

The Czech Presidency of the
Council

January – June 2009

Programme and Priorities

EU2009.CZ

The Presidency's basic tenet

For a Europe without barriers

- Internal existing ones must be removed to realise the EU's full potential
- External barriers to international trade must be removed and the global economy must be liberalised, in cooperation with the EU's neighbours and strategic partners

The Presidency's main priority areas

- The Economy
- Energy
- The European Union in the World



The economy

The Czech Presidency is expected to lay emphasis on:

- addressing the financial crisis (is committed to avoid over-regulation and reject protectionism)
- boosting competitiveness, innovation and R&D, education as well as external trade
- seeking the full application of all internal market freedoms
- improving the regulatory environment

Energy

The Czech Presidency's emphasis is on:

- Energy security
- Energy efficiency and low-carbon sources
- An internal electricity and gas market (particularly based in the Strategic Energy Review) which would also facilitate solidarity in times of crisis
- Climate protection, including reaching international consensus to address climate change

The European Union in the World

The Czech Presidency's emphasis is on:

- An Eastern Partnership (in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy)
- The enlargement process in favour of Croatia
- Transatlantic relations
- The Southern region, particularly the Middle East and relations with Israel
- Human rights, development cooperation, rule of law and democracy and conflict resolution in third countries

Other initiatives to expect

- Address the issue of economic long-term sustainability
- Work towards the implementation of the Economic Recovery Plan
- Prepare for a post-2010 Lisbon Strategy
- Focus on combating tax evasion
- Place emphasis on removal of restrictions to free movement for workers
- Emphasis on the transposition of the Services Directive

Other initiatives to expect

- Focus on the implementation of specific measures found in the Small Business Act, promoting the ‘Only Once’ principle for statistical purposes and concerned with the review of the late payments directive.
- Aims to conclude discussions within Council on the ‘Eurovignette’ Directive and the Single European Sky programme.
- Promote the implementation of the Galileo programme

Other initiatives to expect

- Shall support activities aimed at ensuring easy access for all citizens to e-Government
- Seek to finalise the modernisation of legislation on the coordination of migrant workers social security
- Seek a compromise with the EP in a conciliation procedure on the working time directive
- Focus on parental childcare vis-à-vis employment policy and stress on home childcare as a “fully-fledged alternative to a professional career”.

Other initiatives to expect

- Stress on collaboration between educational institutions and employers and regions.
- Actively build on discussions related to the Common Agricultural Policy, strive on the implementation of the so-called CAP 'Health check', and initiate discussion on less-favoured areas
- Promote the use of modern technology for security purposes

Other initiatives to expect

On migration it considers the key issues to be:

- Legal migration and removal of transitional periods for workers
- Combating illegal migration (intends to finalise legislation for sanctions against employers of illegal migrants)
- Building a Common European Asylum System
- Fostering integration and supporting the socio-economic potential
- Effective cooperation with third countries

Other initiatives to expect

- Emphasis on openness, non-discrimination and liberalisation of trade relations with third countries as well as seek to implement the EU's market access strategy
- Focus on modernising the Trade Defence Instruments system that would fully respect the economic interests of EU MS
- Give special importance to negotiations on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement