in all areas of the single undertaking where progress would appear feasible, in particular on trade facilitation. Other areas of possible progress outside the single undertaking could be the review of the Information Technology Agreement, the review of the Dispute Settlement Understanding and the negotiations in the area of services. Moreover, given the systemic value of an enlarged WTO membership in strengthening the multilateral trading system, ongoing accession negotiations will be supported.
57. EU trade policy should continue to underpin the free flow of goods, services and investment, the protection of intellectual property rights, the enhancement of Market Access Strategy, especially regarding SMEs, the further opening of public procurement markets, the dismantling of trade barriers and the unrestricted trade in raw materials and energy.
58. Particular attention will be paid to the timely examination of proposals regarding the modernisation of EU trade defence instruments, the EU public procurement instrument and the EU financial responsibility instrument linked to investor-state disputes. The follow-up of recently adopted instruments in the area of the EU's investment policy and in the reform of the Generalised System of Preferences for developing countries will also be ensured.

## **DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

59. Development cooperation will be conducted within the framework of the principles and objectives of the Union's external action. Under the chairmanship of the High Representative, the Council will work on a range of development policy initiatives within the overall context of the EU external action.

60. The EU contribution to the development of the so-called "post-2015 agenda" will be a key aspect of development policy focus during this period. The Council will continue to make progress to reach by 2015 the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Moreover, the EU will endeavour to contribute effectively to the evolution of the post-2015 framework, as part of an inclusive and broad-based process which seeks to reflect the contemporary challenges to making progress in the development context. The Council will work on an EU position for the UN Special Event on the Millennium Development Goals during the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York, 2013.
61. Furthermore, work will continue to put in place those external financing instruments targeting development cooperation under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020). Pending the European Council decision on the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), the Council may be called upon to establish the legal acts required. The Council will conclude its legislative work on a new Decision on the association of the Overseas Countries and Territories with the EU.
62. During this period, the Council will follow up on the EU support for sustainable change in transition societies, will review progress in the implementation of the EU plan of action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015, based on the third implementation report. Moreover, the Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the report of the Food Implementation Model, the report on Policy Coherence for Development, on nutrition policy and on financing for development, as well as to progress a number of important files, including global health, gender policy, the role of local authorities and civil society and the private sector in development policy.

63. Managing the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and the European Development Fund will be another priority. This includes ensuring the smooth functioning of the ACP-EU joint institutions and meetings, in close cooperation with the ACP group of States, and preparing Council decisions related to the ACP-EU Partnership, in particular by making resources available to the EDF or establishing appropriate measures with regard to development cooperation with ACP countries which have failed to respect human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law.
64. Following a standing request from the European Council of June 2010, the Council will prepare the annual reports to the European Council on the EU and Member States' commitments and delivery of Official Development Assistance.

## **HUMANITARIAN AID**

65. As natural disasters become ever more frequent and a global rise in food prices threatens the tenuous position of vulnerable people in many countries, the number of those requiring humanitarian assistance continues to increase. At the same time, in complex emergencies and protracted crises, the delivery of impartial humanitarian assistance has become increasingly challenging.
66. Given the Union's responsibility as the world's largest humanitarian donor, the Council will continue to deliver on the commitments set out in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and its accompanying Action Plan. The evaluation of the implementation of the consensus will be carried out, with a view to further enhancing the Union's ability to deliver on the commitments enshrined in the Consensus.



67. Furthermore, the Council will continue to closely monitor ongoing and emerging humanitarian crises and will seek to improve the effectiveness of the EU and international community's response. In this context, it will continue to support the central coordinating role of the United Nations, notably of the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian affairs (OCHA). The Council will seek to support efforts to build greater capacity in the areas of preparedness and prevention, notably through an increased focus on resilience and linkages between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD). In this respect, the implementation of the EU Approach to Resilience will continue, building upon the SHARE (Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience) and AGIR-Sahel (Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Resilience) initiatives.
68. The implementation of the Food Assistance Convention, which fosters the use of the most effective and efficient mix of tools to address the needs of the most food insecure populations and which will enter into force on 1 January 2013, will be closely monitored. Furthermore, the coherence of the EU's external representation in humanitarian bodies, notably within the Executive Board of the World Food Programme (WFP) will also be ensured and to this end, the EU statements to the WFP Executive Board will be proposed by the Commission and discussed in the Council.
69. The Council will also follow-up on the legislative proposal related to the establishment of the "European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps – EU Aid Volunteers". As foreseen by the Lisbon Treaty, the objective of the legislation will be "to establish a framework for joint contributions from young Europeans to the humanitarian aid operations of the Union" (Article 214.5, TFEU).

## EUROPEAN CONSULAR COOPERATION

70. EU consular cooperation is based on mutual solidarity. In addition, there is also a specific treaty right in regard to the provision of consular assistance to unrepresented EU citizens. As provided for in the Lisbon Treaty, this assistance is based on the principle of non-discrimination. This means that every EU Member State is legally committed to helping any EU citizen whose country has no embassy or consulate in that particular third country, under the same conditions as its own nationals.
71. With a view to strengthening citizens knowledge of this right, the three Presidencies will continue to work to maintain and improve the existing sound functioning of European consular cooperation. In this regard, the work will include examination of a legislative framework (Proposal for a Council Directive on consular protection for citizens of the Union abroad) and coordination and cooperation initiatives (such as the Lead State concept).
72. The Presidencies will also seek to further develop tools and arrangements for cooperation in the event of a major consular crisis affecting EU citizens. In addition, the Presidencies will pursue Consular Dialogue with like-minded countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia.

## **ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**

### **ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

#### **Economic policy**

73. The focus of economic policy action will continue to be on the lessons learnt from the financial and sovereign debt crisis, while building on the measures already taken to strengthen economic governance and policy coordination. With the six-pack, the forthcoming two-pack and the Treaty for Stability, Co-ordination and Governance (TSCG) considerable steps towards strengthening the Stability and Growth Pact and Member States' fiscal framework have been taken. The focus of the coming semesters will be on the implementation of the new rules and on drawing first lessons from their application, notably in the framework of the Excessive Deficit Procedures.
74. Moreover, while recalling the importance of fiscal consolidation, structural reform and targeted investment for sustainable growth, the Council will make its best endeavours to ensure the swift implementation of the Compact for Growth and Jobs, adopted by the European Council in June 2012, in order to put Europe back on the path of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
75. Once the TSCG has entered into force, the Council will take forward the work necessary to ensure the implementation of a balanced budget rule and an automatic correction mechanism by Member States in their national legal frameworks according to the agreed principles. Likewise, the Presidencies will ensure a fruitful co-operation between the ESM and the Council with a view to the smooth implementation of the agreed crisis-related policies.
76. The EU's and the euro-area's enhanced policy co-ordination framework includes also the new framework for tackling macroeconomic imbalances and competitiveness losses. After the first experience with the Macro-imbalances Procedure (MIP), the Presidencies will continue to implement the instruments and draw first lessons from its application.

77. The Presidencies will also carry out the necessary work stemming from the final report of the President of the European Council “Towards a Genuine Economic and Monetary union”, prepared in close collaboration with the Presidents of the Commission, the Eurogroup and the European Central Bank.
78. The ex-ante coordination of Member States’ economic and fiscal policies will continue to be carried out under the European Semester, which is currently being reviewed with a view to improving its operation in the future. It integrates the surveillance of structural reforms and the existing processes under the strengthened Stability and Growth Pact and the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines. National Reform Programmes and Stability and Convergence Programmes are presented simultaneously. Within this framework, the three Presidencies will pursue 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 better quality and increased efficiency of public spending with priority given to growth enhancing measures. The three Presidencies will build on the experience collected with the first two full cycles of the European Semester.
79. Further to the increase in the EIB’s capital, the Council will oversee the implementation of measures supporting the financing of investment for sustainable growth, including through the EIB. In this context, the three Presidencies will strive for improving the conditions for stimulating growth and employment by strengthening the future growth potential.
80. Regarding third countries, the three Presidencies will work towards supporting EU partners facing difficulties through a streamlined macro-financial assistance framework.

## **Financial services**

81. Strengthening financial integration within the Union is important both to EMU and the single market. The swift implementation of the agreements reached within the European Council with a view to further strengthening the EMU, while also protecting the single market, will remain a priority.
82. Seeking agreement on all elements of the Banking Union will be a priority. Specific attention will be given to reaching an agreement on the proposals on banking supervision, deposit guarantee and the creation of a resolution framework. In this respect, it will be important to advance the creation of corresponding institutional and political mechanisms, while ensuring a smooth transition to the new arrangements and preserving a level playing field for operators in the financial services sector.
83. The ongoing comprehensive reform of the financial services regulatory framework will remain a priority. The three Presidencies will focus on measures aimed at furthering the integration, competitiveness and efficiency of the EU financial markets, along with enhancing the transparency and integrity of the financial sector and consumer protection. Work will continue on ensuring strong and robust capital requirements in line with international standards.
84. With a view to ensuring that all financial actors are subject to appropriate regulatory requirements, the three Presidencies will coordinate legislative efforts on further proposals which are expected to be brought forward by the Commission for consideration during the 18 month period, in particular in areas such as shadow banking, securities law, financial conglomerates, long-term investment, indices and benchmarks, occupational pensions and the payments services environment.

## Taxation

85. In the area of direct taxation, the Council will further pursue efforts to advance work related to the negotiations of the revised Savings agreements with third countries, notably Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Switzerland and to the revision of the existing EU Directive on Taxation of Savings. The examination of other legislative proposals, currently on the table such as the proposal for a Directive on the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB), will be taken forward as appropriate.
86. In the area of indirect taxation, the Council will continue work on the common system of value added tax in line with the Council Conclusions of May 2012, with a view to creating a simpler, more efficient, robust and fraud-proof VAT system tailored to the Single Market. The main priorities will be the modernisation and simplification of the current system, the reduction of administrative burdens and costs for operators and tax administrations and combating VAT fraud. The review of the Directive on the taxation of energy products and electricity will be pursued.
87. The Council will also take work forward upon the Commission's proposal for enhanced cooperation on a Financial Transaction Tax.
88. The Council will also finalise work on the FISCALIS Regulation.
89. Activities to fight tax evasion and fraud will continue, in line with the Council report presented to the European Council in June 2012. This work will also cover a number of concrete issues suggested in the Commission communication, presented in summer 2012.

90. Moreover, in the context of the High Level Working Party on Tax issues, tax policy coordination among Member States will be further pursued. The focus of such cooperation will be on tax policy issues, exchange of best practices, stepping-up the fight against fraud and tax evasion, including in relation to third countries, and monitoring discussions on tax issues in multilateral fora. The ongoing work of the Code of Conduct Group on business taxation to examine tax measures that could potentially constitute harmful tax competition will continue. The Council will continue to report regularly to the European Council on relevant EU tax policy issues, including on those falling under the Euro Plus Pact.

### **Export Credits**

91. In the field of international disciplines for officially supported export credits, the Presidencies will continue to promote and coordinate the EU's position in the OECD Arrangement on Export Credits. This Arrangement will continue to be transposed into EU legislation, by a process of co-decision involving the European Parliament, using a simplified procedure involving the use of delegated authority by the Commission.

### **BUDGET**

92. The Council will ensure that the annual budget procedure is carried out successfully, within the budgetary provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and within the framework of the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework which will enter into force in the beginning of 2014. Sound financial management of EU funds will remain a priority, notably in the context of the new Financial Regulation and by monitoring the implementation of the budget on the basis of the annual report of the Court of Auditors.

### **Own resources**

93. Work will continue on the Commission's proposals for the system of own resources presented in 2011, in order to pave the way for the adoption of the new own resources decision and regulations related to the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

## **Protection of the European Union's financial interests**

94. The Council will continue work in order to ensure the timely adoption of the Hercule III programme, which aims at promoting activities in the field of the protection of the financial interests of the European Union, and of the Pericles 2020 programme, which establishes an exchange, assistance and training programme for the protection of the Euro against counterfeiting.

## **JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**

95. During this period, the new Multiannual Financial Framework for Home Affairs for the 2014-2020 period will be agreed. The objective is to have the Regulations for the new Multiannual Financial Framework for Home Affairs and Justice adopted at the earliest possible stage in 2013. During that year, discussions will be held between the Commission and the Member States on the national programmes under the system of decentralised management. The programmes will start as of 2014.
96. Within the next 18 months, the Council will continue the implementation of the Stockholm Programme, which remains the guiding reference framework for the political and operational agenda of the European Union in the JHA field. Setting the framework for the next multiannual JHA programme, covering topical issues related to migration, security and justice will also be a priority.
97. Activities in the field of JHA will be based on the principles of **Solidarity** and **partnership** among Member States; **strengthened cooperation** in border management, civil protection and disaster management and **greater complementarity** among action taken at national and EU levels; **flexibility** in addressing the new challenges and trends in migration flows; **greater overall coherence** of all EU policies in order to reconcile fundamental rights and migration policies with developments in the areas of trade, foreign affairs and development; **greater cooperation in security matters** to ensure that through joint proactive actions challenges can be effectively addressed.



98. Moreover, as 2013 will be the European Year of Citizens, the Presidencies will encourage and facilitate citizens' wider involvement in the EU and focus attention on raising public awareness (especially of the young generation) about common EU values. Special attention will be given to assisting the citizens of Europe to be more informed about their rights and opportunities arising from their EU citizenship, particularly their rights to live and work anywhere in the Union and the right to table a petition to the European Parliament, as well as other issues of direct concern to the citizens.

## **HOME AFFAIRS**

99. The effectiveness of the Union's policies in the area of migration and asylum will be kept under review through the follow-up to the annual reporting exercise undertaken by the Commission and the regular updating of the EU Action on Migratory Pressures - A Strategic Response. The Council will also continue to pay special attention to the issue of unaccompanied minors, including through reviewing the implementation, and if necessary, the updating of the relevant 2010 Council Conclusions and Action Plan.

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

100. During the next 18 months, the Council will further pursue the monitoring and implementation of rules on free movement of EU citizens and their families across the EU, on the basis of a report by the Commission, expected for next year. The key objectives remain unchanged: monitoring trends, exchange of information, fight against fraud and abuse. Likewise, developments in the Schengen area will be kept under review through regular strategic discussions on relevant developments and initiatives.

### **External Borders Management**

101. Work will be taken forward on the development of the integrated border management approach on a number of levels, including through support of the work of FRONTEX and of the new IT Agency.

102. As part of the development of the EU's integrated border management system, the Council will focus on the "smart border" concept and work on the legislative proposals on the establishment of a registered traveller programme and an entry-exit system. Work will also continue on the development of the Eurosur project.
103. The successful enlargement of the Schengen area and the further development of the evaluation process will remain a priority of the Council. In collaboration with the Commission, the Council will also support the finalisation of the SIS II project within the foreseen schedule. Due attention will be paid to the practical functioning of the Schengen Information System, in particular to the quality of personal data entered to the SIS following EU decisions on restrictive measures to certain third-country nationals.

### **Visa Policy**

104. In order to ensure that the common visa policy responds to the needs of the Union, it needs to be kept under review, taking into account the [...] relevant Commission reports and communications as well as Member States' experience. This will include, as appropriate, work on legislative proposals to update Regulation 810/2009, establishing a Community Code on Visas. The negotiation of new visa facilitation agreements with third countries will be further pursued, as well as the arrangements of progressing visa liberalisation dialogues with relevant third countries. The Presidencies will also do their utmost to ensure the roll out of the VIS.

### **Legal Migration and Integration of third country nationals**

105. The development of a common immigration policy capable of contributing to the EU's Growth Agenda will remain a key priority.

106. The focus will be on the completion of the legislative work on the implementation of the Policy Plan on Legal Migration, including on the proposals on intra-corporate transferees and on seasonal workers as well as the proposal to amend Directive 2004/114/EC and EC Directive 2005/71 relating to the admission of students and researchers. Effective integration policies remain a key objective, and in this context the implementation of the European Agenda for the Integration of third country nationals will be further pursued.

### **Illegal immigration**

107. The fight against illegal immigration through the promotion of practical cooperation remains a key priority. The updating of the EU Action on Migratory Pressures - A Strategic Response will provide a particular focus for this work.

108. The development of a comprehensive network of readmission agreements with relevant third countries, will remain a key priority, as well as maintaining the pace of negotiations under way and identifying additional third countries with which agreements should be negotiated.

109. The three Presidencies will also continue to promote practical cooperation in the area of return, including in the area of voluntary return.

### **Asylum**

110. The legislative work underpinning the Common European Asylum System is nearly finished. The Council will prioritise any work necessary for finalising this process, as well as supporting the work of the European Asylum Support Office, in implementing the CEAS and further developing practical cooperation among the Member States.

111. At the same time, and in compliance with the 2012 Council Conclusions, the promotion of effective solidarity with Member States facing particular pressures, including through mixed migration flows, will be prioritised. On the basis of a relevant Commission Communication, the Council will also address during this period the issue of mutual recognition of asylum decisions.

## Internal security

112. The Council will continue to prioritise the implementation of the Internal Security Strategy. Based on the proposal from the Commission, the Council will work closely with the European Parliament to establish the **European Information Exchange Model (EIXM)**, an essential tool for the timely access to accurate criminal intelligence it provides to national law enforcement authorities. The work to be carried out stems from the upcoming communication on EIXM, as well as on reports evaluating the implementation of the current instruments, the so-called "Swedish Framework Decision" and the Prüm Decisions. Furthermore, there will be a close monitoring of the way Prüm Decisions are implemented in Member States to ensure optimum exchange of DNA, fingerprint data and vehicle registration data.
113. As far as **Passenger Name Records (PNR)** is concerned, the Council will work, in cooperation with the Commission and the EP, toward the timely conclusion of the PNR Agreement with Canada and aiming at the adoption of a Directive on the collection and use of PNR data. Negotiations with other third countries may also be initiated, on the basis of proposals by the Commission.
114. An Action Plan for 2013-2016 will be elaborated by the Council in order to start the implementation of the new EU **Drugs Strategy 2013-2020**. The Council will also examine the forthcoming proposal for new legislation on the control of drugs, which is considered important in the fight against the rapidly evolving market of new psychoactive substances. Legislation on precursors will also be revised.

115. **Cybercrime and cyber security** have been identified as a growing challenge for information systems in Europe. Work will start within the Council on the elaboration of a strategy encompassing both internal and external aspects to curb cybercrime and to enhance cyber security which respects human rights in cyberspace as a priority issue. The Council will build on available instruments, such as the Directive on attacks against information systems and, if necessary, develop a European model for public and private agreements in this area. The need for an enhanced coordination between various policy areas of the EU will be carefully assessed in order to determine potential positive synergies. Operational cooperation will be developed following the setting-up of the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) at Europol.
116. Moreover, the Council will examine, on the basis of the Commission's Communication on the **European Training Scheme**, a general policy for the training of law enforcement authorities. Legislative proposals on the agencies Europol and CEPOL designed to implement the relevant provisions of the Lisbon Treaty will be brought forward as a priority. The aim of this revision is to provide efficient bases for operational law enforcement cooperation, as well as law enforcement training, and streamlining the capacities of these agencies on regional, EU and international levels.

### **Fight against organised crime**

117. Following the publication of the 1<sup>st</sup> Serious Organised Crime Threat Assessment by Europol, the second EU policy cycle for serious and organised international crime will be defined in 2013, setting out the priorities in this field for the next 4 years. Work will continue to ensure and improve the "operationalisation" of these priorities, using a multi-disciplinary approach. In addition, the development of an administrative approach to combat organized crime will further be enhanced.

118. The Council will be invited to address a number of legal acts and policy instruments, 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. Upcoming proposals on amendments to the Data Retention Directive and to the Money Laundering Directive will also be examined.
119. The fight against trafficking in human beings will remain a priority for the three Presidencies. They will provide full support to the implementation of the new comprehensive strategy on Trafficking in Human Beings and measures to protect and assist victims.
120. The Council will also examine the proposal regarding the setting-up of an Observatory for the Prevention of Crime (OPC), with a view to supporting Member States and EU institutions in their preventive measures and related information exchange.

### **Fight against terrorism**

121. Pursuing the EU's relentless efforts and building on the four components of the EU Strategy against Terrorism, the Trio will have as a priority the prevention and combating of radicalisation and recruitment as well as the fight against terrorist financing. A framework of administrative measures against suspects of terrorism based on Article 75 TFEU will be examined.
122. Concerning terrorist financing, the Council stands ready to examine any proposal that the Commission might put forward for the establishment of a European Terrorist Finance Tracking System (TFTS).
123. Once the Commission and the High Representative have submitted their proposal based on Article 222 TFEU, the Council will also have to agree on the implementation of the **solidarity clause**, arising in situations of a terrorist attack or a natural or a man-made disaster.

## **Customs cooperation**

124. The three Presidencies will continue the ongoing work to implement existing strategies aimed at strengthening cooperation among the EU's customs services, and between the custom services and other law enforcement agencies. The Sixth Action Plan to Implement the Strategy for Future\_Customs Law Enforcement Cooperation will be implemented over the 18 months. The Trio will also coordinate joint customs operations focusing on implementing the goals of the Internal Security Strategy. In addition, the well-established practice of coordinating joint police-customs operations will be further pursued. The Presidencies will continue work on the amended proposal for a Regulation establishing an Action Programme for Customs in the European Union for the period 2014-2020 (Customs 2020).

## **JUSTICE**

### **General issues**

125. The Council will examine the new Regulation on Eurojust and an upcoming proposal for the setting up of a European Prosecutor's Office.

126. In addition, the constant training of professionals working in justice allotting them a high degree of expertise will remain a central objective.

### **E-Justice**

127. The three Presidencies will work towards the finalisation of the work related to the Commission proposal on e-Justice, which aims to establish a legal framework to facilitate access to justice throughout all Member States and to facilitate judicial cooperation in civil, criminal and administrative law at European level.

## **Fundamental rights and Citizenship**

128. The Council will support the Commission's negotiating efforts for the EU's accession to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR). The incoming Presidencies are committed to steering timely discussions in the Council towards a decision authorizing the conclusion of the accession agreement. Furthermore, a similar approach will be taken when it comes to any work needed for the adoption of legislative proposals concerning the internal EU rules which are necessary for the accession of the Union to the ECHR.
129. Work on the proposals for a Regulation on data protection and a Directive on the protection of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties will be pursued as a priority, together with the follow-up from the Commission on the agreement with the United States on a general data protection framework.
130. The Council will also examine the **Citizenship Report**, which the Commission is expected to present in Spring 2013.
131. Following an evaluation on the inclusion of police and judicial cooperation into the framework of the Fundamental Rights Agency, a proposal to that effect will probably be submitted by the Commission.

