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Programm der maltesischen EU-Ratspräsidentschaft
1. Januar bis 30. Juni 2017

Sehr geehrter Herr Präsident,

gem. § 9 Absatz 7 des Parlamentsinformationsgesetzes übersende ich Ihnen zur Kenntnis das Programm (bisher ausschließlich in englischer Sprache erschienen) sowie ergänzend die Prioritäten der maltesischen EU-Ratspräsidentschaft (1. Januar – 30. Juni 2017).

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

gez. Anke Spoorendonk

Anlagen



PROGRAMME
OF THE MALTESE PRESIDENCY
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION

(1 January 2017 - 30 June 2017)



MALTA EU2017

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PART I

Introducing the Maltese Presidency Priorities

As Malta takes on the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in January 2017, the EU faces the toughest challenges in its 60-year history. Unprecedented waves of migration from Africa and the Middle East are exerting pressures on Malta's Mediterranean neighbourhood, while the rise of populism across the continent is challenging the political status quo. Economic stagnation in some Member States is adding to rising disenchantment and to a growing disconnect between power elites and ordinary citizens, while the repercussions of the UK's Brexit referendum in June 2016 will be felt for years to come. These are times of great global change.

We are nonetheless ready for the challenge, and we are confident that while Malta may be the smallest nation among the 28 Member States we can provide strong leadership as we further the excellent work of the Netherlands and Slovakia, our Trio Partners. We will of course close off the Trio Programme, based on the Strategic Agenda agreed by the European Council in June 2014, but in doing so we will adopt our own, unique approach to the Presidency that reflects our response to the particular challenges of our time.





► Our Presidency theme – rEUnion

The theme of the Maltese Presidency is rEUnion, a concept that encapsulates everything we want to achieve at this special moment in our country's rich history. At its core, rEUnion means reconnecting the citizens of the EU at individual, corporate and state levels – with each other, with their governments, with the EU and with the world. It's a huge aspiration, and we are not pretending it can be achieved in just six months. What we do know, however, is that we can make a start, and chart a course through the storms of disunity and disaffection blowing across our continent.

rEUnion is not a legislative programme, it is a philosophy and a way of working. It means listening to and working for the people, sharing the burdens and benefits of membership of the EU fairly between people and states and restoring a sense of cooperation and neighbourliness in these increasingly fractious times. It means reconnecting with people – and the recent political earthquakes have shown just how poorly the existing power elites have understood the everyday concerns of ordinary people.

► A focus on people

So we have to put the citizen at the centre, and we have to shift the focus of the EU away from its institutions and back onto the public. We will encourage the EU to listen harder to the concerns of its citizens, to examine what is driving some away from collaboration and towards nationalism, and we will find new ways to restart and re-energise the project.

To do this, we have developed a series of questions that our deeds will need to answer as we make progress on our theme of rEUnion. These questions, or focus areas, will form the pillars of our Presidency.

Firstly, how can we ensure that all of our citizens feel certain that the burdens as well as the benefits of EU membership are fairly and equally shared? For example, why should the costs and disruption of migration from outside the Union fall so heavily on so few member states?

Secondly, how do we make sure that citizens can understand, believe in and get involved in the EU project? How can we help people feel a personal connection, a sense of excitement and a willingness to participate? How do we make them feel that "the EU is there for me"?

Thirdly, how can we make sure that the rights of every citizen are protected, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation, that inequality is reduced and that opportunities in our society are equally available to all? How do we finally smash the glass ceiling?

Fourthly, in an age when power elites are held in contempt by an increasingly disenchanted populace, how can we ensure that trust is regained through mechanisms that ensure that those in power are clearly held accountable to the people for their actions, and that they are not open to corruption?

Finally, how can we make sure not only that the work of the EU results in economic benefit to Member States, but that those benefits are passed on to all its citizens, and not just corporations and their shareholders?



► Ideas into action

So we have developed a number of priorities around which our leadership of the Council of the EU – which sets the policy agenda for much of the work of the Union – will be based.

Migration and asylum represent one of these priorities – and of course Malta is very much in the ‘front line’ here due to its location less than 300km from the coast of Tunisia. Our twin objectives in this area are to push for reform of the Common European Asylum System (including the Dublin Regulation and transformation of the European Asylum Support Office into a fully-fledged agency) in order to share the burden more evenly between Member States, and to ensure that the issue remains at the top of the political agenda. Across the EU, citizens are demanding action and we cannot afford to have a complacent Union that fails to treat this subject with the urgency and importance it deserves.

