



# **PROGRAMME OF THE POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

January 1 - June 30, 2025



# SECURITY, EUROPE!

Poland takes over the presidency of the Council of the European Union at time of uncertainty and concern. Europe is grappling with the consequences of Russia's third year of armed aggression against Ukraine and the need to strengthen its own defence capacity. We are witnessing increasing geopolitical tensions, the erosion of the rules-based international order and hybrid attacks targeting European democracy and security. Europeans are affected by the consequences of migration pressure, the energy transition, the declining competitiveness of the European economy and climate change.

For Europe, this is the time of trial and decision. The European Union must protect itself and its citizens and take care of its immediate neighbourhood. It must give Europeans a sense of security and prospects for development. Therefore, the Polish Presidency will support activities strengthening European security in all its dimensions: external, internal, information, economic, energy, food and health.

To make Europe more secure, we need the unity of the European Union and its willingness to work together with partners who share our values, including those aspiring to EU membership. We will support a merit-based enlargement of the EU - welcoming new members is a geopolitical imperative and an opportunity to spread stability and growth across the continent. The Polish Presidency will seek sustained support for Ukraine and its reconstruction as well as increasing pressure on Russia and its allies to end the ongoing aggression as soon as possible. A definitive discontinuation of imports of Russian energy resources is essential for Europe's energy security, which we, as the Presidency, will actively pursue. We will also seek to strengthen transatlantic ties and cooperation with allies outside the European Union. Strengthening EU cooperation with the United States will be of great importance.

Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine is also a war against the principles and values that the European Union enshrines. It shows that democracy, freedom and the rule of law are not given to us once and for all. In line with the EU's Strategic Agenda 2024-2029, fundamental European values, including the rule of law, will guide the Polish Presidency's activities - both internally and externally. We will endeavour to have them respected and promoted by the European Union, emphasizing the special role of civil society.



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## Defence and security

Russia has destroyed the security architecture in Europe - it continues to wage an aggressive war against its neighbour, builds up its offensive military capabilities, and launches hybrid attacks. Russia's strategic objective is to revise the international order and restore the spheres of influence of the past. This poses an existential threat to Europe, the greatest since the end of the Second World War. We need concerted and ambitious action on European defence, complementing the efforts of NATO. There is a need to boost defence readiness based on increased military spending, a stronger defence industry and addressing defence capability gaps.

The Polish Presidency will support these activities and push for an in-depth debate on defence financing in the EU. At the same time, Member States should increase their defence spending and keep it at a level appropriate to the threats. We need strong support for the defence capabilities and defence readiness, including for defence industry, which will benefit entities of all sizes from all Member States. Support for key defence and dual-use infrastructure, such as East Shield and the Baltic Defence Line, is also important. They will strengthen the security of the EU as a whole, protecting us from hybrid and military threats. A priority of the Polish Presidency will also be to strengthen cooperation with NATO

and non-EU partners, mainly the USA, as well as the United Kingdom, South Korea and other like-minded countries.

## Protection of people and borders

Europe must continue its efforts to ensure an optimal level of internal security for its citizens. The fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and the comprehensive assistance to Ukraine demonstrated that the EU has the potential to provide real support to Member States and is indispensable in responding to large-scale crises. However, it is necessary to move from a hitherto reactive attitude to proactive preparedness.

The Polish Presidency is determined to build on the momentum and current consensus among EU Member States and institutions on the threat assessment and the need to provide an adequate toolbox. We will seek new solutions to comprehensively address the challenges of migration and security at the EU's external borders, work to reduce irregular migration and strengthen the effectiveness of return policy, including in cooperation with third country partners. We will work towards an adequate EU response to hybrid threats, in particular the instrumentalisation of migration. It cannot be seen only from the perspective of migratory pressure, it is first and foremost a threat to the security and



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territorial integrity of the entire Union. We will face the challenges of ensuring that the Schengen Area functions properly. We will work to enhance EU and Member State capacities for civil protection, disaster resilience, rescue and humanitarian assistance. We will work to enhance EU and Member State capacities for civil protection, disaster resilience, rescue and humanitarian assistance. We will address the issues of combating international organised crime networks, terrorism and radicalisation, including in the context of the internal security threats posed by the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

### **Resistance to foreign interference and disinformation**

Autocracies are using disinformation to break down the social and political cohesion of the West, and are trying to interfere with the democracy, stability and security of the European Union and its partners. The EU and its Member States must strengthen the resilience of democracy. This requires the ability to recognise and eliminate disinformation and foreign manipulation, but also long-term efforts in the areas of civic education, building societies' psychological resilience and crisis preparedness, supporting and protecting the independence of credible media, and strengthening civil society and citizens' commitment to the common good. This

is necessary to build resilience and to curb polarisation and radicalisation.

The Polish Presidency will strive to strengthen coordination in the fight against disinformation, information manipulation and to improve the EU's ability to prevent and mitigate the effects of hostile actions in cyberspace. It is particularly important to deal with crisis situations involving interference by third countries with EU information systems. Attention will be paid to the development of modern, secure digital services. We will also combat climate disinformation to make us more secure in the face of climate change.

The Polish Presidency will look for fields of cooperation in this area and the identification of joint initiatives at the EU level that will translate into real improvements in democratic resilience.

### **Ensuring security and freedom of business**

The EU economy faces numerous challenges. Rapid technological change requires companies to adapt and innovate quickly. The climate transition is also triggering profound changes in business models, creating new opportunities but also undermining the competitive position of traditional industries. In turn, rising geopolitical



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tensions mean that the economic dependencies that are a natural part of globalisation are beginning to pose too great a risk. In this situation, the dense network of EU regulations is an increasing burden. Unresolved problems are causing the EU to steadily lose its competitive position.

The Polish Presidency intends to take measures that will contribute to solving these problems. It is necessary to deepen the Single Market, remove barriers to cross-border activity, especially in the services sector. Enacting initiatives that improve access to private capital for businesses that want to grow and invest will also be of a importance. The Polish Presidency will also promote the reduction of bureaucratic burdens. In this context, it will be important to make approach to energy-climate policy more flexible, move away from penalties and obligations and focus on rewards and incentives. The Polish Presidency will also concentrate on improving support mechanisms for industry in areas important for security and building economic advantages, while maintaining a level playing field within the EU. It will also be our priority to restore a fair competition for EU industry in the global arena. We intend to improve trade policy instruments, take steps to improve enforcement when goods enter the EU market, and make better use of the strengths of the EU's broad public procurement stream.

The Polish Presidency will undertake a discussion on the future shape of cohesion policy, as improvements in the Single Market should be accompanied by policies that promote security and economic competitiveness. This is the role of cohesion policy, which creates a level playing field, tackles inequalities and improves resilience to shocks.

## Energy transition

Poland presidency stresses that the reliability and certainty of the supply of energy resources is crucial for the EU's energy security. However, it was only Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine that led to a reduction in Russian gas and oil imports by about two-thirds and a complete shift away from Russian coal imports. Nevertheless, there is still much to be done. Today, EU energy security is also about ensuring that citizens and businesses have access to energy in sufficient quantities and at an affordable price, without discriminating against any of the clean energy sources. We must also take into account that the energy transition will make us more dependent on technology and less on fuels in the future.

The Polish Presidency will therefore promote actions aimed at a full withdrawal from imports of Russian energy sources. It will undertake steps



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with a view to reduce energy prices in the EU and revise the EU's energy security framework to enhance the physical security and cybersecurity of energy infrastructure in the EU and its neighbourhood and ensure a level playing field for the development of each clean energy source in the EU. As the energy transition requires to look at other technologies and resources, we will strive to reduce our dependence on imported technologies, the components to make those technologies, and the critical raw materials needed to manufacture them.

## Competitive and resilient agriculture

Safe, high-quality and accessible food is a European public good. Therefore, Europe must ensure that farmers' position in value chains is strengthened, including that their income is stable. We need a competitive and resilient European agriculture that provides food security for Europeans. All EU actions should take into account vulnerable agricultural sectors and ensure that non-EU producers comply with EU food quality, safety and sustainability standards.

Therefore, the Polish Presidency will strive to shape a strong Common Agricultural Policy that supports farmers

and the development of rural areas. The policy should encourage, rather than force, farmers to take action to protect the environment and show the benefits of combating and preventing the effects of climate change, such as floods and droughts. We will work on the challenges that future EU enlargement, including to Ukraine, will bring to the sector.

## Health security

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the enormity of the negative impacts that health risks bring. Climate change, extreme weather events, natural disasters and increasing hybrid and cyber threats also require action to improve European resilience in the area of health. Taking these considerations into account, the Polish Presidency will focus on the digital transformation of healthcare, the mental health of children and adolescents and the promotion of health and disease prevention. Our work will take into account the need to improve EU drug security, with a particular focus on the patients' perspective. Both the diversification of medicines supply chains and support for their production in the EU play a key role. Health security is also about the wellbeing of EU citizens, so we will focus on ways to improve the mental health of children and adolescents in the digital age and health promotion activities.

# Main lines of action by Council configuration

- 9 - General Affairs Council (GAC)
- 13 - Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)
- 18 - Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN)
- 23 - Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA)
- 28 - Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)
- 32 - Competitiveness Council (COMPET)
- 37 - Transport, Telecommunications and Energy (TTE) Council
- 42 - Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH)
- 46 - Environment Council (ENVI)
- 49 - Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS)





## General Affairs Council (GAC)

The General Affairs Council will continue its efforts to strengthen and protect the Union's values, both internally and externally. In particular, work will focus on: safeguarding the rule of law, EU enlargement and internal reforms, countering foreign information manipulation and interference, strengthening the democratic resilience in the EU and its neighbourhood, developing cooperation with the United Kingdom and laying ground for the negotiations of the new Multiannual Financial Framework.

The Polish Presidency will also support discussions on the future of cohesion policy, which is by far the best tool for addressing development disparities, tackling inequalities and improving resilience to shocks.



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The Polish Presidency recognizes **the rule of law** as a cornerstone of the European Union and is committed to protecting and promoting it. Particularly now, in view of the ongoing Russian military aggression against Ukraine and in the context of future EU enlargement, the standards of the rule of law in the EU must be maintained, and candidate countries must be effectively supported in their reforms in this regard.

The Presidency intends to build on its own experience by emphasizing the role of civil society and credible media in protecting the rule of law. We will continue the dialogue in the Council with two country-specific discussions and the continuation of ongoing procedures.

The Member States are subject to foreign information manipulation and interference by third countries, particularly Russia. The Polish Presidency will work to **strengthen the EU's resilience against foreign information manipulation and interference** by inspiring discussion, including in the General Affairs Council as well as supporting democratic resilience of the candidate countries. The Polish Presidency is waiting for the European Commission to present a proposal for a "democratic shield".

As part of its commitment to transparency and high ethical standards within the EU institutions, the Polish Presidency will be involved in the work

of the EU Ethics Body. We will also continue to work on the draft Directive establishing harmonised requirements in the internal market on transparency of interest representation carried out on behalf of third countries (the 'Defence of Democracy' package). We recognise the multifaceted nature and differing approaches of the EU Member States evident in the discussion to date.

**Enlargement** is the best possible instrument for the European Union to strengthen and promote peace, democracy, rule of law and prosperity in Europe. New members strengthen the competitiveness and growth potential of the Single Market, create economies of scale and additional opportunities for citizens and businesses. Enlargement is also the most effective channel for promoting European values, led by democracy and the rule of law, and enhances stability in our neighbourhood.

The objective of the Polish Presidency is to make progress in the enlargement process, both in the Eastern direction and with regard to the Western Balkans, in line with the involvement of the countries aspiring to join the EU, in accordance with the merit-based approach. We need to consolidate reforms in the candidate countries, preserve the credibility of the European Union and strengthen European security. In the context of Ukraine, it is also crucial for strengthening defence against Russian armed aggression. The



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Polish Presidency will also maintain a constructive dialogue with Turkey, taking into account its status as a candidate country and in line with European Council conclusions.

The Presidency will continue to work on **the EU's internal reforms** to meet its long-term priorities, to ensure the smooth functioning of EU policies and its capacity to act in the face of new geopolitical realities and the prospect of enlargement. We will focus on what is needed to prepare the EU for new members, fulfil the ambitions expressed in the Strategic Agenda and maintain public support for the European project. The Presidency will aim to prepare a follow-up report to the European Council in line with its roadmap of June 2024 reflecting on four strands of future reform: values, policies, budget and governance. The starting point for discussions and a condition for further concrete progress will be a solid, fact-based analysis that would serve as a common reference point for the Member States. The Presidency is looking forward to the publication of in-depth pre-enlargement policy reviews by the Commission.

The Polish Presidency will work towards exploiting the full potential of the European Union's relations with the United Kingdom, while taking into account the importance of complete and timely implementation of existing agreements. We will monitor the state of implementation of the Withdrawal

Agreement with particular reference to citizens' rights and the provisions under the Windsor Framework as well as make every effort to ensure that the Trade and Cooperation Agreement is duly enforced.

In the light of the geopolitical situation, the Polish Presidency will also shape the conditions conducive to bringing the UK closer to the EU. We will explore opportunities for cooperation in new areas, particularly relevant to Europe's security needs, while ensuring that we maintain a unified position among Member States and in the interests of the European Union.

During the Polish Presidency, work in the Council will be conducted to advance the adoption of a decision regarding the signing of an Agreement with the Swiss Confederation on a package of legislative solutions regulating EU-Swiss cooperation. The Polish Presidency will also endeavour to make progress in work on the next stage of the Agreement with the Principality of Andorra and the Republic of San Marino on their participation in the EU Single Market.

**The draft Multiannual Financial Framework beyond 2027** will be presented by the Commission in 2025. The Presidency will organize a high-level expert conference on the Multiannual Financial Framework beyond 2027 in February 2025, after which the topic will be one of the issues discussed at the informal General Affairs Council.



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The Polish Presidency declares its readiness to work closely with the Commission and the European Parliament on a joint declaration on the EU's legislative priorities for 2025. Given the start of a new institutional cycle, the Presidency will also begin work on the Council's contribution to the joint conclusions of the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on the European Union's political objectives and priorities for 2025-2029.

A secure and stable EU requires investment in the sustainable development of European regions. **Cohesion** in all its dimensions is the main instrument for ensuring balanced socio-economic development. Cohesion policy contributes to counteracting polarisation and enables the reduction of development disparities between regions. It serves the smooth functioning of the Single Market, based on equal access and reaping the benefits of European integration.

A horizontal debate on post-2027 cohesion policy and its role in ensuring the cohesive development of EU regions is planned during the Polish Presidency. The basis for the discussion will be the three major reports published in 2024, confirming in their conclusions the effectiveness of cohesion policy in supporting regional development (Report summarizing the work of the High-Level Expert Group on the future of Cohesion Policy, the Cohesion Report

and the report by E. Letta). As a result of these discussions, the goal of the Polish Presidency is to prepare and adopt, at the March General Affairs Council in the format of ministers responsible for cohesion policy, Council conclusions. They will constitute the Council's input to the Commission for the final stages of work on the package of regulations for the future cohesion policy.

Independently of the work in the Council, activities will be carried out on strengthening the urban dimension of European policies and the territorial cohesion and territorial dimension of policies. These will take place within the framework of the EU Urban Agenda and the review of the EU 2030 Territorial Agenda.



## Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)

In view of Russia's aggression in Ukraine and other security threats, the work of the Foreign Affairs Council in the first half of 2025 will focus on maximizing support for Ukraine at political, military and economic levels, maintaining current policies towards Russia and Belarus, and strengthening the security and resilience of the EU and its partners.

The Presidency will work closely with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to ensure a successful outcome of this work.



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In the area of **foreign affairs**, the Presidency will promote the development of **EU-Ukraine relations**, including cooperation in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy, as well as other instruments of the EU defence dimension. We will work to ensure consistent EU support for Ukraine's plans for a lasting and just end to the war in Ukraine. We will combine this with efforts to stabilize the entire EU Eastern neighbourhood area. Our aim will be to seek to provide stable military support to Ukraine, including through the European Peace Facility, and to adapt the EUMAM Ukraine military assistance mission to the evolving and long-term needs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and to fully exploit the potential of the EUMAM Ukraine civilian mission.

With regard to Moldova, activity of the Polish Presidency will be directed towards strengthening the country's resilience and consistent support for the reform process on the path to the European Union.

The Polish Presidency will work to strengthen **EU sanctions against Russia and Belarus** and to combat their circumvention. We will combine this with making the best possible use for Ukraine of the windfall profits from the frozen assets of the Russian Central Bank. The Presidency will also seek to hold Russia legally and financially responsible for its aggression against Ukraine. We will also support the continuation of the „no

business as usual” policy with Russia and Belarus and will oppose the election of both countries to the bodies of international organizations.