## **Protection of the most vulnerable**

132. Following the adoption of the Protection of Victims' Directive in 2012, work will continue on a "Roadmap" of measures concerning the position of victims in criminal proceedings.



133. The negotiations on a Regulation on EU hotlines for missing children will be actively supported. The three Presidencies will work intensively on all initiatives relating to the combat of violence against women and domestic violence, in particular its cross border aspects, taking into account also developments occurring in other international fora, such as the Council of Europe.
134. The upcoming Directive on Compensation to Victims of Crime will be examined during the period.
135. Cooperation within GRECO (Group of States against Corruption) will be further enhanced.

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

136. The Council will proceed to a swift examination of Commission proposals related to the "Roadmap for strengthening procedural rights of suspected or accused persons in criminal proceedings". Negotiations on the draft Directive on the right of access to a lawyer in criminal proceedings and on the right to communicate upon arrest will be progressed with a view to early adoption. Attention will be given to upcoming proposals of the Commission

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

137. The principle of mutual recognition is a cornerstone of judicial cooperation. Its implementation will be further pursued in order to increase mutual trust between Member States' judicial authorities.
138. The draft Directive on the European Investigation Order in criminal matters will continue to be examined. Negotiations will start on the upcoming Commission proposal for a Directive on the mutual recognition of financial penalties, including those related to road traffic offences. A future proposal on mutual recognition of decisions of disqualifications will also be examined with a view to effectively preventing disqualified persons from carrying out the activities for which the decision of disqualification was taken, anywhere in the EU.
139. Given the impact mutual recognition has on every Member State's national law, efforts to support the Council conclusions on the follow-up to the implementation of the mutual recognition instruments will be enhanced. In this context, the update of the EJN website could be envisaged. The possibility of improving the effectiveness in the way the European Arrest Warrant is applied will also be examined taking into account the findings presented by the Commission in its report of 2011.
140. Bearing in mind the need to secure European citizens' security, which presupposes access of competent national authorities to the electronic interconnection of criminal records databases of all Member States, the Trio will work towards the implementation of the European Criminal Record Information System (ECRIS) framework. In this regard, it will steer discussions pertaining to the transposition of the general technical rules into the national systems and the updated Manual for Practitioners. A proposal on a central register for third country nationals (ECRIS-TCN), to be tabled soon, will be examined.

## **Minimum rules**

141. The Council will continue the examination of the proposals for a Directive for a strengthened legal framework on confiscation and recovery of criminal assets, on Criminal Sanctions for Insider Dealing and Market Manipulation and on the protection of the Financial Interests of the Union. Once presented by the Commission, the proposal on the mutual recognition of the confiscation of criminal assets will be prioritised. Upcoming proposals for Directives on Euro counterfeiting, on strengthening administrative and criminal proceedings, including mutual legal assistance, on the Establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's office (EPPO) and on drugs trafficking will be examined.
142. The Presidencies will streamline work on IT projects for justice in cooperation with the Commission.

## **Civil Law**

143. In the area of family law, the Council will endeavour to conclude work on a Regulation for matrimonial property regimes and will examine to which extent a regime regarding the property consequences of registered partnerships can be created. Examination of the proposal reviewing the Regulation on Brussels IIa relating to divorce, legal separation and parental responsibility will start.
144. Efforts will be dedicated to advance work in an area of fundamental interest to the European citizen, relating to the mutual recognition of the effects of certain civil status documents and relating to the elimination of the formalities for legalisation of documents between Member States.

## **Justice for growth**

145. Particular attention will be paid to concluding work on the proposal for a Regulation on cross border debt recovery in civil and commercial matters and on the revision of the Insolvency Regulation, having in mind the financial situation in the Member States. Intensive examination of the proposal on a European Sales Law will be continued.
146. Furthermore, the aim is to adopt a Regulation on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters to ensure that a temporary protection provided in one Member State is maintained when a person travels or moves to another Member State.
147. Access to justice should be further facilitated, in particular through a future proposal on alternative dispute resolution for business to business. Other proposals to be submitted such as reviewing the service of documents Regulation, a framework for collective redress or the limitation and prescription for cross border damages arising from traffic accidents will be carefully examined.

## **CIVIL PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

148. The three Presidencies will continue the on-going work on civil protection policy, in line with the new civil protection legal basis introduced by Article 196 of the Lisbon Treaty, which aims at improving the effectiveness of systems for preventing, preparing for and responding to natural and man-made disasters of all kinds within and outside the Union.
149. Work in this area will focus on the swift adoption and implementation of the revised legislative framework in the field of civil protection (the Union Civil Protection Mechanism replacing and merging the two current Council Decisions - the Civil Protection Mechanism and the Financial Instrument). The three Presidencies will therefore continue negotiations, in order to achieve an agreement between the institutions as soon as possible.

150. In terms of the European critical infrastructure protection (CIP), the Council will ensure the follow-up to a cross sectoral CIP policy package, to be presented to the Council at the end of the Cyprus Presidency. This cross sectoral CIP package is expected to reshape European Framework for Critical Infrastructure Protection.
151. Following a comprehensive report on implementation of the EU CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Security) Action Plan during the Cyprus Presidency, the three Presidencies will undertake to examine and implement the priority programme for a joint implementation of EU Action Plans on the CBRN and on Enhancing the Security of Explosives. The objective is to ensure concerted European action in the area of malign CBRNE which addresses internal and external security from terrorism.
152. Once the Commission and the High Representative have submitted their proposal foreseen under Article 222 of the TFEU, the three Presidencies will work on the implementation of the Solidarity Clause.
153. The trio Presidency will ensure appropriate follow-up to the Crisis Coordination Arrangements (CCA) Review Process and the full implementation of the revised arrangements, notably concerning training, exercises and lessons learned as well as development of the web platform and crisis communication. In line with these arrangements, in times of major crisis of internal or external origin, the Presidency will be central to the coordination and strategic guidance of the response at EU political level.

## EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF JHA

154. The external dimension will continue to play an important role in addressing key challenges and successfully implementing the Union's overall objectives in the area of freedom, security and justice, including greater internal security and successful management of migratory flows. This will require making the best possible use of the knowledge and competences of the EU institutions and agencies (Europol, Eurojust, Frontex and EASO) as well as those of the Member States. Efforts to achieve a coherent and all-encompassing approach of external relations in the field of justice and home affairs as well as to fully integrate it into the other policies of the EU, by ensuring full coherence of the JHA external dimension with other aspects of Union's foreign policy, will remain of utmost importance.
155. The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility will continue to guide the work of the three incoming Presidencies. The Council will work with the Commission and the EEAS in engaging with third countries in regional partnership processes and in developing dedicated instruments, such as mobility partnerships, directed to individual third countries. A special emphasis will be given to the strengthening of cooperation on border management with the EU's neighbours.
156. The Presidencies will also aim to further strengthen dialogue and cooperation between the EU and non-EU countries on drug issues in a comprehensive and balanced manner.
157. It is likely that cyber security and cyber crime will become increasingly important areas of cooperation for the EU and its main partners.
158. The incoming Presidencies will launch a reflection on ways to enhance JHA cooperation with the EU's strategic partner countries and regions.

159. Relations with the US, will be pursued with a view to achieving progress on all aspects of cooperation. The 2009 Washington Statement remains the framework for promoting transatlantic mobility, security, counter-terrorism, resilience to threats and judicial cooperation. The EU will strive to achieve an overall data protection agreement with the US and to pursue intensive law enforcement cooperation.
160. Relations with Russia will continue to cover the broad set of issues that were agreed for the Common Spaces, and will be based on the respect of commitments in the area of human rights and the rule of law. Efforts to promote the value of data protection must be intensified.
161. Work with the Western Balkans countries, both in the interest of **the latter in the context of their EU integration, as well as in the interest of the EU's internal security, will be further pursued.** The Warsaw Eastern Partnership Summit has agreed to strengthen cooperation in areas related to freedom, security and justice, as well as encouraged the cooperation of the relevant EU agencies with interested Eastern European countries. In this context, the Presidencies will ensure an appropriate follow-up to the Commission communication and the Council Conclusions on cooperation in the area of JHA within the Eastern Partnership, including through organizing a dedicated EaP JHA Ministerial meeting.
162. Efforts will be made to conclude the 2006 agreement on surrender procedures with Iceland and Norway. A proposal for the conclusion of the Protocol to the UN Convention on Organised Crime relating to firearms is expected to be finalised during the period. The negotiations of an agreement with Switzerland, Norway and Iceland concerning the service of documents and taking of evidence may also begin in the course of the next 18 months.
163. Finally, the incoming Presidencies will launch a reflection on ways to enhance JHA cooperation with the EU's strategic partner countries and regions.

### **EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY**

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

164. The Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Semester process have set employment policy at the core of EU activities. Employment targets are part of the Strategy and in the European Semester the EPSCO Council and its subsidiary committees, the Employment Committee (EMCO) and the Social Protection Committee (SPC) have an increasingly important role. Both committees participate in the Semester, in particular via the multilateral surveillance process and thematic review of the implementation of the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs). EMCO's role in the labour-market oriented Council recommendations falling under article 148 should also be highlighted, as well as SPC's contribution to them. Within the European Employment Strategy, employment policies are closely coordinated and monitored via peer reviews and thorough analysis. Orientations are set to provide guidance to Member States in the elaboration and implementation of their employment policies.
165. At a time when employment issues have become so pressing, and where the EU governance structures are being revamped to increase the monitoring of the implementation of reform commitments and to allow for greater and more in-depth analysis of the employment situation in Europe, there is scope for the EPSCO Council to step up its involvement in the European Semester process.
166. The three Presidencies will pursue the implementation of the Employment Package presented by the Commission in 2012, putting emphasis on quality job creation, structural reform of labour markets and investment in human capital, as guided by the European Council. In addition to the specific proposals that the Council will decide upon, the implementation of this package will bring forward an enhanced governance structure in this field.



167. As part of the Employment Package, new initiatives to improve the youth employment situation will be put on the table that will require the Presidencies' impulse and follow-up. These will include in particular elaborating a Council Recommendation on Youth Guarantee in the context of the Youth Transition package as well as other actions to reduce youth exclusion through inclusive labour markets.
168. The Employment Guidelines addressed to all Member States were decided in 2010 and in principle valid until 2014, although they have to be reviewed and confirmed annually. In 2013 a new proposal (post 2014) is expected to be tabled by the Commission.

### **EU Funds in the Employment and Social Sphere**

169. The Presidency Trio will deal with the decisive negotiations on certain key sectoral legislation under the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Their conclusion will determine the financial impact of various funds which concern social policy matters.
170. Within the MFF, the Council will continue its negotiations on the Programme for Social Change and Innovation (PSCI) and for the European Social Fund (ESF) with a view to their finalisation. Negotiations will continue on the European Globalisation Fund.
171. The Presidencies will push forward and finalise the negotiations on these funds.

## **External dimension of EU Employment and Social Policies**

172. The global crisis has since its inception had an ever-increasing effect on social cohesion. International fora have acquired more relevance as the social consequences of the crisis have spread, with an intensification of international activities to address these. Past Presidencies have been increasingly involved in these gatherings, representing the EU alongside the Commission and ensuring a coordinated and coherent approach from EU Member States in these fora. This involvement has particularly taken place in the G20 process, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the International Labour Organisation and the ASEM process. In this regard, the three Presidencies will support actions to be taken at several levels and in different fora.

### **Labour legislation**

173. As for legislative activities, the Presidencies will continue work on the Commission proposals still under examination, in particular the proposal on the review of the Directive on the Posting of Workers. Subject to the outcome of the negotiations by the social partners on the review of the Working Time Directive by the end of 2012, the Commission should take further steps in the course of 2013.

174. The Presidencies will also deal with a Commission initiative aiming at removing existing barriers to mobility of EU workers by enhancing the enforcement of rights conferred by EU law and with any possible amendments of the Directives on the information and consultation of workers.

175. Other initiatives are expected in 2013 concerning the possible simplification of the arrangements for the involvement of employees in the framework of the European Company and the review of the Directive supplementing the Statute for a European cooperative society. The Presidencies will contribute to the discussions from an employment perspective, in cooperation with the competitiveness sector.

## **Health and safety at work**

176. The Presidencies will continue work on the new Directive on minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to electromagnetic fields. The new Directive needs to be adopted by October 2013 in order to meet the transposition deadline of Directive 2004/40/EC.
177. In 2013, a new Community Strategy on Health and Safety at Work for 2013-2020 will be adopted.
178. Furthermore, a new legislative instrument (recast) regarding occupational diseases of the musculoskeletal system (follow-up of the second phase of consultation of the social partners) and a legislative initiative to amend Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work are expected to be dealt with by the Council in 2013.
179. The Council may 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").

## **Social policy issues**

180. In the area of social protection and social inclusion, the Presidencies will continue to ensure an appropriate follow up to the Commission initiatives and in particular to the "Social Investment Package" which the Commission has announced to present in 2013.

181. Attention will also be paid to the issues of the financing of the social protection systems and adequate access to services as well as the potential responses to the ever increasing need for long-term care.
182. With a view to reducing obstacles to worker mobility, the Presidencies will also resume the negotiations on the proposal for a Directive on improving the portability of supplementary pension rights (the so-called "Portability Directive"). This proposal is designed to reduce the obstacles both to freedom of movement between Member States and to occupational mobility within a Member State.
183. In addition, Presidencies will start work on two proposals regarding the coordination of social security systems, aiming at updating Regulations N° 883/2004 and 987/2009.

### **Equality between women and men**

184. Equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the European Union, but there is also a strong economic case for advancing equality between women and men. The Presidencies will seek to ensure that the Council fulfils its commitments, as set out in the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020), and will take into account the framework of the Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015)
185. In addition to implementing the gender perspective into all policy areas ("gender mainstreaming"), the Presidencies will focus on the following specific themes: women and the media, the labour market activation of women in keeping with the 75% employment target for women and men that was set in the Europe 2020 Strategy, effectiveness of gender equality institutional mechanisms , women and the economy. Policies to facilitate the reconciliation of work, family and private life will also receive attention, as will the Commission's proposal in relation to gender balance on company boards.

## **Discrimination**

186. 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. The promotion of the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities and marginalised groups, including Roma, will continue in accordance with the Council's commitments and competences.

## **European Year for Reconciling Work and Family Life**

187. Designating 2014 as the European Year for Reconciling Work and Family Life would help improving the social situation of families by triggering a reflection on the necessary responses to the far-reaching societal challenges in this context. This would have a positive influence on the current demographic tendencies and most certainly contribute to strengthening social cohesion, leading to a socially more inclusive Europe. Whilst family issues are, first and foremost, an area of Member States' competence, family policies are firmly embedded in our shared values and traditions, and there is considerable scope for cooperation at EU level which can also provide added value to policy options and solutions at national level.

## HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

### Public Health

188. The three Presidencies are conscious of the current economic situation and its impact on health and health systems. The three Presidencies will focus on measures towards enhancing public health in the EU as well as on innovation in the health sector. Continuity of implementation of the EU Health Strategy 2008-2013 main goals and tasks will also be taken into account. To promote healthy life style, the Trio will pay special attention to tobacco policies and nutrition. Reinforcement of the cooperation at EU level on serious cross-border health threats is necessary instrument and will be promoted through various initiatives.
189. In the field of public health, the three Presidencies will continue and conclude the work on proposals for a Decision on serious cross-border threats to health aiming at **streamlining and strengthening European Union capacities and structures for effectively responding to serious cross-border health threats**. In 2013, they should finalise the adoption of the regulation on the third multi-annual programme of EU action in the field of health, under the MFF 2014-2020.
190. The three Presidencies will take forward the work in the area of health determinants, whereby special attention will be paid to tobacco control policies. In this respect, work on the revision of Directive 2001/37/EC concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco products (“Tobacco Products Directive”) will be taken forward as a priority, once the Commission has submitted a proposal. 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.
191. The three Presidencies will move forward the "reflection processes" on modern, responsive and sustainable health systems and chronic diseases launched under the auspices of the Working Party on Public Health at Senior level.

192. The three Presidencies will also ensure the high level of involvement of the Union and its Member States in the WHO in order to enhance those health issues of global importance that are in the interest of the Union and its Member States.

193. Pharmaceuticals and medical devices

194. In this area the Presidencies will work towards achieving a substantial progress on different proposals. The Council will actively engage with the proposal for a revision of the fees payable to the European Medicines Agency<sup>2</sup> that is expected to be presented during the first half of the 18-month period. The Presidencies will also take forward the ongoing work on the proposal for a Directive<sup>3</sup> relating to the transparency of measures regulating the prices of medicinal products for human use and their inclusion in the scope of public health insurance systems. During the second half of 2012, a proposal for a Regulation<sup>4</sup> on clinical trials on medicinal products for human use and two proposals<sup>5</sup> for a Regulation on medical devices and a Regulation on *in-vitro* medical devices have been presented. The Presidencies will prioritise work on these files.

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

3 This proposed Directive will replace 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.

4 This proposed Regulation will replace 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.

5 These proposed Regulations will replace Council Directive 90/385/EEC of 20 June 1990 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to active implantable medical devices, Council Directive 93/42/EEC of 14 June 1993 concerning medical devices and Directive 98/79/EEC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 October 1998 on *in vitro* diagnostic medical devices.

## **Foodstuffs**

195. The three Presidencies will endeavour to ensure a high level of food safety, taking into account the work conducted by the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius and the essential role of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to carry the risk assessments in the context of authorization procedures.
196. They will ensure the adoption of the proposed Regulation on food intended for infants and young children and on food for special medical purposes, aimed at replacing the current legal regime on dietetic foods.
197. The three Presidencies will start work on a proposal revising the Regulation on Novel Foods that will be submitted by the Commission, together with a proposal on cloning.

## **COMPETITIVENESS (*INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND SPACE*)**

### **Competitiveness**

198. As the economic crisis hits the EU more severely and unemployment rates show a disturbing upwards trend, enhancement of Europe's growth and competitiveness policies is a top priority for the Presidencies. New impetus must be given in order to strengthen European competitiveness and bring the European economies back on track.
199. The Competitiveness Council plays a key role in the EU legislation process and policy making for the growth agenda: it is responsible for essential growth enhancing initiatives and measures in the framework of the Single Market policy, Europe 2020 strategy, the European semester, and in particular the "Compact for Growth and Jobs" decided by the European Council at its meeting end of June 2012.



200. The Presidencies will spare no efforts to ensure that the Competitiveness Council contributes in an effective manner to achieving the targets of these initiatives by delivering concrete and timely results on the European growth agenda. Particular attention will be paid to the implementation of the Single Market Acts I and II, the achievement of a well-functioning Single Energy Market by 2014 and Digital Single Market by 2015, improvement of governance of the Single Market as well as the adoption of Horizon 2020 and COSME in 2013 and the finalisation of the European Research Area by 2014.
201. A process has been put in place in spring 2012 for the regular monitoring, at European Council level, of progress achieved by the Council on growth enhancing measures. The European Semester exercise and in particular the regular European Council spring summit on growth and employment will give the Competitiveness Council the possibility to report back to the European Council in this respect.
202. The Presidencies, in cooperation with the Commission, intend to examine a possibility to make an assessment of the national practices reforming state owned companies and evaluate their impacts on the competitiveness and the Single Market.

## Single Market

203. 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. The Single Market remains fragmented in various areas, to the detriment of businesses, in particular SMEs and consumers. Deepening the Single Market by removing remaining barriers will be a key priority for the Presidencies in promoting growth and jobs, in particular in digital and network industries. It also needs to respond to new challenges in the context of globalisation. Particular efforts will be made by the Presidencies to advance and finalise work on the basis of the Single Market Act I and II, presented by the Commission in April 2011 and October 2012 respectively, with a view to building a highly competitive social market economy, through smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Presidencies will emphasise the importance of an improved and more uniform implementation, application and enforcement of the Single Market regulation. They will discuss the Annual Single Market Integration Report to assess the progress made in the integration of the EU markets by means of both harmonisation and mutual recognition.
204. The development of the services sector is crucial to the EU economy since services represent about 70% of EU's GDP. In 2012 the Commission completed a comprehensive review exercise on the application of the Services Directive. The Presidencies are determined to promote the full implementation of the Services Directive, and explore further pathways of enhancing the functioning of the EU services markets.
205. A major priority will be to reach agreement on the still outstanding parts of the public procurement package (public procurement directive, sectoral directive and concessions directive) as well as the Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications, as called for by the European Council.

## **Consumer Affairs**

206. The three Presidencies will be dedicated to promoting a high level of protection of consumers, also with a view to enhancing public confidence in the single market and reinforcing the internal market. Work will be launched on forthcoming proposals which aim at reviewing existing legislation, namely the Directive on package travel and the Directive on general product safety. The forthcoming Regulation on market surveillance will also be given priority. The work on these proposals will continue throughout the whole period.

## **Better regulation**

207. Better Regulation ("Smart Regulation") will be considered as an ongoing priority for the three Presidencies in seeking a better quality evidence-based legislation, effective and least burdensome policy making. Based on the experience gained when implementing a 25% reduction target of administrative burdens arising from EU legislation, it is intended to analyse - together with the Commission - the possibility of further steps aiming at more systematic application of a broader range of the smart regulation instruments. The overall regulatory burden, in particular for SMEs, should be reduced at both European and national levels.

208. The Presidencies are looking forward to possible new Commission initiatives on better regulation and the reduction of the overall regulatory burden at EU level with specific emphasis on SMEs and micro-enterprises.

## Industrial policy

209. In view of competitiveness and growth, Europe must continue producing goods and exporting them, instead of depending on outside innovation and imports. The up-dated **integrated European Industrial policy** aims at responding to the needs of the changing economic situation, while maintaining the principles established in this flagship, i.e. stimulating innovation, competition and investment in know how while becoming more resource efficient, guaranteeing a level playing field in the Single Market and expanding business opportunities in global markets, and reducing frictions as well as transaction costs in the European economy. However, in the global picture, the individual sectors and their specificities are equally important. Constant attention will be given by the Presidencies to the progress of the implementation of the flagship and the action plans for specific sectors, such as construction, security, automotive and shipbuilding industries, with the aim to implement policy measures which bring the most added value.
210. **Key enabling technologies** (KETs) are technologies that enable process, goods and service innovation throughout the economy. These technologies are multidisciplinary, cutting across many technology areas with a trend towards convergence and integration. KETs enable technology leaders in a wide variety of fields to capitalise on their research efforts and turn these into sustainable growth and job creation. The three Presidencies will give continuous attention to the implementation of the European strategy for Key Enabling Technologies.
211. **Clusters** play an important role for innovation, gathering researchers, creative people, enterprises and technology to create new products and services for the world market as well as improving regional attractiveness; the efforts need to be continued to remove barriers to trans-national cluster cooperation, and to encourage the emergence and consolidation of world-class competitive clusters across Europe. Fostering industrial competitiveness and innovation in the EU through competitive clusters and networks and monitoring the relevant policy measures will be looked at.