Following horrific terror attacks in recent years around the world, security is a primary concern to citizens of every nation. We owe it to them to combat this pernicious menace. The Maltese Presidency will work to develop concrete proposals that address regional and global challenges while upholding the values that underpin the very existence of the Union. The EU’s first line of work in this area remains effective diplomacy, and in this respect we will work closely with the External Action Service, under the umbrella of the EU’s Global Strategy, to manage the complex challenges of migration, terrorism, and hybrid threats.

Europe’s security and prosperity are interlinked with that of our neighbourhood. Countries bordering the Southern Mediterranean are facing serious challenges, including armed conflict, terrorism, political instability and radicalisation. Aware of the potential ripple effects of instability beyond Europe’s borders, we will focus EU engagement towards the stabilisation of our neighbourhood, with particular focus on Libya.

We will also be looking to strengthen the EU’s Single Market, the huge free trade area that many regard as the EU’s greatest asset. Our priorities include a final end to mobile phone roaming charges, and tearing down the digital fences that stop some EU citizens from buying goods and services from other EU nations – a practice known as geo-blocking. We are also looking to complete the Internal Energy Market, bringing tangible benefits to our economies, businesses and families.

Our tiny island state has long punched above its weight in building an inclusive society, and Malta will use the Presidency to help women get a fair deal in all areas of society – and not least the labour market – and to ramp up efforts to combat gender-based violence. A Ministerial Conference on issues impacting people of all sexual orientations and gender identities to push ahead more quickly on the European Commission’s existing roadmap will be held in Malta.

And finally, as befits an island nation, we will be looking to the sea, to ensure not only the sustainability of our oceans, but also effective governance to promote growth in areas such as maritime tourism and sea freight.



► Only (re)connect...

The Summit of EU Heads of State or Government, due to be held on 3 February 2017 in Malta following the Bratislava Summit in September 2016, will be an important opportunity for EU leaders to gather momentum towards a new vision of Europe. This will be a timely event coming just ahead of the commemoration of the 60 years since the birth of the EU itself, a celebration that will also take place during our Presidency in March 2017.

Here, as throughout our Presidency, rEUnion will be our theme, and in this document we present in detail the Programme we will follow to deliver success in the priority areas outlined above. The task is momentous, but we will not be daunted. Throughout its history, Malta has never shied away from responsibility in the face of seemingly impossible challenges. We know too well the consequences of disunity and European political disintegration. We will work tirelessly to reconnect the citizens of Europe with the uniquely successful project that is the European Union.







PART II

council configurations

GENERAL AFFAIRS



► **Future of Europe**

The Bratislava Summit marked the beginning of a process which will continue at the informal Summit to be held in Malta in February 2017. Emphasis needs to continue on the delivery of promises and improving communication with the citizens. The March 2017 celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties will bring together Heads of State or Government in Rome and set out orientations for our common future together. The Commission will contribute to this debate by way of a White Paper on the Future of Europe.

► **Better Regulation, Accountability and Transparency**

The Maltese Presidency will continue the work on the implementation of the Inter-Institutional Agreement on Better Lawmaking (IIA) which was signed on 13 April 2016 by the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament. This agreement aims to improve the way the EU legislates to ensure the quality of regulation and to make sure it responds to the needs of society and businesses. The Maltese Presidency will make sure that better law-making remains an ongoing priority for the Council. Following the work undertaken by the Netherlands and the Slovak Presidencies, the Maltese Presidency will continue to develop and implement measures which aim for better quality evidence-based legislation and effective but less burdensome policy-making.

On legislative programming, the Maltese Presidency intends to continue the discussion on the Commission's annual programme by holding an early exchange of views with the Commission on the priorities for the upcoming year on the basis of the IIA on Better Lawmaking. The Maltese Presidency, will also engage in regular monitoring, together with the European Parliament and the Commission on the implementation of the Joint Declaration. The declaration sets out the broad objectives and priorities for 2017 and identifies proposals that deserve preferential treatment in the legislative process.

Apart from the discussions on legislative programming, work will continue on transparency, including the joint database on legislative files and the mandatory Transparency Register, work on delegated and implementing acts, as well as improved practical arrangements for cooperation and information sharing on negotiation and conclusion of international agreements.

► Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

Following the Commission's Proposal for the mid-term review/revision of the 2014-2020 Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) dated 14 September 2016, the Maltese Presidency will follow up on the work carried out during the Slovak Presidency with the aim of concluding negotiations within the Council and obtaining the European Parliament's consent in early 2017. This will enable the 2017-2020 EU annual budgets to better respond to the needs of the European Union, its citizens and beyond, particularly in relation to jobs and growth as well as the migration and security crises, the extent of which could not be foreseen in 2013, when the current MFF had been agreed upon.

In the context of this review, the Maltese Presidency will also strive to make sufficient progress in the negotiations within Council and with the European Parliament on the Commission's Omnibus Proposal for the revision of the Financial Regulation applicable to the EU Budget and 15 funds/programmes' sector-specific legislation. The revision aims at simplifying the budgetary procedures, rendering them more flexible and agile, thereby allowing them to respond to new requirements.

► Cohesion Policy

Work will continue on the implementation of the Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 programmes, both in terms of the deadlines set out within the Cohesion Regulations, as well as implementation of projects on the ground.

The Maltese Presidency will also coincide with the first general debates on the future cohesion policy post-2020.

Under the Maltese Presidency, the expected legislative changes to the Cohesion Policy Regulations as a result of the MFF review are considered a priority, alongside efforts to simplify the overall policy. In this respect, the Maltese Presidency will seek to assess the outcomes of the High-Level Group on Simplification, both of its sixth meeting held in November 2016 which focused on audit and work programme post-2020, and its next meetings in the beginning of 2017 focusing on post-2020.

► Urban Agenda for the European Union

The Maltese Presidency will further the implementation of the Urban Agenda with a mid-term review of the first four partnerships which commenced during the Netherlands Presidency, provide input to the partnerships which were given the green light during the Slovak Presidency, and pave the way for the last four partnerships which are to be initiated during the Maltese Presidency.

► Enlargement

Enlargement plays a key part not only in the shaping of the Union but also in the development and growth of prospective Member States. The policy has been a key contributor in shaping the Union as it is today. This is mainly the result of the various reforms, which are at the core of this extensive process. In keeping with the European Commission's Fundamentals First approach, which prioritises rule of law, economic governance and public administration reform, the intention of the Maltese Presidency is to underline, through a number of initiatives, the importance which rule of law can play in advancing economic development in the candidate and potential candidate countries. The Maltese Presidency considers these elements as key for the successful accession of the enlargement countries. Highlighting this link is even more important with the change in reporting of the enlargement package which will, from 2018 be published in Spring in order to ensure stronger coherence between the package and the Economic Reform Programme process. The Maltese Presidency's objective is to reinforce the link and its spill-over effect in relation to the two other areas at the heart of the enlargement process, namely Rule of Law and public administration reform.

The Maltese Presidency will continue to support the accession process of the Western Balkan region and Turkey. EU engagement ensures that the momentum on key reforms is maintained. The transformative power of the enlargement process cannot be underestimated. We believe it is mutually beneficial.



▶ **Cooperation and Verification Mechanism**

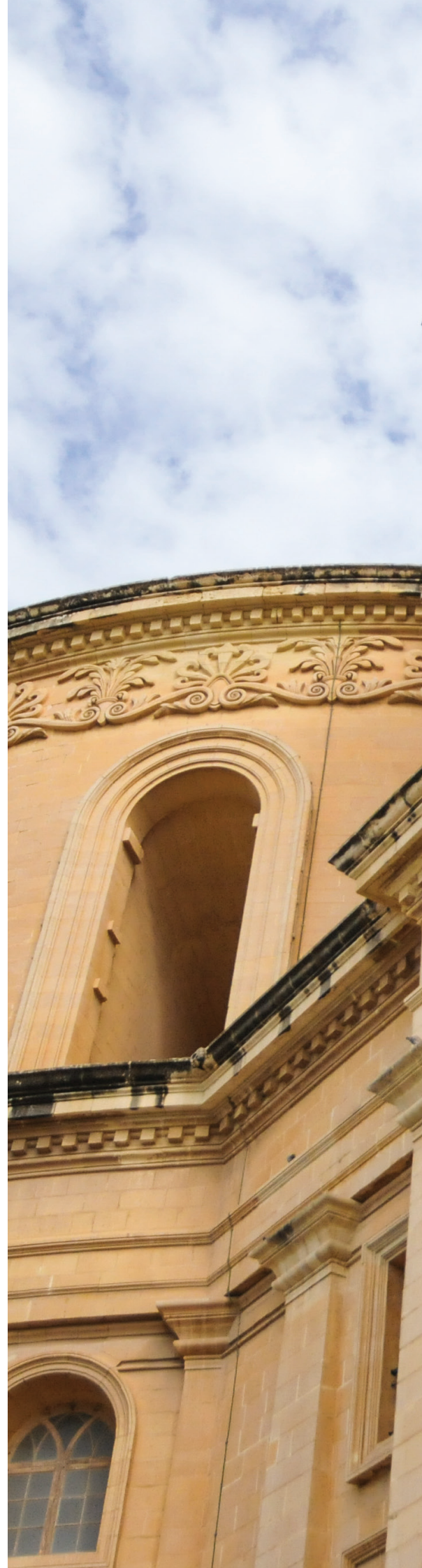
The Maltese Presidency will continue to support Romania and Bulgaria in meeting their objectives as set out by the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism within the fields of justice and the rule of law.