The Presidency will stimulate discussion on the future of the **Eastern Partnership**, aiming to update and reinvigorate it, inter alia, by making it complementary to the enlargement process and at the same time having a stronger impact on pro-European reforms in countries that do not aspire to join the EU and a greater emphasis on security, including combating hybrid threats.

The Polish Presidency will strive for the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the stabilisation of the situation in the South Caucasus region, enabling the development of its cooperation with the EU. It will also support the aspirations of the Georgian people for EU membership.

The Polish Presidency will also strive to keep the Western Balkans and Turkey in the orbit of close cooperation with the EU under the CFSP, including by maintaining an ongoing political dialogue.

An important element of the Polish Presidency's programme will be the development of **the European defence**. We will seek to strengthen EU-NATO relations, including in the transatlantic dimension, by identifying priority arrangements to be implemented and possible ways of achieving them.



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The Polish Presidency will also place emphasis on supporting Member States in developing their defence and readiness capabilities, defence industries and defence and dual-use infrastructure. The Polish Presidency will aim to conclude negotiations on the draft Regulation on the European Defence Industrial Programme - EDIP, depending on the development of work in the European Parliament. We will also seek to use EU instruments to support key elements of defence infrastructure, such as **East Shield** and investments to develop transport networks for military mobility. We will support the achievement of full operational readiness by EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (EU RDC) and the delivery of other tasks envisaged in the 2025 EU Strategic Compass. The Presidency will also be tasked with completing the Strategic Review of the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

The Polish Presidency will promote the **non-military security and resilience** of the EU and its Eastern Neighbourhood and support the development of the civilian dimension of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The work will focus on: the civilian capability development process and the implementation of the Civilian CSDP Compact; strengthening resilience and response to cyber, hybrid and terrorist threats; deepening crisis management cooperation; enhancing the EU's strategic communications capabilities and

countering foreign (especially Russian) interference and disinformation. We will also seek to strengthen the EU's energy security, including through cooperation with the Gulf States (EU-GCC) and investment in the Global Gateway strategy (particularly in the digital, energy and transport sectors). These investments should take into account the geographical and technological diversification of energy sources.

The Presidency will support the deepening of **transatlantic relations**. In particular, we are committed to EU-US coordination in the face of Russia's aggression towards Ukraine and dialogue on global issues, including the Eastern Neighbourhood, China and the Indo-Pacific region, energy policy, new technologies and the Connectivity Agenda.

In terms of relations with other EU partners, the Presidency's goal remains to stop the escalation in **the Middle East**, provide humanitarian assistance to civilians and stabilize the situation in the region. The Polish Presidency will also support the implementation of the EU's strategy for cooperation in the **Indo-Pacific** in its political, economic and security dimensions. One of the objectives will be the preparation of the next edition of the Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum (IPMF). Furthermore, the Presidency will promote the development of a comprehensive partnership with Africa and relations with Latin America



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and the Caribbean, including through high-level EU engagement with sub-regional organizations, as well as with strategic partners.

Within the overall framework of EU-UK relations, the Polish Presidency will support their deepening in the area of security and defence. This is due to the convergence of values and positions and strategic importance in the international arena, as well as its previous experience in supporting Ukraine, imposing and enforcing sanctions.

The Polish Presidency will continue to promote the adherence to **international law and respect for human rights**, aiming to strengthen the EU's influence within the multilateral system. This will include cooperation between the EU and the Council of Europe, including in the context of the international community's legal response to Russian aggression against Ukraine and support for reforms in candidate countries.

In the area of **development cooperation and humanitarian aid** the Presidency will focus on building the resilience of countries and societies to crises. It will seek to support partner countries in building strong institutions and ensuring good governance, including through various funding tools. The Presidency will also continue the EU's efforts to deepen international partnerships to achieve the goals of Agenda 2030 and other international commitments, building,

inter alia, on the Samoa Agreement. An important event will be the Humanitarian Forum co-organised by the Presidency and the Commission.

The Foreign Affairs Council in **trade** format will continue its reflection and discussion on the future of EU trade policy and its place in EU economic policy.

The actions falling in the area of the **Common Commercial Policy** will focus on strengthening the EU's economic security and competitiveness through an ambitious external agenda based on defending an open, fair and balanced global trading system, enhancing the resilience of the transatlantic relationship and developing the economic dimension of the neighbourhood policy, including in particular the modification of the trade component of the Association Agreements with Ukraine and Moldova.

An important objective of the Polish Presidency will also be to bring about an effective **review of the liberalisation concessions granted in access to markets** on the basis of Articles 29 and 147 respectively of the EU Association Agreements with Ukraine and Moldova. The appropriate adaptation of economic relations on the basis of the above-mentioned provisions, in addition to commercial support for Ukraine and Moldova, will be a key step in the process of member negotiations based on balanced and long-term mutual benefits,





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the modernisation of economies and the harmonisation of the regulatory environment of these countries on the basis of the EU acquis and standards. The Presidency will take into account the situation created by the war waged by Russia against Ukraine.

The Presidency will support the **WTO reform** process, including, in particular, the restoration of a fully functioning two-tier dispute settlement system and maintaining the Organization's relevance amid growing global tensions over trade and industrial policy.

The Presidency will continue to work on ambitious, balanced and reciprocal **trade agreements**. It will seek to ensure a level playing field for European companies in third country markets as well as in the EU, to strengthen supply chains and to improve access to third country markets for EU goods, services and investment. It will also work to ensure the effective implementation and active enforcement of existing trade agreements, emphasizing the need to ensure a fair distribution of benefits between Member States and economic sectors as a means of upholding the social legitimacy of European trade policy. The Presidency will also continue to work towards the creation of multilateral and bilateral rules for international digital trade.

The Polish Presidency will continue discussions and initiatives related to the Commission communication on the

### European Economic Security Strategy

of 20 June 2023. It will be guided by the need for a balanced approach to the various elements of the strategy. In the context of trade, this means a balance between maintaining the openness of the EU economy and protecting against identified sources of risk to the EU economy. The aim should be to structure the existing debate, with a strengthened horizontal approach to the issue of economic security itself and the complementarity of applied and planned measures, the involvement of external stakeholders and the development of a network of international partnerships. The Presidency will support actions aimed at reducing the use of economic dependence or coercion against the legitimate interests of the Union.

Within the broader objective of deepening transatlantic relationship, when it comes to trade and technology, the Polish Presidency will support increasing the resilience of **the transatlantic relationship**, including through the continuation and strengthening of dialogue with the US administration and the work in this area. The need to take appropriate measures to maintain positive transatlantic relations during the next US political cycle must also be reckoned with. The Presidency will also seek to prevent the emergence of possible trade tensions while protecting the legitimate economic interests of the Union.



## Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN)

The main thrust of the work of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council will be to respond to the challenges of the EU's current economic and financial situation. The most important areas on which the Polish presidency will focus are streamlining the Single Market and strengthening the competitiveness of the European economy, primarily through efforts to strengthen the capital markets union, which will foster greater involvement of private capital in financing the economy and the green and digital transformation, as well as efforts to lower energy prices and reduce overregulation, and work on the financial aspects of strengthening the EU's defence capabilities and supporting Ukraine, as well as the balanced and efficient revenue side of the EU budget.

The Polish Presidency will take work forward on the implementation of the economic governance framework, on financial services legislation, on files in the field of direct and indirect taxation, on the reform of the customs union as well as on the EU budget for 2026.



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High energy prices are the most important factor limiting the competitiveness of the EU economy. Within ECOFIN, the Polish Presidency intends to continue the discussion on the macroeconomic ways to reduce the negative effects of excessively high energy prices and the reduction of energy prices themselves.

The Polish Presidency will also strive to improve the functioning and competitiveness of European capital markets by prioritising work on legislative projects to strengthen the capital markets union, which will foster greater involvement of private capital in financing the economy and green and digital transformation.

The Polish Presidency intends to continue the discussion on the **financing of the defence and security in the EU**, including with the participation of the European Investment Bank (EIB). The Presidency will also work closely with the Commission as well as other institutions and strategic partners to develop new solutions in this area, which should have a positive impact on both the defence capabilities of the Member States and the level of development of their industrial and R&D sectors.

The Polish Presidency will continue to work on ensuring long-term support for **Ukraine**, as part of the implementation of Ukraine Facility, macrofinancial assistance and other instruments, as well as preparations for financing its

reconstruction needs. The Presidency will actively support activities related to the use of windfall profits from immobilised Russian assets, monitoring the implementation of sanctions against Russia and Belarus and analysing their economic consequences for the EU and Member States.

The Presidency will ensure the conditions for a smooth implementation of the new **economic governance** framework. Poland will continue discussions on the first round of medium-term Budget and Structural Plans. The aim is to prepare Council recommendations that will establish net expenditure pathways and identify the reforms and investments needed to extend these pathways from 4 to 7 years.

ECOFIN will therefore play a role in European Semester to ensure the smooth coordination of Member States' economic and fiscal policies.

The Polish Presidency will work actively for the smooth implementation of the Reconstruction and Resilience Facility (RRF).

One of the objectives of the Polish Presidency will be the finalisation of the **financial services** legislative agenda, including the conclusion of negotiations with the European Parliament.

The Polish Presidency will also continue work on the amendment of the Regulation on reference indicators (the so-called



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BMR), which is part of a package of measures aimed at simplifying regulatory requirements. It is likely to continue negotiations with the European Parliament with a view to reaching an agreement on simplifying reporting requirements. Negotiations will also continue on the regulations under the reform of the Crisis Management and Deposit Guarantee Framework (so-called CMDI).

An important part of our work will be the Payment Services Market Package, including amendments to the Directive and Regulation PSD/PSR. Its aim is to improve the functioning of the market for payment services within the Single Market, including improving the competitiveness of open banking services. The goal of the Polish Presidency will be to significantly advance work in this area. The Presidency will also continue to work on the introduction of the digital euro.

Poland will take action to support EU competitiveness by tackling harmful tax competition. The work will include, inter alia, updating the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes, including an evaluation of the commitments made by cooperating jurisdictions to implement the principles of good governance in tax matters. The EU list will be approved through Council conclusions in February 2025.

In the area of direct taxation, the Presidency will continue work on the ninth Directive on administrative

cooperation in the field of taxation (the so-called DAC 9 Directive), aimed at ensuring exchange of information on data relating to Pillar II of the BEPS 2.0 Project (the GloBE system). Steps will be taken to ensure that the DAC 9 Directive is fully compliant with the OECD standard, helping to maintain the competitiveness of the European economy.

In the area of indirect taxation, the Polish Presidency intends to continue efforts to close the VAT gap. In this context, the priority will be to further tighten up VAT in the e-commerce sector, in particular to counter irregularities in the case of distance sales of imported goods via electronic interfaces. It will also seek to take into account the priorities of the new Commission in its activities.

Should the Commission present a legislative proposal on the structure of taxation and excise rates applicable to tobacco products and substitute products, the Presidency will take work forward on this. The Presidency will also continue work on the revision of the Directive on the taxation of energy products and electricity.

In the area of customs, the Polish Presidency will continue work on the reform of the customs union, including the creation of the EU Customs Authority. The aim will be to agree a Council position and adopt a mandate for negotiations with the European Parliament. In addition, the Presidency will



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pay attention to issues related to customs relations with countries bordering the EU (Ukraine, Moldova, Western Balkans) also in the context of their future accession to the EU. Steps will also be taken to support the formation of the EU Customs Alliance for Borders (EUCAB), an alliance aimed at strengthening cooperation and coordination between Member States on customs border management. The issue of implementation of EU sanctions against Russia and Belarus by customs authorities will also be an important part of the work. The Presidency will also take steps to strengthen the EU's presence in the World Customs Organization.

The Presidency's activities will aim to guide the new draft decision on the own resources' system, expected as part of **the post-2027 MFF package**. The Presidency will focus on possible measures to reduce the regressivity of the own resources' system and further proposals for new sources of revenue for the EU budget linked to the Single Market. The topic of own resources will also be one of the topics to be discussed at the MFF conference in February 2025.

Furthermore, the Presidency will work on the preparation of a Council recommendation on the discharge to be given to the Commission in respect of the implementation of the EU budget for 2023 and guidelines for the EU budget for 2026. The aim is for the Council to adopt the discharge recommendation and Council conclusions on the budget

guidelines at its meeting in February 2025. The Presidency will also ensure the smooth day-to-day management of the EU budget for 2025.

The Polish Presidency will strengthen **economic cooperation with partner countries**, and take steps to expand cooperation with Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan) and Azerbaijan.

Depending on the macro-financial assistance (MFA) proposals on the table, the Presidency will aim to work efficiently on the MFA proposals, with particular attention to possible proposals for Ukraine and Moldova. In addition, we will move on with the EU MFA projects announced in the first half of 2024 for Egypt and Jordan, which will not be finalised during the Hungarian presidency.

The Presidency will also strive to develop and present a coordinated, unified EU position for G20 meetings at the level of finance ministers and central bank governors. The EU's external dimension will also require preparing and presenting the EU's position at meetings of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group and maintaining close relations with other international and regional financial institutions and economic integration organisations.

As part of the Macroeconomic Dialogue with the Social Partners (MEDPOL),



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the Polish Presidency will discuss the fragmentation of the services market in the EU, with the aim of identifying key regulatory barriers in this regard. The Polish presidency will also participate in the process of reinforced economic dialogue with EU candidate and potential candidate countries (including in meetings at the ministerial level), in order to best prepare these countries to meet the economic criteria for the EU membership.



## Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA)

The Polish Presidency will continue its efforts to ensure an optimal level of security for EU citizens. The focus will be on a comprehensive response to the challenges of security and migration, including countering its instrumentalisation by Russia and Belarus and working extensively with international partners in tackling its root causes. It is crucial to seek innovative solutions to migration policy in order to respond to currently identified challenges.

We will work to effectively combat transnational organised crime networks, terrorism and radicalisation, as well as hybrid threats, affecting the internal security. We will also focus on the topics of security and the protection of fundamental rights in the areas of criminal and civil law, and on the role of civil society, also in protecting the rule of law.



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In the context of **migration policy**, the Presidency will actively work to find new and innovative solutions to today's migration challenges, particularly regarding the **security of the EU's external borders**. It is necessary to seek appropriate responses to security threats, including those of a hybrid nature. We will continue to work on solutions to adequately respond to them, while supporting Member States under migratory pressure at all EU external borders. We will work on operationalising selected concepts that were mentioned in the 15 Member States' letter of 15 May 2024 to the Commission, such as building partnerships with key countries of origin and transit of migrants, in establishing safe places in third countries to provide migrants with a safe alternative to attempting to travel to the EU illegally.

We will seek to strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of both voluntary and forced **returns by improving cooperation with third countries**, using all available leverages, such as visa or trade policies. We will support the continuation of the work towards updating and harmonising legislation in this area, in particular the adoption of the new legislation concerning returns. We intend to continue to monitor the status of implementation of action plans with third countries and to monitor the current situation and its impact on security in the regions and the EU as a whole,

also in the context of the root causes of migration and challenges along the migration routes. We will also work towards better coordination between the Commission and Member States in the area of external dimension of migration.

At the same time, we will continue to work on the strategic use of visa policy and aim to strengthen its tools, including the visa waiver suspension mechanism. We will also undertake a discussion on the legal and practical possibilities of countering the instrumentalisation of migration through coordinated action on the external and internal dimensions of migration taken at European level and in the spirit of Team Europe.

In view of the **ongoing war in Ukraine and its implications for the EU**, we will work to support Ukraine in dealing with migration challenges, including internal displacement, while building preparedness to adequately manage a possible next wave of war refugees, as well as responding to the needs of beneficiaries of temporary protection who are already on the territory of EU Member States. We will discuss alternative solutions to temporary protection for war refugees from Ukraine in order to prevent secondary movements.

The Polish Presidency will mark the 40th anniversary of the **Schengen Agreement**, establishment of which is one of the EU's most important achievements.





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This milestone provides an opportunity to prioritise the functioning of the Schengen area and manage it accordingly. Among other things, the Presidency will address the issue of introducing temporary border controls at the internal borders of Schengen countries.

In the context of **civil defence and civil protection**, the Presidency will continue work on strengthening the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Given the evolving risk landscape in Europe and the world, we will emphasise the need to build cross-sectoral relations and integrate knowledge from different areas of EU activity. We will work on the civil protection sector's contribution to the future EU Preparedness Strategy. We will also contribute to an even more ambitious implementation of the EU Disaster Resilience Goals. We will also support Ukraine in its participation in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

We will address the issue of monitoring and neutralising threats to the EU's internal security linked to armed conflicts in its neighbourhood, such as the Russian aggression against Ukraine or the unstable situation in Gaza Strip, including arms, ammunition and drugs trafficking, migrants smuggling and human trafficking, infiltration of criminal groups and preventive actions.

In the context of combating **serious and organised crime**, we will pay particular

attention to the process of adequately preparing the new cycle of the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) for 2026-2029. With regard to the fight against drugs, we will develop and implement an EU action plan to combat illicit drug trafficking and organised crime. Responding to current challenges in the area of internal security, we will initiate a broader discussion on the future and directions for further development of the main EU agencies supporting Member States in this area. The Presidency will continue to work in the area of combating human smuggling and related crimes, including trafficking in human beings. In this regard, we will focus on progress following the adoption of the European Parliament's position on the draft Regulation enhancing Europol's role in supporting Member States in the fight against migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

In terms of access to digital information for law enforcement and data retention bodies, we will support the ongoing process while protecting fundamental rights. In the area of customs cooperation, the Presidency will work towards the adoption of a Customs Threat Assessment, which will identify emerging and potential threats to the functioning of the customs services in the EU.

In terms of **judicial cooperation in criminal matters**, the Polish Presidency



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will focus on the fight against corruption and enhancing the level of protection for victims of crime. In the light of technological developments and online threats, we will support the swiftest possible update of the legal framework for the protection of children from online exploitation, which will include the work on the draft Directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse material. Furthermore, the Polish Presidency will continue the work on the draft Directive laying down minimum rules to prevent and counter the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and stay in the Union. Efforts will also continue to ensure accountability for perpetrators of crimes committed in connection with the war in Ukraine. In the area of **judicial cooperation in civil matters**, the Presidency will aim at strengthening the legal protection of European Union citizens in cross-border situations. In this context, we will endeavour to make substantial progress on the draft Regulation on jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and enforcement of measures and cooperation in matters relating to the protection of adults. The Presidency will also continue work on the draft Council Regulation on jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition of decisions and acceptance of authentic instruments in matters of parenthood and on the creation of a European Certificate of Parenthood.

Mindful of the need to remove barriers

to the competitiveness of the EU economy, which at the same time hinder citizens from exercising fundamental freedoms, such as the free movement of capital and freedom of establishment, and put their legally protected interests at risk, the Presidency will further focus on the draft Directive harmonizing certain aspects of **insolvency law**. The Presidency will also be ready to continue work on a draft Directive on adapting non-contractual civil liability rules to **artificial intelligence**.

The Presidency will be committed to supporting cooperation of Member States in the **digitalisation of justice**, particularly in key areas arising from the „European e-Justice Strategy 2024-2028”.

It will also be important to provide political guidance for **future European Union action in the field of justice**, and the Presidency will therefore take an active role in this discussion, taking into account the positions of all stakeholders.

With regard to **the rule of law and fundamental rights**, the Polish Presidency will undertake a discussion on building the resilience of Member States' justice systems and the role of civil society in protection of the rule of law, taking into account the requirement of independence of the legal profession, freedom of research and the role of whistleblowers in this process. Civil society organisations will be invited by the Presidency to actively participate in



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the discussions. We will promote greater citizens involvement in the law-making process and dialogue with stakeholders on the effectiveness of tools to protect journalists and human rights defenders participating in public debate.

The Presidency will also continue to work on the EU's accession to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR). However, reaching an agreement on this will depend on resolving the question of the jurisdiction in the area of CFSP.



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

The work of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council will focus on measures to ensure fair, non-discriminatory and safe working conditions in the age of digital transformation. We will work to ensure equality, cohesion and inclusion. In particular, we will work towards gender equality in a modern digital society.

We will lean into the challenges faced by the elderly. The emphasis will be on the health security of the Union and its citizens.



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The work of the Polish Presidency **in the area of employment, social affairs and equality** will focus on three priorities: the future of work in digital Europe; Europe of equality, cohesion and inclusion; and Europe responding to the challenges of the silver transformation.

As part of the **future of work in digital Europe** priority, the Polish Presidency will hold a discussion on possible solutions for the protection of people and their work in an age of increasing innovation and automation. Among the issues discussed will be legislative initiatives relating to the use of AI in the workplace and those relating to teleworking and the right to disconnect. We will also lean into the implementation of the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027 and social economy initiatives in the context of digital transformation. With a view to the Action Plan on labour and skills shortages, the Presidency will support measures to stimulate the acquisition of new qualifications and retraining. We will promote solutions aimed at inactive people, who represent the hidden potential of the labour market. Bearing in mind the Val Duchesse Declaration (2024) and the Recommendation on Strengthening Social Dialogue in the EU (2023), the Presidency will take steps to develop social dialogue and emphasise its role, including by continuing work on the revision of the European Works Councils Directive and starting work on a New Pact for European Social Dialogue.

Under the **Europe of equality, cohesion and inclusion** priority the Polish Presidency will pay particular attention to specific vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, economically inactive individuals, the NEET group, migrants and people benefiting from intra-EU mobility. The social economy can have a positive impact on the inclusion of groups at risk of labour market exclusion. It is also necessary to ensure equal treatment on the labour market. To address these challenges, the Presidency will focus on further work on the 'Traineeship package'. In line with the Porto Declaration (2021) and the La Hulpe Declaration (2024), the European Pillar of Social Rights is a compass providing guidance to Member States in dealing with challenges relating to the promotion of upward convergence in terms of working and living conditions in the EU. The Polish Presidency will engage in the 2025 review of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, with its three main objectives of increasing employment, strengthening skills and qualifications and reducing poverty among Europeans set for 2030.

The reinforcement of actions for equal treatment, protection of minorities forming EU's diversity against discrimination, as well as strengthening and promoting actions for gender equality and countering violence, including gender-based violence, will be an important component of the work



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of the Polish Presidency. In particular, we will focus on **gender equality in a modern digital society**. The aim will be to strengthen the equality and anti-discrimination perspective at EU level, especially within the framework of the Digital Services Act. These aspirations will be reflected in the Trio Declaration on Gender Equality, which will be signed in April 2025. The Presidency will also continue efforts to adopt the draft Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment. We will present the Council conclusions on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by Member States, marking the 30th anniversary of its adoption. The Presidency will also include in its activities the Roadmap for Women's Rights, due to be published in March 2025, as well as the work on new EU strategies on equality.

Demographic change, including population ageing, is one of the most important challenges facing the EU today. Under the priority **Europe responding to the challenges of the silver transformation**, the Polish Presidency will strive to give due prominence to the policy responding to the challenges of an ageing EU population, understood as a set of activities aimed at shaping conditions for dignified, healthy ageing and ensuring the realisation of the fundamental rights of the elderly. Particular attention will be paid to the rights of elder individuals to self-determination, enabling them to decide on the form and extent of their

participation in society and their preferred support arrangements. In addition to actions for decent social security and access to services (review of the Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care), the Polish Presidency will promote initiatives to support the active participation of senior citizens in the labour market.

In order to better diagnose demographic changes and the situation on the labour market, the Polish Presidency will strive to conclude work on the proposal for a Regulation on European statistics on population and housing and the proposal for a Regulation on European Union labour market statistics on businesses.

In the domain of **health** the Presidency will focus on three areas: the digital transformation of healthcare, the mental health of children and young people, and health promotion and disease prevention.

The Polish Presidency will provide space for a debate on **critical medicines**, emphasising the need to ensure **the health** and drug **security of the EU**. The Presidency will continue to work on the revision of pharmaceutical legislation, in the spirit of increasing security of supply and ensuring the availability and affordability of medicines.

In relation to the priority on **digital transformation in health**, the Presidency will pursue the development of cross-border services in e-health with



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particular regard to the projected organisational system of the European Health Data Space (EHDS). Taking into account the dynamic development of the medical devices market, especially those requiring certification and processing sensitive medical data, as well as the changing external situation related to the war in Ukraine, the Presidency will initiate a debate on more stringent regulating of medical device cybersecurity in EU legislation. The Presidency will also be ready to discuss the announced action plan on cybersecurity for hospitals and healthcare providers.

implemented in the Member States and promoting pro-health behaviours, to prepare a catalogue of good practices and solutions, and to propose actions at the EU and national level.