212. Moreover, the Commission has called for ideas for potential new policy measures and focus areas for future targeted **demand-side innovation actions** at EU level, to enable faster uptake of innovations and to create a better environment for creating innovations - including in the area of eco-innovation - in order to maintain the value and business investments in Europe. The Presidencies will follow up on these initiatives in this area.

### **Small and medium sized enterprises**

213. SMEs, which in the EU represent 99% of businesses, are a key driver for economic growth, innovation, employment and social integration. The adoption of the Regulation establishing a **Programme to enhance the competitiveness of enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises** (COSME) is a priority. COSME is in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and aims at strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs. COSME will contribute to addressing the market failures facing SMEs including access to finance through the use of dedicated financial instruments.

214. **The Small Business Act** (SBA), launched in 2008, has made a significant contribution to improving the business environment for SMEs. In future, efforts will be focused mainly on cutting bureaucracy, facilitating access to finance, supporting businesses' access to new markets and stimulating entrepreneurship. The Presidencies will ensure the necessary monitoring and follow-up to the initiative, taking also into consideration its regional aspect. The Presidencies will also ensure the necessary follow-up to the Entrepreneurship Action Plan to be launched by the Commission at the beginning of 2013.

## Research and innovation

215. Horizon 2020 is a key EU funding programme, supporting European growth and innovation efforts in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy, the Innovation Union flagship and the ERA Framework. The harmonisation efforts in the Rules for Participation respond to the call from participants to address the complexity of administrative procedures and the lack of consistency of rules between instruments. The simplification has been strongly called for also by the Council, in particular the high level ministerial group on simplification. Concluding on the Horizon 2020 package, in cooperation with the European Parliament, is a top priority for the Presidencies to allow for the new programme to start from the beginning of 2014. In this context, the Presidencies will also endeavour to find appropriate solutions for the Euratom programme as well as Europe's contribution to the international **ITER** fusion project.
216. The three Presidencies will also give specific attention to adopting the proposals relating to the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology** (EIT). EIT contributes to the general objective of Horizon 2020 and the sustainable European economic growth and competitiveness by reinforcing the innovation capacity of the EU and its Member States. The first evaluation of the EIT shows strong support to its key concept of integrating the knowledge triangle bringing together excellent research, education and innovation into Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).
217. The European Council has called for the **European Research Area** (ERA) to be completed by 2014 to create a genuine single market for knowledge, research and innovation. In particular, efforts should be made to improve the mobility and career prospects of researchers, the mobility of graduate students and the attractiveness of Europe for foreign researchers. The Commission communication "A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth" was adopted in July 2012 with proposed reforms and actions to achieve more effective national research systems, optimal transnational cooperation and competition, an open labour market for researchers, gender equality and gender mainstreaming and optimal transfer of scientific knowledge. The three Presidencies will give constant attention to the follow-up and implementation of this initiative.

218. In this context, the Presidencies will also ensure the necessary follow-up to the Commission's communication "**Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation: A strategic approach**". There is a need to engage more strategically in science, technology and innovation cooperation with third countries, as a means to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives and, in particular, strengthen the Union's excellence and attractiveness in research and innovation, foster its economic and industrial competitiveness and jointly tackle common societal challenges with the rest of the world. The Presidencies will do its best to ensure that the international dimension of science, technology and innovation remains an important element of the development of the European Research Area, for international cooperation to be streamlined into all relevant ERA measures and instruments as well as across Horizon 2020.
219. The Council has underlined the need for the **European Innovation Partnerships** (EIPs) to have a clear focus, the importance of Member States involvement and the need for effective streamlining of existing instruments. Regular monitoring by the Council will be necessary in order to reach long term objectives as well as concrete goals to be fixed year by year. The Presidencies will keep this issue on the agenda as necessary, to ensure proper monitoring as well as the necessary political decisions on future Innovation Partnerships before they are launched.
220. An evidence-based approach to policy-making is of vital importance for the analysis of progress in the R&D field at Union level as well as for priority-setting and the consideration of different policy options. The review of the Innovation Union flagship as well as the proposal on a **single integrated indicator** ("Innovation Headline Indicator") to allow a better monitoring of progress in innovation, called for by the European Council, will play an important role in this regard. The Innovation Headline Indicator is meant to inform on the capacity of an economy to create and maintain high quality jobs in economic sectors that are promising for the future in terms of innovation, growth and employment. The Presidencies acknowledge the Commission's efforts to promote and contribute to the development of an evidence-based monitoring system at European level on progress towards the European Research Area and a knowledge-based economy and will give special attention to the monitoring of the progress made in this respect.

## Intellectual property

221. Building upon the results achieved in 2012, the three Presidencies are committed to improving the **patent system** particularly for SMEs, by implementing the agreement and regulation on unitary patent protection which will be cost-efficient and offer legal certainty. The first new unitary patents should be available in 2014. This is a major priority under the Europe 2020 strategy for employment and growth.
222. 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, following up on the adoption of common rules on the protection of orphan works. Work will now concentrate on **collective rights (copyright) management**, with a double focus: general rules for the functioning of all collecting societies, and specific rules aimed at licensing of online music in order to foster the digital single market and provide more cross-border services to consumers across the EU.
223. The three Presidencies will aim to upgrade, streamline and modernise both the Community Trade Mark Regulation and the Directive approximating national trade mark laws, and to establish enhanced cooperation between the Office for Harmonization of the Internal Market (OHIM) and national trade mark offices, with the purpose of making the trade mark system in Europe more effective, efficient and consistent.
224. 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

225. The three Presidencies will continue work on the adoption of the Regulation on the Union Customs Code, in order to simplify and modernise customs law and procedures and to support economic competitiveness and growth in the Union.
226. The three Presidencies will aim to finalise the adoption of the Customs 2020 Regulation in order to ensure financing for customs cooperation between the European Commission, Member States, candidate countries, potential candidate countries and third countries. The three Presidencies will continue work on the adoption of the Regulation amending the rules for the monitoring of trade between the community and third countries in drug precursors **and of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 273/2004 on drug precursors**. Work will also continue on the proposals for amendments to regulations governing mutual assistance between the customs authorities of Member States.
227. At multilateral level, the three Presidencies will deal with initiatives conducted by the World Customs Organization After the finalisation of the Protocol on the illicit trade of tobacco products at the end of 2012, at bilateral level, important agreements with major trading partners in view of balancing security concerns and trade facilitation measures should be negotiated and concluded.
228. Following the entry into force of amending regulations on customs enforcement of intellectual property rights and the implementation of the new EU Customs Action Plan for the years 2013-2016 will commence. 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.
229. Furthermore the three Presidencies will work on the Directive on customs penalties with a view to its timely adoption.

## **Company law**

230. The three Presidencies will aim at the adoption of the audit package (the revision of the 8th Company Law Directive on statutory audit and the Regulation on specific requirements regarding statutory audit of public-interest entities) which seeks to restore confidence in audits carried out in the EU. They will also seek to finalise the negotiations on the reform of the 4th and 7th Company Law (Accounting) Directives.
231. The three Presidencies will also make efforts to progress the negotiations on the Statute for the European Foundation (FE). In addition, the three Presidencies intend to work on the forthcoming initiatives that will be submitted by the Commission within the process of "Rethinking European Company Law" aimed at further simplification and modernisation of existing Company Law and enhancement of Corporate Governance.

## **Competition**

232. The Commission has announced a wide package on State Aid Modernisation which aims at streamlining rules, accelerating decision-making and focusing enforcement on cases with the biggest impact on the internal market with a view to fostering growth in a dynamic and competitive internal market. The three Presidencies will aim at the adoption of the proposals expected within the framework of this package, namely the revision of the Procedural and Enabling Regulations (Council Regulations 659/1999 and 994/1998). Attention will also be given to the sectoral initiatives in this context, such as the revision of the Community Framework for State Aid for research, development and innovation.

233. The three Presidencies will also focus their efforts on the expected proposal on damages actions which aims at achieving compensation for consumers and businesses who are victims of violations of EU antitrust rules. Also, the three Presidencies will do their utmost to conclude the expected cooperation agreement with Canada by the end of their term.

### **Technical harmonisation**

234. In the area of technical harmonisation, the Council will continue to work towards the adoption of nine proposals - such as on the directives on pyrotechnic articles, lifts or measuring instruments - whereby these directives are adapted to the New Legislative Framework. Work will be carried forward on the proposal on recreational craft and on the forthcoming proposal on radio and telecommunications technical equipment. The three Presidencies will also pay particular attention to the proposals on harmonisation of motor vehicles, notably the proposals on sound level, eCall and transfer of registration, as well as on the forthcoming review of the framework directive on type approval.

### **Space**

235. A coherent **industrial policy for the space sector** needs to be defined in order to reconcile the Union's political ambitions with the economic specificities of the space sector. The space industry is of strategic importance in consideration of its dependence on public funding and its increasing global competition on the commercial market. It is essential to set out actions to improve the framework conditions for Europe's space industry and to define clear policy objectives for the space activities, with a view to strengthening the industry's competitiveness and contribute to a balanced involvement of capacities in Europe. The Presidencies will support the definition and implementation of an industrial policy for the space sector, as an integral part of the EU's space policy.

236. The **Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES)** is a European Union flagship project crucial for Europe's independence and autonomy. GMES offers a huge economic potential, creating jobs, sustainable and inclusive growth and business opportunities in various industries as well as in the service sector. It is essential for Europe to develop a sustained and reliable Earth observation system of its own in order to contribute to improving its response to ever growing challenges of global safety and climate change. The three Presidencies will do their utmost to find good solutions, in cooperation with the European Parliament, to ensure that the programme can become fully operational by 2014.
237. The **Space Situational Awareness (SSA)** is an activity essential for the protection of space-based systems and infrastructures against the risks which increasingly threaten Space infrastructures such as man-made hazards (collisions with other spacecraft or space debris during launch and in-orbit operations) or furthermore uncontrolled re-entry of inactive satellites or space debris into the Earth's orbit, representing an increasing hazard to the security of European citizens that needs to be assessed and mitigated (notably through better prediction of when and where such an object is likely to crash into the ground). The EU itself has a strong interest in ensuring the emergence of an SSA capability at European level to ensure the protection of space and ground infrastructure it owns (such as Galileo or EGNOS) or relies upon. The three Presidencies will ensure, in cooperation with the European Parliament, that the proposal for a Regulation on the setting up and operations of Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST) services at European level is adopted in due time.

## **Tourism**

238. The Presidencies will continue the work done by the previous Presidencies promoting sustainable and competitive tourism and on actions related to better integrating tourism into various policies. Attention will also be given to the initiatives contributing to overcoming tourism seasonality. The implementation of the actions as set out in the Commission Communication entitled "Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe" will be monitored.

239. In this regard, the Presidencies will give due consideration to any proposals from the Commission, including on a possible European Tourism Quality Label

## **TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATION AND ENERGY**

### **CROSSCUTTING ISSUES**

240. Coming closer to the mid-term in the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, the Presidencies will ensure that the TTE Council continues to contribute to meeting the targets of the strategy as well as the deadlines set by the European Council for the completion of the Internal Energy Market and the Digital Single Market. New initiatives that might be required in order to complete the strategy will be identified and launched in order to achieve a fully interconnected Europe across borders and networks. In so doing the Presidencies will strive to build on synergies between the three sectors, for instance as regards the deployment of infrastructure and the security of critical infrastructure.

241. Within the context of the so-called "output indicator" expected to be tabled by the Commission in the area of innovation and research before the end of 2012, a systematic monitoring of the growth and innovation creation capacity of all TTE sectors should be monitored with the aim to benchmark these areas with other sectors.

## TRANSPORT

242. Sustainability of connectivity, security and safety of means, fair competition and market access, the new technologies and mobility will be high on the transport agenda during the 18 months of the Irish, Lithuanian and Greek Presidencies. During this period of time, work will be actively carried forward on a proposal for a Regulation on TEN-T Guidelines and on the CEF ("*Connecting Europe Facility*") proposal - closely related to the MFF discussions - as well as on the airport package, the maritime transport package, the roadworthiness package, the proposals on rail and freight transport, goods traffic between EU ports and the Single European Sky.

### Horizontal issues

243. The Presidencies will pay particular attention to the proposal for a Regulation on TEN-T Guidelines which set ground rules for the development, planning and financing of transport infrastructures in the EU which is fit for purpose for a single market. Closely related to this proposal is the proposal for a Regulation establishing the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) which establishes the criteria, conditions, methods and procedures for EU support for trans-European networks (transport, telecom and energy).

244. Work will be launched on the Commission Communication and legislative proposal 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. It should assess 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.

245. Work will be conducted with regard to GALILEO with a view to preparing the exploitation phase aiming at achieving its Full Operational Capability (FOC) in the years to come. The three Presidencies will examine various proposals in this context including, a Regulation on the implementation and exploitation of the European satellite navigation systems (Galileo and EGNOS), a Regulation on the functions of the GNSS Agency and a Regulation establishing a third party liability regime for the EU global navigation satellite systems.

## **Aviation**

246. The three Presidencies will pursue negotiations with the European Parliament on the three proposals in the "airport package": the Slots Regulation which seeks to liberalise the mechanisms of allocation of slots; the Ground-handling Directive, which seeks to tighten procedures dealing with the provision of ground-handling at airports and the responsibility of service providers; and the revision of the Directive on the noise-related operating restrictions which seeks to reduce the negative impact for populations and environment of the noise caused by planes.

247. The three Presidencies will also deal with a proposal aiming at strengthening and further protecting air passenger rights. Furthermore, they will deal with a proposal to recast the Directive on occurrence reporting in civil aviation with a view to preventing accidents by further collecting and analysing information on civil aviation occurrences.

248. Work will be launched on a Single European Sky II plus package (Communication, Single European Sky Regulation, EASA Regulation) to address in particular the performance of air navigation service provision.

## Land transport

249. As regards road issues, the three Presidencies will continue work on the proposal for a Regulation on the tachograph, with a view to improving the security of the system (reducing fraud and the manipulation of the tachograph), reducing the administrative costs and improving the efficiency of the control of the system. The three Presidencies will also examine the three proposals of the "Roadworthiness package" dealing with periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicle and their trailers, the technical roadside inspection of commercial vehicles circulating in the Union, and the related registration documents for vehicles with a view to enhancing road safety and environmental protection.
250. Furthermore, they will take forward the work on the proposal for the revision of the Directive on weights and dimensions aiming at improving aerodynamic characteristics of trucks and at changing their dimensions. They will also examine the "internal road market package" including legislative proposals on cabotage (access to road haulage market and access to the occupation of road transport operator), on minimal rules on sanctions and their enforcement in commercial road transport and on charging systems for heavy goods vehicles. This initiative will be aimed at improving the economic and environmental efficiency of road freight transport and creating a more even playing field.
251. Concerning the rail transport, the three Presidencies will examine several proposals included in the "Fourth railway package" aimed at further opening, better management and separation of the passenger market, the Public Service Obligation (PSO) service tendering, rail safety and interoperability as well as the revision of the ERA (European Railway Agency) Regulation.



## Maritime transport

252. The skills and qualifications of seafarers in European waters are an integral part of the EU maritime policy. In this regard, the Presidencies will pursue the negotiations with the EP on the legislative package concerning the social dimension of shipping ("Package on a Social Maritime Agenda") which covers the "human element" of maritime transport and the enforcement of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) adopted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2006. This package includes a proposal amending Directive on port State control and a proposal for a Directive concerning flag State responsibilities aiming at moving towards the rapid ratification of the MLC by the EU Member States and the early adoption of the provisions based on the social partners' agreement for implementing its key elements in EU law and ensuring the effective enforcement of the new rules.
253. Several new proposals are expected to be presented which aim to improve the implementation of the European Maritime Transport Strategy. In this case the three Presidencies will launch the work on the Commission proposals dealing with the revision of the EMSA Funding Regulation (multiannual funding for EMSA activities, related to the MFF); the marine equipment Directive (increasing legal certainty and effectiveness of current legislation); passenger ship safety, improving safety conditions for passenger vessels engaged in international/domestic voyages; and the amendment of the Directive on Vessel Traffic Monitoring (optimising the EU SafeSeaNet system by introducing new functionalities to prevent accidents and pollution at sea). A proposal concerning the liberalisation of the ports services may also be submitted during the 18-month period.

## TELECOMMUNICATION

254. The three Presidencies will facilitate the swift progress required to implement the Digital Agenda for Europe, which will provide new dynamism to the European economy and benefits for all members of the society through secure networks and information while ensuring data protection, trust and privacy. Of particular relevance are the steps to be taken in order for the Single Digital Market to be fully functioning by 2015. This will require efforts as regards both infrastructure and regulatory framework.
255. Regarding infrastructure, the finalisation and rapid implementation of guidelines on telecommunication infrastructure will be pursued as a matter of urgency in order to provide the networks and services platforms foreseen by the Digital Agenda. This will be further supported by initiatives on broadband deployment, notably with a view to reducing the costs of next generation access [high speed broadband] networks.
256. Another potential bottleneck is the limited radio spectrum available in face of an exploding demand from sectors such as transport and energy on top of use by the telecom sector. Building on the 2012 Decision on the Radio Spectrum Policy Programme, the Presidencies will therefore support initiatives that contribute to free this resource, such as the steps outlined in the 2012 communication on shared access to spectrum.

257. Trust is a pre-requisite for a dynamic digital market and a general use of internet to flourish: the negotiations on the expanded eSignature Directive which provides a framework for Electronic identification and authentication will therefore be rapidly completed. In the same vein digital content will be greatly enriched with easier and wider access to public information, to which the adoption of the updated Directive on re-use of public sector information will contribute. If access to internet services is truly to be to the benefit of all it should include persons with disabilities and build on improved digital literacy: the Presidencies will facilitate the early adoption of the relevant instruments.
258. In order for the European e-Government Action Plan 2011-2015 to continue to contribute to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public administrations in a fast changing digital environment, the Presidencies will facilitate its review and, if necessary, revision.
259. Cyber threat is a fast growing cross-sectoral risk, affecting sectors well beyond the telecommunications sector, which has to be addressed at EU level if trust in the digital economy and the resilience and reliability of networks and critical infrastructure are to be maintained. The Presidencies will therefore finalise in a timely manner the work on ENISA, the European Network and Information Security Agency whose mandate expires in September 2013, and ensure a thorough and rapid follow-up to the Communication on cyber-security and related proposals on security measures.
260. Given that the governance of the information society is increasingly operating at international level, be it for internet governance or for the management of radio spectrum, the Presidencies will work towards achieving a more consistent and visible EU approach in international fora.

## ENERGY

261. With a view to implementing the internal and external components of the Energy Strategy 2020, fully completing the internal energy market by 2014 and ensuring that no Member State remains isolated from the European gas and electricity networks after 2015, the Presidencies will give high priority to the "three S`s", Security of supply, Safety and Sustainability of energy production and use, while bearing in mind the decisive contribution of the EU`s energy policy to competitiveness, growth and employment. In this respect the Connecting Europe Facility package will be of key importance. Looking beyond 2020, the Presidencies will work on initiatives helping to give a long term perspective to energy investment.
262. As regards the internal energy market, the latest assessment shows that more efforts are needed to adopt the required network codes and to implement the 3rd Internal Market Package without further delay. To that effect, the Presidencies will work towards the rapid endorsement of an Action Plan<sup>6</sup>, involving all stakeholders, to make sure that the energy market delivers its benefits to consumers as well as to businesses and provides the appropriate price signals to investors. Particular attention will be paid to initiatives enhancing (regional) cooperation between Member States, especially when changes in national energy policies affect the functioning of the internal market.
263. Completing the integration of this market will require the finalisation of the guidelines on energy infrastructure and the rapid selection of the projects to be financed under the new Financial Framework while taking into account that networks will have to adapt to low-carbon energy. The Council will therefore be invited to examine initiatives for the development of smart energy grids and smart metering, which will facilitate integration of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

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<sup>6</sup> NB: such Action Plan will be part of the Communication on the IEM due on 14 November.

264. Building on the adoption of the Energy efficiency Directive, further progress towards the 2020 energy efficiency targets needs to be made by facilitating the expeditious adoption of new measures on eco-design, and labelling of energy related products and appliances.
265. In a post-2020 perspective renewable energy, from wind to marine energy, will be able to play an increasing role if further progress is made for its integration in the electricity market and if concerns raised about its sustainability and effectiveness of the support schemes are addressed. In this respect the Presidencies will ensure due consideration of proposals related to the sustainability of biofuels production and of biomass.
266. Realising the full potential of renewable energy and generally securing the transition to low carbon energy systems will not be possible without further investment in R & D: the Presidencies will therefore work towards a review of the implementation of the Strategic Energy Technology (SET)-Plan and related initiatives e.g. as regards Carbon Capture and Storage.
267. Conventional as well as non-conventional sources of energy should not only contribute to security of supply but be safe. Regarding safety of offshore oil and gas prospection, exploration and production activities, the Presidencies will therefore finalise the negotiations on the proposed relevant regulatory framework. Regarding nuclear energy the Presidencies will arrange for a thorough examination of legislative initiatives aimed at strengthening the safety regulatory framework which are due to be tabled on the basis of the now completed stress test process. They will also strive to complete the revision of the Directive setting Basic Safety Standards for ionizing radiations.

268. In the light of ongoing negotiations with third countries as well as on the implementation of existing instruments, the Presidencies will review and update the orientations set out in 2011 on external energy relations with a view to improving the consistency, credibility and effectiveness of the EU action. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring coherence between trade policy and energy policy.