▶ **Reunification of Cyprus**

Recalling the support reiterated by the European Council in December 2016 for the ongoing process for the reunification of Cyprus, the Maltese Presidency will also be closely following the developments in the talks.

▶ **Sustainable Development Goals**

Additionally, the Maltese Presidency will also give due attention to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda that was adopted in New York in September 2015. The Maltese Presidency will work towards attaining an EU vision for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, on the basis of the Commission Communication, adopted in November 2016 on the Next Steps for a sustainable European future, encompassing the economic, social, environmental dimensions of sustainable development, as well as governance, within the EU and globally.





VIRGINI · STUDENTIBVS · RESTITVIT · FRANCIS



FOREIGN AFFAIRS (INCLUDING DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND DEFENCE)



The Maltese Presidency will support the work of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy in chairing the Foreign Affairs Council in two of its configurations and in carrying out the Common Foreign and Security Policy competences bestowed under the Treaty of Lisbon. It will work closely with the European External Action Service under the umbrella of the EU's Global Strategy to manage the complex challenges Europe is facing, especially migration and security. In this regard, the EU Global Strategy will comprehensively guide EU action and determine the Union's role as a relevant international player.

Against the backdrop of an international landscape that has been increasingly marked by instability and insecurity, the Maltese Presidency will contribute to the efforts towards addressing regional and global challenges geared towards enhancing security for Europe's citizens and enhancing the stability of its immediate neighbourhood, while upholding the values that underpin the very existence of the Union. A comprehensive response must be formulated not only from an internal security perspective, but also within a common foreign and security policy. The EU's first line of work remains diplomacy. In a world where the EU is facing an increasing number of challenges (migration, terrorism, hybrid threats), an integrated approach is crucial. The Maltese Presidency will strive to continue the mainstreaming of counterterrorism into the broader EU policies and strategies and ensure synergy between the internal and external aspects.

The EU's response to the turmoil in Libya, Syria and Iraq, as well as the longstanding instability characterising the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa, will define its resolve in implementing actions based on the development-security nexus.

The Mediterranean will be a horizontal focal region of engagement for the Maltese Presidency given the reigning instability resulting from ongoing conflict, socio-economic challenges, terrorism, radicalisation and human rights violation. One of the main consequences of this instability has been the ongoing migration challenge which will be a key priority of the Maltese Presidency.

Addressing the External Dimension of Migration will require the continued resolve of the EU and Member States to maintain a comprehensive approach deploying the full range of the EU's policies and instruments. The implementation of the new Partnership Framework with third countries will be further pursued as tasked by the European Council in December 2016, as well as actively contribute to the ongoing negotiations of the Global Compacts in the follow-up to the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.

The Maltese Presidency will also host the Joint Valletta Action Plan: Senior Officials' Meeting in Malta in February 2017 in order to take stock of the implementation of the Action Plan that was launched during the 2015 Valletta Summit on Migration as well as to plot timeframes for future work. The Maltese Presidency will also take forward the work on the Compacts.



▶ European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

The situation in Europe's neighbourhood has rarely been as fluid, or as challenging, as it is today. Nevertheless, this presents the EU and its partners in the region with opportunities to address common threats and challenges through a comprehensive approach within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The Maltese Presidency will support the High Representative and the Commission in their efforts to further consolidate and develop the ENP along the lines of the revision conducted in 2015 and in a spirit of consultation with Partners.

