



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

The Swedish Presidency of the European Union

The Work Programme

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Major common challenges need to be dealt with both regionally and globally and indeed a unified Europe seeks to tackle these challenges. The European Union is taking responsibility for economy, welfare, environment, security and peace. Thus, the Swedish Presidency will hold the responsibility to meet these challenges and also be prepared to handle the crisis during this six-month period ending in December 2009.

Main challenges which are increasingly shaping our world are related to the economy, employment and climate change. The Swedish Presidency's priorities are mostly focused on these areas.

The EU must emerge from the economic crisis in a stronger position. Since the economic situation remains complex and in difficulty, unemployment tends to increase. In this regard, the Presidency is giving priority to action regarding measures on the labour market that limit unemployment, reduce exclusion and help people return to work. Whilst countering the negative impact of the crisis on growth and employment, the Presidency is seeking to create long-term solutions for sustainable growth, employment and open markets. An active labour market policy for better adjustment and mobility in the EU, more effective matching, increased skills development and more entrepreneurship are deemed as essential in dealing with the job crisis. Better regulation, financial stability and better access to capital are also considered as necessary points when dealing with the business sector particularly when addressing SMEs. Another Presidency objective is to reach an agreement on the form of a new supervisory structure for the financial market which would involve a European body. The Presidency is looking for a good business climate with simple rules. In addition, another key issue is to discuss how Member States can recover in terms of public finances.

With regards to climate change, this is a challenge that requires consensus in Europe and the world as a whole on the long term measures to be taken across all sectors of society. It is therefore important that a new global agreement is put in place since the EU cannot combat climate change on its own. The Presidency's most important objective is to lead the EU, together with other parties, to agree on an international climate agreement at the meeting in Copenhagen where a decision will be taken on new commitments for the period post-2012. With regards to the ambitious climate policy, financing is another issue which has to be addressed and which facilitates the response to the expectations that the developing countries place on the EU. It is this Presidency's ambition that strong political leadership will allow the development of an eco-efficient economy.

On Justice and Home Affairs, the Presidency's challenge is to further develop cooperation in areas where cooperation across national borders provides added value. The Presidency intends to



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

adopt a new strategic work programme for the entire policy area – the so-called Stockholm Programme. The programme is to specify the framework and focus of EU cooperation in 2010–2014 in areas such as police, border and customs issues, legal matters and asylum, migration and visa policy. The Presidency will promote a common asylum system that is characterised by legal certainty and transparency. The EU Global Approach to Migration is an important tool to strengthen the positive link between migration and development, to deepen dialogue and cooperation with countries outside the EU and to counteract irregular immigration without undermining the opportunity to seek asylum.

Another primary objective of this Presidency is the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea, with a cleaner marine environment and a more competitive region. The Presidency also wishes to develop EU macro-regional cooperation. Amongst the challenges being faced in the Baltic are environmental degradation and under-exploitation of the region's growth potential. The EU Presidency will continue to work on bearing the responsibility in strengthening the EU as a global actor and it is expected that it will seek deeper transatlantic dialogue.

Work is also set to continue on the development of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Particular focus will be placed on the implementation of the Eastern Partnership and to work for closer cooperation with neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean region, such as within the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean. Moreover, the Presidency views the continued enlargement process as of strategic importance to ensure peace and progress in an open, united Europe. The Presidency will also seek out to make further progress in the EU integration process of the countries of the Western Balkans.

Finally, the Presidency intends to act so that the Lisbon Treaty, once ratified by all Member States, is launched in a positive spirit.