## **AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES**

### **AGRICULTURE**

269. The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the period 2014-2020 is expected to enter its final and decisive stage. During the first semester of 2013, intensive negotiations are foreseen between the European Parliament and the Council. Depending on the rhythm and pace of those negotiations, and on the progress made in the negotiations on the Union's post-2013 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the Council aims to achieve decisive progress early in the trio Presidency with a view to a timely implementation of the reformed policy, including the implementing regulations.
270. In parallel with the negotiations on CAP reform, the Council will continue its work on the adaptation of agricultural legislation to the Lisbon Treaty. Good progress has already been made on a large number of Commission proposals during the previous trio Presidency. The Council will continue to work constructively with the European Parliament towards the completion of this exercise, in full respect of the institutional balance foreseen by the Lisbon Treaty.
271. The Council also expects to review and if necessary fine tune the results of previous CAP sectoral reforms. In this context the Council looks forward to the Commission's assessment of the 2007-2008 reforms of the fruit and vegetables and wine sectors and to examining any legislative proposals which the Commission may deem necessary.

272. Presidencies will work on changing Regulation laying down general rules on information provision and promotion measures for agricultural products on the internal market and in the third countries.
273. Following the green paper consultation in 2011, the Commission adopted a communication in March 2012 to launch a debate on the future promotion policy on the inter-institutional level. This communication may be followed by legislative proposals in the second quarter of 2013.
274. The three Presidencies will also progress a legislative proposal on organic farming, which is expected to be published in 2013.

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

275. The field of animal and public health will feature prominently in the 18-month programme of the Council as work will be undertaken on a series of major legislative proposals, encompassing new framework legislation (the "Animal Health Law"), as well as the revision of the vast body of legislative acts regarding specific animal diseases adopted over the past decades.
276. The new Animal Health Law stems from the Animal Health Strategy 2007-2013 and will set the framework for activities relating to animal health and welfare for years to come. With its motto 'Prevention is better than cure', the EU's Animal Health Strategy aims to ensure a high level of protection of human and animal health, putting a greater focus on precautionary measures including disease surveillance, bio-security and research in reducing the incidence of animal diseases and minimising the impact of disease outbreaks when they occur. One of the objectives of the strategy is to establish a clearer regulatory structure for animal health across the EU, and the Animal Health Law is the centre-piece of this effort.

277. Given that the existing legislation covers areas such as intra-community trade, imports and disease control, the impact of this revision will clearly be significant. Further, the Animal Health Law proposal will be accompanied by reviewed rules on expenditure in the veterinary field and a thorough overhaul of EU legislation regarding official controls, including veterinary border controls of animal products and live animals from third countries. As part of the same (five part) package, legislation on phyto-sanitary issues and seeds will also be overhauled (see below).
278. The announced Commission assessment of the problems in the application of the veterinary medicinal products Directive is expected to be followed by a revision of the Directive on veterinary medicinal products<sup>7</sup>. This will aim to address the objectives of consumer safety and animal health protection, competitiveness of the veterinary industry including SMEs and a reduction of the administrative burden in this area. It will also aim to improve availability of medicines and create a more unified EU market for veterinary medicines. This may be accompanied by a separate proposal on Medicated Feed. The proposals are due during the second half of 2013.
279. A proposal on cloning for food production is expected as a follow-up to the Commission Report from 2010 which underlined, inter alia, the need to address the welfare concerns linked to the use of cloning. As was the case for discussions held in the framework of the conciliation on the Novel Food proposal in 2011, discussions on this proposal are likely to attract a high degree of public attention.
280. A legislative proposal reviewing the zootechnical legislation is expected and the Presidencies will seek to progress work on this file with a view to its finalisation.

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7 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.



## **International issues**

281. The Council will continue to devote the expertise of the EU Member States in the preparation of the position to be taken by the EU in the relevant international fora, in particular in the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). Effective implementation of FAO reform will remain an important issue.
282. The Council will also give its full attention to the Commission Communication expected for 2013 concerning the opening of negotiations with the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV) on the terms and conditions for the Union to be granted a particular status in the OIV.
283. As regards negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) in the WTO, the Council remains committed to preserving and enhancing the multilateral trading system at the core of the EU's trade, investment and development policy and also remains committed to continuing efforts to achieve a balanced outcome of the DDA negotiations, including delivering on its development dimension. The elements relating to agriculture in a possible final agreement should remain within the framework of the CAP.

## **Forests**

284. On forests, the three Presidencies will focus on sustainable forest management and its important contribution to a green economy in the context of sustainable development [...] as well as to mitigating the impact of and adapting to climate change. Furthermore, special attention will be devoted early in the trio Presidencies to the negotiations and possible adoption of a pan-European legally binding agreement on forests and its implementation, as well as the adoption and implementation of the new EU Forest Strategy.

## **Phytosanitary issues**

285. The three Presidencies will intensively work on the five part package encompassing fully fledged reforms of both the plant health and seeds/plant propagating material legislations (two legislative proposals) which the Commission is expected to submit early 2013.
286. It will also include horizontal provisions concerning official controls and financing, and cover animal health legislation (see under the specific heading).

## **FISHERIES**

287. In the fisheries sector the main priority will be the completion and adoption of the reform package for the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The three Presidencies will make every effort to reach agreement with the European Parliament on the three legislative proposals contained in that package (Basic Regulation and Regulation on Common Market Organization and EMFF) and to begin their effective implementation with a view to ensuring more sustainable management of EU fisheries.
288. The three Presidencies will also pay special attention to a number of multi-annual management and recovery plans. These plans are an essential tool for pursuing the objectives of the reformed CFP. Every effort will be made to achieve progress in this area in close cooperation with the European Parliament.
289. The Council will continue to work on the Commission proposal for a regulation on the specific access for fishing for deep-sea stocks, in order to complete the review of this regime.
290. The work on alignment of various existing Regulations (notably on IUU and control) to the Lisbon Treaty as well as on implementation of the decisions of various Regional Fisheries Management Organizations in EU law will continue during the 18 month period.
291. Great importance will be attached as usual to a responsible and efficient handling of the annual exercise of setting the TACs and quotas for 2014.

292. In the context of external fisheries policy, bilateral and multilateral negotiations (particularly the coastal agreement on mackerel, the agreements with Norway and Morocco, negotiations at ICCAT, other Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and international fora) will remain high on the agenda. New Fisheries Partnership Agreements and accompanying protocols will have to be in line with the latest Council Conclusions on the external dimension of CFP.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

293. Environment, within the wider umbrella of sustainable development, will continue to be on the forefront of the EU agenda and high on the agenda of the three Presidencies. The challenges posed by the current economic and financial situation cannot be addressed effectively in the long term without a continuing emphasis on green growth and resource efficiency. The objective for the environmental policy remains to ensure a high level of environmental protection that can also stimulate sustainable economic growth.

294. The adoption of the 7th Environment Action Programme remains a priority for the Council and will be at the centre of the work in the environmental area during the trio Presidency.

295. Developing and reviewing environmental legislation will be one of the focuses of the three Presidencies. Work on legislation on waste (such as ship recycling, shipments of waste, plastic bags, and-batteries) as well as on water and air will be at the core of the programme. The Environmental Impact Assessment Directive will also be reviewed.

## **Environment governance**

296. The three Presidencies will give due attention to the "Rio+20 follow-up". That will cover a broad number of issues at international level, including an enhanced and strengthened UNEP, the creation of a High Level Political Forum (HLPF) that should succeed to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

## ***International issues***

297. The three Presidencies will work on EU legislation and a wide range of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and other international environmental processes. All these international processes will require intensive and thorough preparations and coordination within the EU. The three Presidencies will make every effort to conduct those preparations in an efficient manner within the Council.

298. The Presidencies will be engaged at international level in actions to implement other outcomes agreed at the Rio+20 Conference along with the ones abovementioned related to the international environmental governance and the institutional framework for sustainable development (i.e. UNEP and HLPF), namely the development of sustainable development goals and the development of options for an effective sustainable development financing strategy. Moreover, the Presidencies will also pursue other important EU priorities related to the Rio+20 including the timely operationalization of the 10 YFP on sustainable consumption and production; the advancing of work on developing indicators to complement GDP; the launching, as soon as possible, of a negotiation under UNGA for an UNCLOS implementing agreement for the conservation of biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdictions ; as well as the 3rd International Conference on SIDS, to be convened in 2014.

## **Chemicals**

299. Sound management of chemicals will occupy a central place in the work of the three Presidencies in 2013-2014. At the international level, the negotiations for a new international treaty on mercury (INC 5 in January 2013 and Diplomatic Conference before the end of the year) will be finalised and the extraordinary and ordinary conferences of the parties to the three conventions on chemicals and waste, will be held in April–May 2013 (that is, the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, and the Basel Convention). The decisions to be taken at these conferences, in particular on mercury, will require a follow-up and implementation process within the EU. They will also have a likely impact on ongoing work on the long-range transboundary air pollution instruments under the LRTAP Convention (Gothenburg Protocol, Heavy Metals Protocol and POPs Protocol).

## **Biodiversity**

300. Protection of Biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as conservation and management of natural resources will be high on the agenda of the three Presidencies. This includes the preparation of future conferences of the parties on biodiversity and biosafety (2014), of CITES (2013), IPBES (2013), and, possibly, of the International Whaling Commission (2014). Further conferences are expected on the implementation of existing international agreements on biosafety (liability and redress) and access to and benefit-sharing from genetic resources (ABS) over the period. Related new legislative measures on ABS and on invasive alien species will be progressed and the three Presidencies will also be committed to advance the implementation of the broader EU biodiversity strategy's objectives and corresponding targets within the EU.

## **GMOs**

301. 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.
302. 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. The three Presidencies will continue to monitor possibilities for further progress on this important file, as all the compromise proposals presented so far by successive Presidencies have not gathered the necessary qualified majority

## **Climate Change**

303. The international regime for the fight against climate change is at the crossroads. After the adoption of the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol at the Doha Conference in December 2012, the necessary steps for ratification and entry into force have to be taken speedily. Furthermore, a review of the UN Convention (UNFCCC) will start in 2013 and will coincide with a review of the ambition level under the Kyoto Protocol. Last but not least, the work on the Durban platform with the objective of adopting a global legally-binding agreement by 2015 at the latest needs to be taken forward.
304. The three Presidencies will prepare and coordinate the EU's position effectively, in particular with a view to the UN Conference in November 2013 (UNFCCC COP 19, Kyoto Protocol CMP 9).

305. The work within the EU is at least as important as the work in the international framework. The EU has a strong interest to pursue dynamic policies towards a low-carbon economy. It is crucial to develop these policies in synergy with the EU 2020 Strategy and the flagship initiative on resource efficiency. Time is ripe for an EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change which is being identified as a strong challenge in many Member States. The three Presidencies will ensure an effective follow-up on the Commission's communication on adaptation which is expected for 2013. The implementation of the EU's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions continues to require consistent orientations of other EU policies (like energy, transport, agriculture).
306. The three Presidencies will ensure the Council's active and constructive role in the completion of the legislative programme before the changeover to a newly elected European Parliament and European Commission. This comprises legislation reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from passenger cars and vans as well as work on a strategy tackling the emissions from heavy-duty vehicles. A review of legislation addressing fluorinated greenhouse gases will also be conducted. Presidencies will ensure an appropriate follow-up concerning greenhouse gas emissions from shipping, taking into account international developments. The aspect of sustainability of bio-fuels, in particular with regards to indirect land use change, will be re-examined in the context of a new Commission proposal.

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

307. During a period likely to be characterized by an economic environment that remains very challenging across the EU and public spending that remains very tightly controlled, the policy areas of education, youth, culture, audiovisual and sport will focus considerable attention on the contribution that they make to economic growth, jobs and social cohesion.