▶ Southern Neighbourhood

The Maltese Presidency will devote particular attention to the EU's Southern Neighbourhood, where the stabilisation of Libya through a peaceful transition, will be a key priority. Similar commitment will be shown to ensure that the democratic transition in Tunisia remains on track and in this regard, during the Presidency, Malta will be at the forefront to support Tunisia in its endeavours towards stability.

Countries bordering the Southern Mediterranean shores are facing serious challenges ranging from conflict through terrorism, to extremism and radicalisation. Europe's external policy has to counter these threats to peace in the region, particularly in Libya and Syria. The fostering of enhanced synergies between regional mechanisms such as the 5+5 and the Union for the Mediterranean, and the Anna Lindh Foundation will contribute to this process.

The considerable security challenges in the wider Middle East will remain a priority. The Maltese Presidency attaches particular importance to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and will support all efforts towards the relaunching of a meaningful political process that will break the current deadlock.

In the same vein, the Maltese Presidency will encourage the deepening and widening of relations with the League of Arab States building on increased engagement in a range of mutually important issues such as crisis management, counter-terrorism and migration. Malta will seek to revitalise

relations both through the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and its Member States, which would serve as another opportunity for stepping up multi-level cooperation of the EU's relations with the GCC.

The Maltese Presidency will also be committed to support the development of EU-Iran relations through the EU's policy of gradual engagement that is comprehensive in scope, cooperative where there is mutual interest and critical and constructive in practice.

In line with the above, during its Presidency, Malta intends to hold an event that brings together Foreign Ministers from the EU, the Southern Neighbourhood and the Gulf Cooperation Council. It is our intention to provide an ideal forum for a constructive discussion on issues of common interest such as culture, education, youth and interfaith dialogue in a more intimate and relaxed environment. The format of this meeting would be that of an informal retreat to make sure that there is a dynamic and open exchange of ideas among all sides. No conclusions will be adopted after this meeting and no resolutions will be tabled.

▶ Eastern Neighbourhood

The Eastern Neighbourhood will also be a priority as a specific dimension of the European Neighbourhood policy. The Maltese Presidency will endeavour to support discussions in the run up to the Eastern Partnership Summit, which is to be held in November 2017 in Brussels under the Estonian Presidency. This will provide the opportunity to evaluate the status of the Partnership and consider how it can be consolidated while responding to the individual priorities of the partner countries.

Support will be given to the EU's efforts to resolve the ongoing conflicts in the Eastern Neighbourhood, including the situation in Ukraine, and to ensure commitment to strengthening of democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as principles and norms of international law. During its Presidency, Malta will work hard to maintain engagement with Russia to ensure cooperation on issues of global and regional concern and common interest.



▶ Africa

The Maltese Presidency values the importance of the EU's strategic partnership with Africa. In this context, the Maltese Presidency will support preparations for the 5th EU-Africa Summit which will take place in November 2017 in Abidjan, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. The Summit will present an excellent opportunity to further strengthen our partnership to address common challenges and opportunities. It will serve to build upon the continuing dialogue on peace and security, development, creating a better future for Africa's youth, migration and the fight against terrorism.

▶ Latin America and the Caribbean

The Maltese Presidency will follow up on the discussions held in the EU-CELAC Foreign Ministerial Meeting of October 2016 and will support preparations for the EU-CELAC Summit taking place in 2017 in El Salvador.

▶ EU and Turkey

Turkey remains a key strategic partner for the European Union and plays an important role in maintaining peace and stability within the region.

The entire international community, and the EU, need a stable and unified Turkey to address together the many crises and common threats in the region. Turkey's contribution towards reducing irregular flows of migrants and addressing the crisis, as a result to the EU-Turkey Statement, also cannot be underestimated. Within this context the Maltese Presidency will be monitoring developments closely with a view to ensuring continued implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement. It will also do its utmost to ensure that the EU maintains constructive engagement and clear communication with Turkey.

► Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) remains a key element of the EU's comprehensive approach towards ensuring peace and stability in Europe's immediate neighbourhood and beyond. The new Global Strategy provides an opportunity for the EU to rethink and fine-tune its approaches to conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict peace building and reconstruction. During its tenure, the Maltese Presidency will continue to support the High Representative's work in the implementation of the EU Global Strategy within the various work strands, with the first High Representative's Implementation Report expected in June 2017. The Maltese Presidency will similarly support efforts to address the increasing links between the internal and external security dimensions of the EU, migration, and the EU's responses to the instability in its immediate neighbourhood to the South and East. CSDP missions and operations should be an integral part of preventive engagement and crises response and should be activated in a timely and effective manner, since the EU has the ability and responsibility to deliver security.

