



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Work programme of the incoming Presidency
- Information from the Estonian delegation

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Estonian delegation on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 19 June 2017.

Work programme of the incoming Presidency

- Information from the Estonian delegation -

Starting from July, the Republic of Estonia will have the privilege of holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU for the first time since joining the Union in 2004. Our priority is safeguarding Europe's progress towards a sustainable future, and our motto is **NEVER WASTE AN OPPORTUNITY!**

During the Estonian Presidency the underlying theme will be our common goal of transitioning to a **low-carbon and climate-resilient circular economy**. Estonia will build on the progress made by the Maltese Presidency and work for a smooth transition to keep the momentum, aiming to advance all files as far as possible.

Climate change

Despite some recent unfortunate developments at global level, the European Union must remain steadfast in promoting the implementation of the landmark Paris Agreement, and in our regional progress towards these goals. The incoming Estonian Presidency will work hard to push forward EU policy to deliver on the Paris targets. We are **committed to making substantial progress on all climate policy files** – emissions trading system (ETS), the effort sharing Regulation (ESR), land-use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF), and ETS aviation – taking into account the interests of all Members States and finding maximum common ground. During our Presidency, we will continue negotiations with the Parliament on the ETS file, and intend to start and hope to finalise trilogues on the ETS aviation sector. With regard to non-ETS matters, we hope to reach a general approach on the ESR and LULUCF to pave the way for trilogues.

In addition to expanding the EU legislative framework for implementing the Paris Agreement in Europe, the global dimension of **international climate negotiations**, in the framework of the UNFCCC process, is also an important part of our programme. The Paris Agreement remains an unprecedented achievement, and Europe, together with its partners, will continue to stand by it and lead the way. Our priority is to uphold multilateralism by fortifying a broad-based international alliance, and we are therefore dedicating the second day of our informal ministerial meeting to exploring the best ways forward in the global arena. The COP 23 in November will be an important milestone in the context of continued efforts related to implementing the Paris Agreement work programme, especially in terms of setting a strong foundation for achieving our ambitious goals set for 2018, and COP 24 next year. We are committed to ensuring that the EU remains decisive and speaks with one voice on these critical matters, and we intend to adopt relevant Council conclusions at the Environment Council scheduled for 13 October.

Circular economy

The waste package currently on the table includes **legislative proposals to amend six Directives covering various aspects of waste management**, which is one of the fundamental pillars of a resource-efficient circular economy. We are committed to advancing negotiations with the Parliament while continuing to work closely with the Member States. Our aim is to make good progress, and hopefully to finish these trilogues by the end of our Presidency.

To further advance the circular economy agenda, we have decided, together with our trio partners Bulgaria and Austria, to **highlight the topic of eco-innovation** throughout our successive presidencies, because we see it as the key element in the transition to a circular economy. Ultimately, our joint aim is to provide constructive input for reviving this issue at EU level, and to lay the groundwork for future progress by integrating the principles of eco-innovation into horizontal EU policies being developed for the post-2020 period.

We will launch a discussion on promoting more widespread use of eco-innovation at the **informal meeting of Environment Ministers** to be held in Tallinn this July. Our discussions will revolve around product transparency, smart cities, financing for sustainable growth in light of the multiannual financial framework, and relevant upcoming legislative proposals (e.g. plastics, chemicals). In addition, Estonia will dedicate the month of October to this theme, hosting a number of international events, e.g. conferences on green and circular procurement, and nature-based solutions. Given Estonia's reputation as a digital pioneer, our programme also includes two hackathons – brainstorming sessions to find digital solutions for the circular economy and also for climate change. Finally, we aim to adopt Council conclusions on eco-innovation at the **Environment Council** scheduled for 19 December.

To conclude, it is clear that all our activities and objectives in the spheres of circular economy and climate change are mutually reinforcing lines of action in our **progression towards a more sustainable future**. The transition to a low-carbon circular economy will pose an enormous challenge to all sectors and aspects of our economies – from business models, design and waste management to larger production and consumption patterns. By advancing our common agenda on climate change and the circular economy, the EU will have a unique opportunity to set an example for the rest of the world – how to mobilise different policies towards a competitive low-carbon circular economy.

IMPORTANT DATES

- 13-14 July / Informal meeting of Environment Ministers / Tallinn, Estonia
- 13 October / **Environment Council** / Luxembourg
- 24-26 October / High-level conference "Nature-based solutions: from innovation to common use" / Tallinn, Estonia
- 19 December / **Environment Council** / Brussels, Belgium

Selection of major **high-level international events**:

- 10-19 July / UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
- 6-16 September / Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification
- 11-15 September / Meeting of Parties of the Aarhus Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the PRTR Protocol
- 18-22 September / International Atomic Energy Agency General Conference
- 24-29 September / Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention
- 23-28 October / Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
- 6-17 November / Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC
- 20-24 November / Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol
- 4-6 December / United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3)