Reducing **mental health risks for children and adolescents** is a key task in the area of mental health care. Particularly challenging for all Member States are the threats posed by the rapid development of digital technologies, the intensive use of the Internet, including information and communication tools and platforms, and above all social media. The Polish Presidency will conduct a debate on these risks and include this matter in Council conclusions.

In the context of new challenges and threats to public health, there is a growing need for an in-depth analysis of the actual **effects of health promotion and disease prevention programmes and tools**. The main objective of the activities of the Polish Presidency in this area is to discuss the effectiveness of strategies and prophylactic programmes



## Competitiveness Council (COMPET)

The work of the Competitiveness Council will focus on measures to ensure long-term competitiveness, which is at the same time a pillar of the EU's economic security. It is essential to strengthen the European economic base, to ensure that the European economy is resilient to the risks of disrupted supply chains, and to ensure a level playing field within the EU and at global level.

The most important areas on which the Polish Presidency will focus relate to reinforcing the foundations of the Single Market and development of the EU industrial policy that strengthens the competitive position of European companies.





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In the area of the **internal market and industry**, the Polish Presidency will work towards **a strong industrial policy strengthening the competitive position of European companies and ensuring economic security**.

We will continue to discuss the future of EU industrial policy and the decarbonisation of specific sectors of the economy (with a view to the **Clean Industrial Deal** initiative), which in turn can translate into growth of GDP, improvements in productivity and efficiency, lowering healthcare costs and, consequently, improved quality and length of human life. At the same time, mitigating the effects of high energy prices and implementing the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) will play a role in improving the global competitiveness of the European economy. The Presidency will also invite other Council formations to contribute to the discussion on the future of EU industrial policy and the decarbonisation.

An important element of the Polish Presidency's programme in the area of industrial competitiveness will be the **stimulation of public and private investment**. Particular attention will be given to maintaining the level playing field and the impact of state aid on **the integrity of the Single Market**. The context for the discussion in this area will be set by the planned expiry of the Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework for State Aid measures to

support the economy following the aggression against Ukraine by Russia at the end of 2025, the publication of the Competition Policy Report, and the recommendations on state aid policy deriving from Annual Single Market and Competitiveness Report and E. Letta and M. Draghi reports.

A significant aspect of the competitiveness debate will be the elimination of risks in supply chains and the reduction of strategic dependencies, as well as the mitigation of risks to the competitiveness of European companies resulting, inter alia, from protectionist actions by third countries. In this context, the Polish Presidency will address the links between the EU industrial policy and the Common Commercial Policy. The Presidency will pursue the activities ensuring the security of supply of critical raw materials, among others, by holding discussion on the implementing European raw materials policy and also partnerships planned by the EU with third countries on sustainable supply of raw materials.

The Presidency will also address the issue of capacity building in the EU. An important topic of discussion will be the differing conditions for industrial development in the Member States, including technological neutrality. The Polish Presidency will address the issue of **strengthening the competitiveness and position of the EU in traditionally strong sectors of European industry**,



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which can form the basis for the development of high-technology industry and constitute an important element of the EU's economic security.

The Polish Presidency will also work to **reinforce the foundations of the Single Market**. We will hold a debate on **the Single Market for Services**, which features the largest integration deficits and the greatest number of barriers to cross-border activity. There will also be a discussion on horizontal, practical aspects concerning services in the Single Market, including the distinction between temporary cross-border provision of services and right of establishment, the application of the proportionality principle in services or European standardisation of services and servitisation. The Presidency will also strive to provide an ambitious contribution in the area of services **to the work on a horizontal Single Market Strategy**.

With regard to **improving the regulatory environment to support the competitiveness of European companies**, the Presidency will endeavour to reduce reporting obligations and simplify EU regulations, including the elimination of requirements that are unnecessary, inconsistent or constitute an excessive bureaucratic burden. In addition, the Presidency will conduct a review of the instruments used in the area of better regulation from the perspective of entrepreneurs

as addressees of EU legislation. It will continue the discussion on Regulatory Impact Assessments and the development of digital tools to support the Single Market.

Discussions in the area of the Single Market and industry will be embedded in the monitoring cycle of the EU's long-term competitiveness. The conclusions of the competitiveness discussions in the EU Council will be forwarded to the European Council.

With regard to legislative work in the area of the Single Market, the Presidency will be ready to work on the proposal on combating late payment in commercial transactions.

In the area of intellectual property, the Presidency will continue to work on the projects included in the patent package. In addition, the Presidency will coordinate the EU's position in meetings at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). In the area of copyright law, it will continue the activities with regard to, among others: the negotiation of a treaty on the protection of the rights of RTV broadcasters, the search for effective ways to combat piracy of live RTV programmes and the analysis of the impact of AI on copyright law.

With regard to technical harmonisation, the Presidency will continue work on the draft Regulation on the safety of toys,



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the draft Regulation on detergents and surfactants and the draft Directive on measuring instruments. In addition, the Presidency will hold a discussion on the conclusions of the 2024 review of the Regulation on European standardisation.

In the area of consumer policy, the Presidency will continue work on the draft Directive on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) for consumer disputes.

In the field of company law, the Presidency will be ready to work on a draft Directive on European cross-border associations.

With regard to tourism, the Presidency will have three objectives: promoting Europe as a safe tourist destination, increasing the competitiveness of sustainable European tourism and its products, and raising the tourist attractiveness of less popular and peripheral areas. The Presidency will continue work on enhancing the effectiveness of traveller protection and simplifying and clarifying certain aspects of the Package Travel Directive (PTD).

The Presidency will continue to monitor and coordinate public procurement legislation, through the involvement of the working group responsible for public procurement in legislative work on sectoral legislation containing provisions directly relating to public procurement. The Presidency will provide a space for debate on important procurement

initiatives, particularly in the context of industrial policy.

In the area of **space** the Presidency will work towards the adoption of Council conclusions on maximizing the benefits of using Earth observation space data to enhance resilience with a particular focus on the use of artificial intelligence algorithms in the area of security and crisis management. The Presidency will be ready to work on the draft EU space law, seeking to ensure a balance between EU legal framework and support for SMEs and start-ups, taking into account the requirements of cybersecurity and environmental policy. It will hold a discussion on space policy in the context of EU security and crisis management, focusing on the use of satellite data and synergies of space technologies with other industries (including defence industry).

The leitmotif of the Polish Presidency's activity in the **research** field is openness and synergy. We will underline the need to undertake actions of the inclusive nature, to stimulate new pan-European collaborative networks in research and innovation, the full exploitation of the EU's potential and talents and the synergies between the different funding sources, both in the Council Recommendation on the European Research Area (ERA) Policy Agenda 2025-2027 and in the Council conclusions on the mid-term evaluation of the Horizon Europe Framework



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Programme, works on which will commence in the 1st half of 2025. In its work, the Presidency will emphasise the potential of science and innovation and the framework program, in particular for strengthening EU competitiveness, security in various dimensions, economic resilience and reducing strategic dependencies, among others, based on the results of discussions at the informal EU Competitiveness Council (research). The Presidency will take forward work on the Council Regulation establishing the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community 2026-2027 and Council conclusions on the application of artificial intelligence in science.



## Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE)

The work of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council will focus on measures to strengthen the resilience and competitiveness of the transport sector.

We will support the development of a comprehensive and horizontal approach to cybersecurity. We will work to develop a new EU energy security architecture.



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The area of **transport** is crucial to the development of Member States' economies, the citizens' well-being and building Europe's security, especially in the context of current geopolitical challenges, which highlight the need to improve the transport not only of passengers and goods, but also of troops and armaments, and to ensure the effective protection of transport infrastructure. For this reason, the Polish Presidency will focus on the issue of **strengthening the resilience of the transport sector** and deepening transport cooperation with countries aspiring to join the EU.

From the point of view of the effective functioning of the Single Market and the territorial cohesion of the EU, the implementation of a coherent EU transport infrastructure **based on a revised Trans-European Transport Network - TEN-T** - is crucial. The implementation of the new requirements will also contribute to the shift towards sustainable transport, its decarbonisation, with the development of alternative power sources and digital transformation, as well as enhancing the safety and resilience of infrastructure. In the context of the new TEN-T policy requirements, the Presidency will emphasise **the increased investment needs in the transport sector**, including in terms of improving military mobility within the EU.

The Presidency will also focus on the

issue of making **the transport sector more competitive**. It is crucial that the regulations adopted by the European Union support the competitiveness of EU transport industry entities, including in relation to their third-country counterparts. The Presidency will provide a space for debate on the competitiveness of rail transport and the safety and competitiveness of maritime operators.

Strengthening the capacity of **rail transport** is a matter of priority. For this reason, particular emphasis will be placed on finalising the draft Regulation on the use of railway infrastructure capacity in the Single European Railway Area, which positions rail as a key enabler of the transition to green transport. Given the role of the railways in crisis situations, the Presidency will emphasise the promotion of investment and action to strengthen the resilience of the railway sector and preserve its strategic role.

In **maritime transport**, the Polish Presidency will continue work on the revision of the Regulation on the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) to enable the agency to provide Member States and the Commission with the necessary technical, operational and scientific assistance to ensure maritime safety and security and the green and digital transformation of the sector.

In the area of **road transport**, the Polish Presidency will carry on work on the



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revision of the Directive on the weights and dimensions of vehicles circulating within the EU. When published, the Presidency will also undertake work on the review of the roadworthiness package. We consider **road safety** to be an extremely important element of EU transport policy and therefore, if the road safety package is not finalised, we will make an effort to complete it. The Presidency will also seek to further strengthen cooperation and the exchange of good practices between Member States in this area.

The Polish Presidency will underline **the importance of the legal framework for passenger rights**. In particular, in the air transport area, the Presidency plans to resume work on the revision of the Regulation on air passenger rights in order to clarify and update the provisions.

The EU has the potential to build a resilient, innovative and sustainable digital ecosystem that benefits citizens and businesses while promoting the EU's essential values. Therefore, in the area of **digital and telecommunications**, the Polish Presidency will strive to further strengthen the resilience of the EU by developing **a comprehensive and horizontal approach to cybersecurity**. The Presidency will work on updating and strengthening the EU's cyber crisis coordination framework (Cyber Blueprint) and on improving synergies between the civilian and military

spheres. The backbone of an efficient cybersecurity system is appropriately qualified professionals, hence the Presidency will hold a discussion on best practices in Member States on investing in cybersecurity. Depending on the proposal of the Commission, the Presidency will provide a space to discuss a new EU cybersecurity strategy.

**Artificial intelligence (AI) and cutting-edge technology** will play a key role in the coming years. It is important to assess their economic and social impact and to support digital transformation and smooth market adaptation to regulatory change. In this context, the Presidency will promote the strengthening of European AI research, development and competence centres across the EU and support EU activities for entrepreneurs implementing disruptive technologies.

In addition, the Presidency will strive to further strengthen the EU's role in digital external relations by, among other things, continuing **the debate on digital diplomacy**. Discussions (also from a global perspective) will focus, among others, on policies for the management of digital space (the Internet), including the management of virtual worlds and the promotion of an open, free and secure Internet.

The Presidency will emphasise the need to maintain the competitiveness and innovation of the EU's digital economy



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by holding a discussion on **regulatory burdens and the efficiency** of the numerous new digital regulations. The Presidency will identify the topics requiring in-depth cooperation to ensure a harmonised approach and the exchange of good practices. International cooperation in this area is also important, particularly with partner and allied countries. **The development of digital services**, both public and private, remains an important issue. The Presidency will strive to reduce the administrative burden on businesses, especially SMEs, especially in terms of notification obligations, promoting the idea of a single point of incident reporting, also in conjunction with notification under GDPR.

The development of new business models, reliance on services and networking are influencing the need to update the regulatory framework for the telecoms market in the EU. Bearing in mind that the basis for the development of the Digital Single Market is an appropriate quality infrastructure and an efficient management system, the Polish Presidency plans to continue work on the **reform of the telecommunications market**, especially in the area of secure and resilient communication, and to strengthen the role of the EU in international forums setting global standards (ITU). The Presidency will also seek to strengthen cooperation between the EU and the ITU. In its activities, the Presidency will emphasise the

importance of protecting users' rights, in particular by ensuring privacy in electronic communications. In addition, the Presidency will be ready to finalise the work on the adoption of Roaming Regulations by some candidate countries and to continue the discussion on a potential revision of the Radio Spectrum Policy Programme.

The provision of **efficient postal and courier services** - in parallel with the development of digitally delivered services - is particularly important for the operation of SMEs, providing them with access to markets. Accordingly, the Polish Presidency intends to hold a discussion on the adequacy of the current legal framework in this area. The Presidency will also coordinate the preparation of an EU position for the World Postal Union (UPU) Congress, where work on UPU reform will continue.

In the area of **energy**, energy security in its broadest sense will be given priority. The Polish Presidency will aim to prepare Council conclusions on updating and strengthening the European energy security strategy. We will propose a broad approach to the definition of energy security, encompassing access to energy at low prices, also for energy intensive industries, that allow to maintain the international competitiveness of EU industry and are socially acceptable, equitable access to new technologies, and climate and





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environmental protection. An important element of the **new energy security architecture** will be strengthening the physical security and cyber resilience of strategic infrastructure and supporting - on an equal basis - the development and deployment of each of the clean energy generation technologies, and securing the supply of critical raw materials. The Polish Presidency will also take stock of the state of implementation of the REPowerEU objectives, including with regard to aiming for a full termination of Russian fossil fuel imports to the EU.

The success of the energy transition will largely depend on the availability of technological and financial solutions that facilitate its implementation. Therefore, the Polish Presidency will promote solutions for **the development of EU technologies to facilitate the transition** and mechanisms, including financial ones, that aim at maintaining European industry competitive on the path to climate neutrality and energy security. The Polish Presidency will initiate a discussion on the energy strands of the Commission's planned Clean Industrial Deal communication. The aim of the discussion will be to make the EU economy more competitive externally through the availability of clean energy and new technologies and a rapid and more internally consistent energy transition. The Polish Presidency will also look at the issue of access to public and private funding for new technologies.

Increasing solidarity with Ukraine and **support for the Ukrainian energy sector** from the European Union and its Member States, in particular during the winter period, will be a primary objective of the Presidency. In the longer term, the Polish Presidency will assist and promote the convergence of Ukrainian energy regulations with EU's legislation.



## Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH)

The work of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council will focus on measures needed to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and increase its resilience to crises.

We recognize that they are essential both to stabilize farmers' incomes and to guarantee food security. We will address the challenges that future EU enlargement, including to Ukraine, will bring to the sector.



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In the area of **agriculture**, the Polish Presidency will hold a policy debate on the **Vision for Agriculture and Food** announced by the Commission. The discussion will, among others, greatly contribute to determining the shape of the **CAP after 2027**. Future CAP solutions will be crucial for **food security** and stabilising farmers' incomes. They must also foster the building and maintenance of a **competitive and resilient European agriculture and the development of rural areas**. They should support the transformation needed to address environmental and climate challenges, including access to water. In the discussions we will highlight the issue of sustainable management of protected species causing damage to agricultural production. The simplification aspect of the future CAP cannot be overlooked. The future enlargement of the EU is also an important element to be included in the discussion. Meeting the ambitious objectives set for agriculture and the CAP requires adequate funding.

The Presidency will also endeavour **to rationalise the achievement of the goals of the European Green Deal** by simplifying the green architecture of the CAP so that it is acceptable to farmers.

The Polish Presidency will hold a discussion on the implementation of the **rural proofing principle** (mechanism for verifying the impact of other policies on rural development), to obtain

recommendations to the Commission for action in the new Multiannual Financial Framework. This discussion will also aim to promote an effective combination of different sources of funding for rural development in order to maintain its vitality, including its resilience to adverse demographic changes.

The Presidency will also emphasise the role of **research, innovation and digitalisation** in increasing the competitiveness of all areas of European agriculture and ensuring food security.

The Presidency will provide space for a regular debate on **the situation on agricultural markets**, with a view to identifying threats to the competitiveness of EU agricultural products and the interventions needed to eliminate market distortions.

The Presidency will hold debates on the state of **affairs in the area of international trade in agricultural products**. The objective to be pursued is an EU trade policy that takes into account strategic and practical interests of European agriculture, promotes its competitiveness vis-à-vis agricultural production from third countries and ensures the safety of food imported into the EU. We will attach particular importance to ensuring a level playing field with agricultural products imported from third countries that do not have equally high standards and requirements in agricultural production as the EU.