The Maltese Presidency will highlight the importance of strengthening the security-development nexus. The implementation of Capacity Building for Security and Development (CBSD) will be a key element to enable partners to prevent and manage crises. The Maltese Presidency looks forward to facilitating discussions with the European Parliament towards the adoption of the relevant CBSD proposal during the first half of 2017.

► Development and Humanitarian Aid

Given the universality, the implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development across EU policies will be one of Malta's priorities during the Presidency. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring coherence

between the internal and external policies as a follow-up to the overarching Commission Communication on the Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future.

Bringing about a new European Consensus for Development will be a main priority of the Maltese Presidency in the area of development policy to provide a new shared vision of how the EU institutions and Member States will work together to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The EU Global Strategy, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Declaration and the COP 21 Paris Agreement need to be reflected in the new European Consensus on Development to maintain its relevance, thereby equipping the EU to respond efficiently and effectively to current and future development challenges.

Focusing on the Migration and Development nexus will be pivotal to achieve a comprehensive and balanced approach that addresses the root causes of migration and forced displacement.

The new European External Investment Plan (EIP) will provide a coherent overall framework to improve investment in Africa and the Neighbourhood, in order to promote sustainable investment and tackle the root causes of migration. The Maltese Presidency will aim to have all work on the plan completed in time for its launch by the end of June 2017.

Furthermore, preparations for the formal negotiations on future relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) will be undertaken during the Maltese Presidency.

The Maltese Presidency will work to uphold the fundamental principles of Humanitarian aid: neutrality, impartiality, humanity, and independence, while advocating a strong needs-based approach. Malta will seek to ensure the promotion of better coordination between humanitarian aid and development cooperation, also in the context of the current crises in the European neighbourhood. Indeed, humanitarian aid will be a core element of the EU's comprehensive approach addressing the multi-faceted challenges of migration, particularly related to the issue of displaced persons.



► Trade

International trade will be a key policy area during the Maltese Presidency in view of the importance it has for the EU's economy, jobs and global competitiveness. In this regard, the Presidency will maintain momentum with respect to the current EU trade agenda, with the objective of making progress in multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral discussions, working on new mandates and advancing on legislative proposals to achieve balanced and mutually beneficial outcomes.

The Maltese Presidency will give due importance to the multilateral dimension of international trade, enabling constructive discussions within Council to progress on defining the EU's position in view of the WTO Ministerial Conference (MC11) scheduled for December 2017. On the plurilateral front, the Maltese Presidency will keep up Council's engagement on the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) and the Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA).

Recognising the importance of bilateral trade for jobs and economic growth, the Maltese Presidency will keep up the momentum on a number of ongoing negotiations. While substantial progress can be achieved with Japan, the Maltese Presidency will also follow the developments of negotiations with Tunisia, Mercosur, Mexico and ASEAN countries amongst others. The status of transatlantic trade relations will also be under consideration during the first half of 2017.

The Presidency will also work on the mandates for negotiations with Turkey in terms of the modernisation and upgrade of the customs union, Australia, New Zealand and Chile subject to the timing of their presentation. If the time is right, working towards the signing of concluded trade negotiations, especially the EU-Singapore and EU-Vietnam trade agreements, could also be envisaged. The Maltese Presidency will also work to substantially progress on the EU-China Investment Agreement.

A special focus of the Maltese Presidency will be on the reform of the Trade Defence Instruments (TDI), including their modernisation, and a new anti-dumping methodology in the light of the evolving WTO context. The Maltese Presidency will furthermore continue discussing draft legislation on Dual-Use Items and the International Procurement Instrument (IPI), as well as the implementation of the Conflict Minerals regulation.

Following the CETA process and the likelihood that the Court will declare its Opinion on the signature of the EU-Singapore FTA, the Maltese Presidency will seek to bring the Commission and Council together to discuss in a constructive and responsible manner, ways to address the issues raised.



ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS



▶ EU Budget

The Maltese Presidency will ensure that the discharge procedures for the 2015 Budget, the implementation of the 2017 Budget and the preparatory work for the 2018 Budget are all steered as smoothly as possible. On the revenue side of the EU Budget, the Maltese Presidency will follow up the report of the High Level Group on Own Resources.