308. The importance of education to equipping our citizens with the skills they need in today's challenging labour market is well understood, and indeed one of the Europe 2020 strategy's headline targets concerns education. There is also now a growing recognition of the crucial role of the cultural and creative industries to the regeneration of the European economy. In the youth area, there will be a focus on social cohesion, where action is clearly vital at a time where the current generation of young people are faced with record levels of unemployment. In sport too, the economic contribution of sport will be emphasized, as well as the crucial role of grassroots sport in the building of communities and in social integration.

### **Education and Training**

309. Education occupies a central role in the *Europe 2020* strategy. The further development of education and training systems in the Member States should be aimed at ensuring the personal, social and professional fulfilment of all citizens, promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue, as well as contributing to sustainable economic prosperity and employability. Education and training systems have a significant contribution to make in reducing the current drop-out rates and high levels of unemployment, especially among the young, notably by ensuring that all EU citizens are equipped with the skills and competences required by the labour market.

310. One of the first priorities of the three Presidencies will therefore be to focus on the types of skills needed to promote and maintain growth, and on ways of ensuring that education and training systems keep pace with evolving patterns of skills demand in the economy arising from rapid technological change and globalization. In addition to stressing the fundamental importance of basic skills, attention will be paid to areas such as assessment and evaluation, entrepreneurship, digital literacy, language competences and quality assurance with the development of relevant tools and instruments.



311. Another key priority in 2013 will be to complete work on the ambitious new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020 (Erasmus for All). On the basis of the partial general approach agreed by Education Ministers in May 2012 and a solid working relationship with the European Parliament, the three Presidencies will endeavour to finalise work on the new Programme once the final shape of the next Multiannual Financial Framework has been decided.
312. In the field of higher education, greater emphasis will be placed on the issue of equity and efficiency and on ways of ensuring access to higher education for disadvantaged and under-represented learners. As a follow-up to Council conclusions adopted in 2010, further efforts will also be directed towards developing an internationalisation strategy for the EU's higher education sector, aimed at promoting European and international high quality partnerships which can generate teaching and research capacity and empower universities as agents of knowledge transfer. Fresh initiatives to enhance cooperation between higher education institutions and the business world will also be launched. Finally, more work will be carried out on the proposed multi-dimensional ranking system aimed at measuring the performance of higher education institutions across Europe and increasing transparency.
313. In the context of the Copenhagen Process, further work will be done on quality assurance in the field of vocational education and training (VET). By 2013 most countries will have established national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and referenced these to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Efforts will thus be stepped up to strengthen the impact of these frameworks, notably by ensuring a larger role for employment sector stakeholders in effective quality assurance, and by examining the extent to which these initiatives are contributing to easier recognition of qualifications and mobility.

314. As for schools, the Trio will return firstly to the important topic of pre-school education and teacher recruitment and education, before examining some of the issues relating to school leadership, such as what makes a good school leader and how school leaders should be selected and prepared for their task. Finally, as a follow-up to the recent European Survey of Language Competences, consideration will be given to adopting a possible new European benchmark in the field of language learning, to complement those already agreed under the "ET2020" strategic framework.

## **Culture**

315. The aim of the three Presidencies will be to strengthen the role of culture during this time of recovery from the crisis. While fully acknowledging the inherent value of culture and its important role in shaping our heritage and identity, the Presidencies will seek to demonstrate culture's contribution to job creation and growth, mainly through the cultural and creative industries, and also to social cohesion, as well as continuing to develop a strategic approach to culture in the Union's external relations.

316. The three Presidencies will devote a significant part of their agenda to the finalisation of negotiations on the two legislative proposals related to the multiannual financial framework, namely the Creative Europe Programme and the Europe for Citizens Programme. The aim will be to come to an agreement with the European Parliament with a view to having both programmes in place for 2014.

317. Among other legislative proposals which will be on the agenda of the Presidencies is the proposal for a decision to renew the European Capitals for Culture action for a period 2020 to 2033. This is a well-established, respected and popular EU cultural initiative which constitutes a primary example of culture's positive impact on long-term growth and urban and regional development, in both economic and social terms.

318. Depending on the outcome of the review of the Council Directive 93/7/EEC on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State, the Commission may come forward with a revision of the Directive.

319. The three Presidencies will continue to work on implementing the priorities identified in the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014. They will focus in particular on three areas. Firstly, the Presidencies will seek to identify solutions for widening access to culture, including access to cultural and creative content on-line. This work will have a direct link with the Digital Agenda for Europe, a flagship initiative launched in 2010 under the Europe 2020 strategy with a view to creating a single digital market. Secondly, the Presidencies will examine the issue of maintaining cultural services in a time of economic hardship, with a specific focus on cultural heritage. Linkages to broader themes such as digitisation, access to culture and cultural tourism will be made and thereby demonstrate the potential of culture to generate sustainable and inclusive growth. Lastly, the three Presidencies will continue to develop a strategic approach to culture in the EU's external relations and thus enhance cooperation in this field, in order to promote cultural diversity and ensure visibility of culture in international decision-making.
320. Given that the current Work Plan for Culture will come to its end in 2014, the Presidencies' task will be to start, on the basis of a mid-term evaluation report to be presented mid-2013 and a final report due for mid-2014, discussions on the Work Plan's future priorities and working methods used for its implementation.

### **Audiovisual Policy**

321. The digital environment is rapidly changing and new services and devices are created at an incredible speed. Such a dynamic environment creates many opportunities for cultural and creative content which can be now widely and easily distributed all over the world. On the other hand, it must be ensured that the digital on-line environment is a safe place, in particular for children who are digital natives. New business models need to be found so that authors and creators of on-line content are fairly remunerated for their work, thus preserving cultural diversity. In 2010 the European Union adopted a Digital Agenda, a strategy which outlines measures to be taken to ensure that everybody can benefit from the digital shift. The three Presidencies will continue to work on some of the key objectives of this strategy.

322. The Presidencies will monitor, together with the Commission, the implementation of the European strategy for a Better Internet for Children in accordance with the related Council conclusions adopted at the end of 2012. They will seek to ensure adequate funding from the proposed Connecting Europe Facility in order to match the ambitious strategy that covers a wide range of topics from stimulating production of high-quality content for children to combating child sexual abuse material on-line, via awareness-raising, digital skills teaching and ensuring children protection on-line.
323. The three Presidencies will continue to foster the development of Europeana, the EU public digital library, through seeking to reach an agreement on its sustainable financing, which the Commission proposes to be guaranteed from the proposed Connecting Europe Facility.
324. Regarding cinema, the focus will be on the digitisation of cinemas and film heritage and on new platforms for distributing audiovisual material and film, which will be the subjects of a planned proposal for a Council recommendation, due to be presented by the Commission at the beginning of 2013.
325. On the basis of the first report on the application of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, the three Presidencies will closely follow the Commission's initiatives in this area, namely with the launch of a public consultation on Connected TV (which is Internet-enabled TV) and the update on the Commission's guidance on televised advertising, both expected in 2013.

## **Youth**

326. The youth field has a long and well established practice of Trio Presidency cooperation. In the context of Structured Dialogue between public authorities and young people, Ireland, Lithuania and Greece have agreed social inclusion as the overall theme for the Trio Presidency for the next 18 month period. This overall theme was confirmed by the Council in November 2012. In this context, a positive agenda of possibilities and opportunities should be highlighted, i.e. a focus on initiatives rather than solely on problem issues.

327. The first six month period will focus on the contribution of quality youth work to young people's development and well-being. The aim will be to adopt Council conclusions in May 2013. With a view to strengthening the link between youth policy and Europe 2020, the Irish Presidency will also explore the contribution youth work can make to achieving the goals of Europe 2020, in particular in relation to employment for youth as well as to social inclusion.
328. With a view to strengthening the link between the youth policy and Europe 2020, the Irish Presidency will also seek to highlight the importance of optimising the contribution youth work can make to employment and employability, as well as to social inclusion.
329. The priority for the middle six months of the 18 month term will also be closely linked to the overall theme of Social Inclusion. The Lithuanian Presidency will address the need to provide opportunities, experiences and developing skills for all young people, including those with fewer opportunities. It will also focus on the well-being of young people, especially by enhancing accessibility and participation of young people in society, with particular emphasis on young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs). Lithuania will also promote the exchange of good practices as how to better integrate NEETs and those young people at risk of social exclusion in social and economic life. The intention is to adopt Council Conclusions on these issues in November 2013.
330. During the last six months, the Greek Presidency will specifically explore the issue of culture and entrepreneurship among young people. Against the background of the challenging economic and financial situation across the EU and the large numbers of young unemployed persons, the potential of "social entrepreneurship" to generate economic growth, while at the same time taking into account social, cultural and environmental values, will be explored and developed. The intention is to adopt Council Conclusions on these issues in May 2014.
331. The Commission may launch an initiative on an EU-wide "Youth on the Move" Card during the 18-month period under consideration.

332. Furthermore, during the Greek Presidency a new Council Resolution on the Structured Dialogue with young people will be adopted. This Resolution will highlight the key messages and lessons learned during the current 18 months dialogue with young people and set the priorities for the following 18 months in collaboration with the next Trio Presidency (IT, LV, LU).

## **SPORT**

333. Work during the 18 month period will focus on advancing the priorities set out in the EU Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014 and building on the work being done by the six Expert Groups on sport that were established by the Work Plan. Among these priorities, the issue of sustainable financing and the contribution of sport to the wider economy will be a theme on which particular emphasis will be placed throughout the 18 months.

334. Priority will also be given to co-operation within the EYCS Council Formation towards the completion of the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. This is the first time that sport will have a dedicated funding stream within an EU programme.

335. On anti-doping issues, the Presidencies will prepare and coordinate the EU contribution to the World Anti-Doping Code Revision process. The third and final consultation phase, running from 1 December 2012 to 1 March 2013, will be crucial in paving the way for the last major discussions on the draft Code that will take place in WADA in May 2013. A final draft will be submitted for approval by the WADA Foundation Board at the World Conference on Doping in Sport in Johannesburg in November 2013.

336. During the first six months of the 18 month period three other major priorities in the EU Work Plan will be advanced, namely Dual Careers, Good Governance, and the Sustainable Financing of Sport. The aim will be to adopt Council Conclusions in May 2013 on Dual Careers - the ability for an athlete to combine his or her sporting career with education and work - and on Good Governance principles. On Sustainable Financing for Sport, the Irish Presidency is particularly keen to explore the ways in which the long-term sustainability of grassroots sport clubs within the current economic climate can be supported.
337. During the middle six months of the 18 month period the focus will be on the contribution of sport to economic growth and employment. In this context the Lithuanian Presidency will also focus on solidarity mechanisms in sport. A second priority for the Lithuanian Presidency will be Health Enhancing Physical Activity (HEPA). In response to the Council Conclusions of November 2012, the Commission is expected to propose a Council Recommendation on HEPA in early 2013. An agreement should be reached on this dossier in November 2013. Such a Recommendation would be the first ever "soft legislation" act to be adopted by the Council in the field of sport, following the entry into the force of the Lisbon Treaty.
338. A key task to be undertaken during the final six months of the 18 month period will be that of negotiating and concluding a second EU Work Plan for sport covering the years 2014-2017. By the end of 2013, the Commission is expected to present an evaluation report of the first Work Plan in the field of Sport. In response to this report, an agreement on the new EU Work Plan should be reached in May 2014. This work plan will establish the key EU priorities in the field of sport for the following three years.
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