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A priority for the Polish Presidency will be to **strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain**. Solutions are needed to reinforce the negotiating power of farmers so that more powerful actors such as retail chains and food processing plants do not impose unfavourable cooperation conditions on them. In this context, the Presidency will be ready to develop the best possible solutions for farmers as part of the Council's work on the legislative proposals for a Regulation on the common organisation of agricultural markets and a Regulation on the enforcement of cross-border market practices. In addition, the Presidency will hold a discussion on the experiences of Member States in eliminating unfair practices in the food supply chain and the implementation of the Directive on unfair business-to-business commercial practices in the agricultural and food supply chain and the need for its revision.

The Polish Presidency will continue to work on the **revision of animal welfare legislation**, in particular on the draft Regulation on the protection of animals during transport with a view to harmonising EU practices and improving law enforcement. In addition, the Presidency will negotiate with the European Parliament on the draft Regulation on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability. Animal welfare rules should be better adapted to the latest scientific and technological

developments, but also should not distort competition and create disparities with regard to the conditions for animal production within and outside the European Union.

The Polish Presidency will also pay attention to maintaining the **competitiveness of the plant breeding sector**. We will continue work on the draft Regulation on new genomic techniques and the draft Regulation on the marketing of plant reproductive material, bearing in mind the challenges of climate change and innovation in agriculture.

The Polish Presidency will take action to ensure the **sustainability and resilience of Europe's forests** by continuing work on the draft Regulation on forest monitoring and the draft Regulation on the production and marketing of forest reproductive material. We will also coordinate the preparation of the EU position for the 20th technical session of the UN Forum on Forests.

In the area of **fisheries**, the Polish Presidency will pay attention to the competitiveness of the EU fleet by guaranteeing its interests in negotiations within regional fisheries management organisations and in EU agreements with third countries. The Presidency will do its utmost to ensure that decisions concerning stocks are made taking into account the best available scientific advice and the socio-economic aspects



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of the fisheries. The Presidency will negotiate amendments to the fishing opportunities for 2025 in the North Sea, Mediterranean and Black Sea and in Atlantic, as well as fishing opportunities for deep-sea stocks. It will also negotiate with the United Kingdom and Norway on stocks for which these matters are being discussed in the first half of the year. In terms of multilateral and bilateral cooperation with coastal third countries and sustainable fisheries partnership agreements, the Presidency will emphasise cooperation with Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands.

The Presidency will also work on the transposition into the EU law of the findings of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the amendment of the Regulation on certain measures for the purpose of the conservation of fish stocks in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing, with a view to strengthening cooperation on sustainable stock management with third countries.

We will also initiate preliminary discussions on the review of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).



## Environment Council (ENVI)

The work of the Environment Council will focus on actions to build the resilience of the environment and societies to climate change.

We will underline the tangible benefits that healthy and stable ecosystems bring to societies. Emphasis will be put on legislation concerning access to resources critical for human functioning, such as water and soil.



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The Polish Presidency will focus on issues of **security in the face of climate change, environmental and societal resilience** and will support EU efforts to prepare a climate adaptation plan for the EU. The natural disasters experienced by the EU, including the recent floods in Europe, highlight the need to develop measures to limit the impact of increasingly frequent dangerous weather events.

The green transition brings a number of challenges, particularly in case of the public's limited knowledge of it and the associated vulnerability to manipulation and disinformation as well as potential lack of public acceptance. Accordingly, the Polish Presidency will promote the pursuit of environmental and climate policy with a particular emphasis on human being and benefits that the transition brings. We will promote **fight against the causes and effects of climate change first and foremost through incentives and support, rather than bans and excessive burdens** that could undermine public support for green transition.

Given that European climate policy has become the target of a systematic disinformation campaign aimed at slowing down the transition and maintaining Europe's dependence on imports of energy carriers from countries that do not share our values, the Polish Presidency will strive to **develop tools to combat disinformation on EU environmental and climate policies**.

With regard to the legislative work already initiated, the Polish Presidency will continue negotiations with the European Parliament on the law on soil monitoring and the revision of the waste framework Directive with regard to food and textiles. Both proposals are important not only from an environmental, but also economic and social point of view. The Polish Presidency also intends to continue negotiations in the Council with regard to the draft Regulation on end-of-life vehicles.

Noting the importance of a clean and safe environment, the Presidency will initiate negotiations with the European Parliament regarding the One Substance - One Assessment package. The Presidency also plans to continue negotiations on a draft Regulation on preventing plastic pellet losses to reduce microplastic pollution.

An informed consumer is an essential part of the green transition. The Polish Presidency envisages to continue negotiations on the draft Directive on substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims (Green Claims). It is a valuable instrument in the fight against greenwashing and its adoption will reduce the negative effects of this phenomenon in the EU.

In the area of water management, the Presidency will focus on the continuation and possible finalisation of legislative work on the draft amendments to the



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Directives on priority substances in water. The Presidency is also awaiting the communication on water resilience.

The Polish Presidency, with a view to continuing international activities promoting the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, will be involved in the elaboration of EU positions for the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions and the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention.

In addition, the Polish Presidency, adhering to the negotiating mandate adopted by the Council in October 2024, will be dealing with the coordination of the EU position for the continuation of the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.





## Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS)

The work of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council will focus on activities for the benefit of young people, including in relation to supporting young artists in starting their professional careers.

We will address the issue of the European identity of young Europeans. Attention will be paid to measures aimed at strengthening the role of sport in the education process.



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In the area of **education** the Polish Presidency will continue efforts to promote cooperation between EU countries in order to build more **resilient and inclusive** education and **training systems** and to ensure access for everyone to high quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning. The Presidency will initiate high-level discussions on the evaluation of the implementation of 1st Cycle of the European Education Area with a view to define prospects for further cooperation and its priorities for 2nd Cycle in 2025-2030. Bearing in mind that it remains a priority in the European Union to respond to the diversity of learners and to ensure access to high quality, inclusive education and training for all learners, the Polish Presidency will work on Council conclusions on practical approaches to ensuring inclusive early childhood and school education.

The Presidency will also provide space to initiate high-level discussions on the shape of programmes in the field of education after 2027, building on the mid-term evaluation of the current Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. The new programmes should respond to the changing needs and expectations of the EU citizens, but also take into account the possibility of participation of citizens from third countries, so that the European Union is seen as an attractive place to learn and study. In the context of increasing the competitiveness and attractiveness of

EU education systems, the Presidency will continue work on the higher education package, in particular on the plan for a joint European diploma, and in the area of vocational education and training on the implementation of the concept of vocational excellence. The Presidency will undertake a discussion on mobility and the future of the European Universities Initiative.

In the area of **youth** the Polish Presidency will strive to **strengthen the European identity among young Europeans** based on the values of the Treaties. A high-level discussion will be initiated on a community of young Europeans based on universal values for a common and secure Europe.

The Presidency will provide a space for high-level discussions on the review of the Council resolution establishing guidelines on the governance of the European Youth Dialogue. We will address the creation of a communication strategy for the EU Youth Dialogue. The implementation of the strategy would have a direct impact on the effectiveness and scope of the dialogue, enabling it to be promoted and undertaken by both youth and youth-oriented decision-makers, partners and co-organisers.

In the context of the legacy of the European Year of Youth 2022, the Polish Presidency will provide a space for high-level discussions on mainstreaming the



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youth perspective into key policies.

In the area of **culture** the Polish Presidency will develop and facilitate work with a view to the approval of Council conclusions on **supporting young creators**, focusing on the status of artists and creators in the creative sectors, commencing their professional career.

We will also initiate a discussion on the future of the Creative Europe Programme after 2027, also in the context of the mid-term review and the future budget, and the directions of EU support for the cultural and creative sectors, for which Creative Europe is the most important source of funding.

In view of the rapidly changing media environment and the need to conduct an in-depth analysis of the functioning of media regulation before the Commission presents legislative proposal, the Polish Presidency will initiate discussion on the need for a revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMS Directive) - we will develop and facilitate work with a view to the approval of Council conclusions on the evaluation of the legal framework for **audiovisual content delivery services**.

In the area of **sport** the Polish Presidency will devote particular attention to activities aimed at **developing a new approach to the**

#### **role of sport in the education process.**

The Presidency will address current challenges to increasing physical activity levels among children and young people and promoting sport as a tool for physical and mental health. Council conclusions on a new approach to the role of sport in education will be presented, emphasising issues such as counteracting the risks that affect children and young people's declining fitness levels and identifying possible actions and cross-sectoral initiatives to promote active lifestyles.

The Presidency will also initiate a debate on the role of athletes in creating sports development strategies, emphasising their key position in a sports system based on transparency and openness.