▶ Economic Governance

The Maltese Presidency will carry forward the cycle of economic policy coordination in line with the revamped European Semester. The Maltese Presidency also intends to achieve a political agreement on the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) Regulation. This Programme will allow Member States to request tailor-made assistance to support them in the design and implementation of institutional, administrative and structural reforms, and in this context, also help them make efficient use of Union funds.

The Five Presidents' Report on "Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union" was published on 22 June 2015 and was followed by the Commission's proposals relating to Stage I of the vision outlined in the Report. The Commission is expected to present a White Paper on the Future of Europe outlining the Stage II in March 2017. The Paper will provide the basis for discussions on the future architecture of the Economic and Monetary Union during the Maltese Presidency.

▶ Financial Services and Banking Union

Considering that Malta is a respected financial services centre, the Maltese Presidency will continue to push forward the discussions on the Action Plan on Building a Capital Markets Union. In particular, the Maltese Presidency will aim to finalise discussions with the European Parliament on the common rules on securitisation and creating a European framework for simple, transparent and standardised Securitisation.

With regard to venture capital, the Maltese Presidency will organise meetings with the European Parliament to negotiate the revision of the European Venture Capital (EuVECA) and European Social Entrepreneurship Funds (EuSEF) legislation on the basis of the Commission proposal. The aim is to improve the existing Regulation by addressing issues with investment policy, widening limits on investment and on who can set up these funds. The Maltese Presidency will aim to reach a political agreement during the Presidency.

Apart from the adoption of legislative proposals, the Maltese Presidency aims to take forward the remaining elements of the Capital Markets Union agenda, in particular the relevant policy initiatives within the narrative of growth and jobs. SMEs play a vital role in Member States' economies, so promoting access to finance to SMEs is crucial. The Maltese Presidency will continue to push forward initiatives that enable the



development of a wider range of funding sources which are better connected to the needs of SMEs across the Union.

The Maltese Presidency also aims to make progress on the legislative proposals on banking issued in November amending the Capital Requirements Directive (CRDIV), Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR), Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD) and Single Resolution Mechanism Regulation (SRMR), which include the EU's implementation of international standards.

It will also continue the work on the legislative proposal on Central Counterparties (CCPs).

The Maltese Presidency will also initiate work on the review of the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR) which will be issued in the first quarter of 2017.

The Maltese Presidency acknowledges that a European Deposit Insurance Scheme (EDIS), which constitutes the third pillar of the Banking Union, is an important step in Member States' commitments towards completing the Banking Union. In this respect, the Maltese Presidency will continue constructive work at technical level on EDIS while aiming to progress on the risk reduction measures in the banking proposals.

► Taxation

The Maltese Presidency will also carry forward work on a number of ongoing taxation files, most notably the direct tax and indirect tax packages of Autumn 2016. Key dossiers within these packages include: the amendment to the Anti-Tax Avoidance Directive; an initiative on dispute resolution mechanism; the re-launch of the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base; the e-commerce proposals; and the reduced rates on e-publications proposals, in the area of indirect taxation.

► Anti-Fraud

The Maltese Presidency will invite OLAF and the Supervisory Committee of OLAF to present the respective annual activity reports at the Council Working Party on Combating Fraud. The Maltese Presidency will also represent the Council in the technical preparatory meetings which the European Commission will be organising in relation to the 2017 Inter-Institutional Exchange of Views.

► Anti-Money Laundering

The Maltese Presidency will seek to conclude the negotiations on the proposal amending the 4th Anti-Money Laundering Directive, which is meant to complement the existing preventive legal framework in place in the Union, by setting out additional measures to better counter the financing of terrorism and to ensure increased transparency of financial transactions and legal entities.

The Maltese Presidency is committed to achieving rapid progress and aims to reach a political agreement during its tenure.

► Investment

Growth and jobs remain an overarching priority for all EU Member States and for the EU as a whole. The vision that EU policies should contribute to bringing the European economy back up to speed and mobilising private sector financing in Europe is strongly shared by the Maltese Presidency.

As a matter of fact, the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) 2.0 and the EIB External Lending Mandate are priority files that will be worked on together with the European Parliament during the Maltese Presidency and all efforts will be made to ensure a political agreement.





JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS



► Justice

In line with the recently adopted Commission Action Plan for Strengthening the Fight Against Terrorist Financing, the Maltese Presidency will take forward discussions on the proposed Directive to introduce minimum rules regarding the definition of the criminal offence of money laundering and to approximate different sanctions in Member States. Moreover, the Maltese Presidency will tackle discussions on the legislative initiative aimed at the strengthening of mutual recognition of criminal assets' freezing and confiscation orders (Terrorist Financing Package). The Maltese Presidency will initiate and aim to finalise negotiations on the proposed Council Decision on the conclusion, on behalf the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism and its Additional Protocol. Depending upon the date of issuance of the relevant proposal, the Maltese Presidency will also take forward discussions on the Proposal on the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS) to cover third country nationals.

Negotiations will also continue on the revision of the current Eurojust Decision as well as on the proposal dealing with the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO Regulation). Work with regard to electronic evidence will also proceed.

The Maltese Presidency will further discussions on the proposal for a Directive on certain aspects concerning contracts for the supply of digital content, and initiate discussions on the Proposal for a Directive on certain aspects concerning contracts for the online and other distance sales of goods, as well as on the proposal revising the "Brussels II A" Regulation on jurisdiction, enforcement of decisions in

matrimonial matters and matters of parental responsibility, and on international child abduction. Furthermore, it will also initiate the discussions on the Proposal for a Directive on preventive restructuring frameworks, second chance and measures to increase the efficiency of restructuring, insolvency and discharge procedures (Insolvency Law), which aims at providing tools which would allow viable businesses in distress to be rescued and honest entrepreneurs to be given a second chance.

The Maltese Presidency will endeavour to proceed as far as possible on the discussion regarding the revision of Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies. Malta will continue to give prominence to combating gender-based violence, in particular by promoting the sharing of best practices, and to exchange information on existing legislation, policies and strategies, as well as statistical data and studies on Violence against Women. Attention will also be devoted to finalising the Commission proposals for Council Decisions on the signing on behalf of the European Union, and conclusion, by the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence ('Istanbul Convention').

► Home Affairs

An area of freedom, security and justice within the European Union requires truly common European action in these sectors, particularly in relation to the challenges posed by migration and in relation to terrorism threats. The Maltese Presidency will aim to take forward this European approach.





► Migration and Asylum

Illegal immigration and asylum will be high on the agenda during the Maltese Presidency, which will endeavour to proceed with the implementation of the European Agenda on Migration presented in May 2015 and the associated packages of measures presented by the Commission.

The Maltese Presidency will take forward, as a matter of priority, the work on the proposals revising the Common European Asylum System with the aim of achieving consensus on the EU's asylum policy in line with the December European Council conclusions. Particular focus will be placed on the measures aimed at the effective application of the principles of solidarity and responsibility and the Dublin Regulation, the proposal on the establishment of the European Agency for Asylum and the EURODAC Proposal. It will also take forward negotiations on the proposals present in the second legislative package on asylum¹. The continued implementation of the Council Decisions for the relocation of persons in need of international protection will also be an important element as the end of the two-year period for the implementation of these Decisions (September 2017) draws nearer.

At the same time, efforts will continue in the field of legal migration, so as to ensure that Europe has the necessary conditions to attract workers with the skills it needs. With

this objective in mind, the Presidency will take forward the legislative negotiations on the revision of the Blue Card Directive.

The Maltese Presidency will give due importance to the external dimension of immigration and asylum within the framework of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility. As mentioned above, further to the European Council conclusions of June and December 2016, the Maltese Presidency will follow up on the new Partnership Framework with third countries in order to save lives in the Mediterranean, increase the rate of returns to countries of origin and transit and enable migrants to stay close to home and avoid making dangerous journeys.

A Senior Officials Meeting will also be held in Malta in February 2017 to follow up on the 2015 Valletta Summit on Migration. The Maltese Presidency will also take forward discussions on the Global Compacts on Migration and on Refugees following the outcome of the UN Summit in September 2016. In the area of Visas, the Maltese Presidency will follow up on the work of the Slovak Presidency, where agreement was reached on the Visa Suspension Mechanism. In this regard, the Maltese Presidency will seek to achieve progress on visa liberalisation, particularly with Ukraine. A way forward on the recast of the Visa Code will also be sought. Furthermore, the Maltese Presidency will maintain the same momentum on further Visa Facilitation Agreements particularly with China.

¹ Consisting of (i) the revision of the current Reception Conditions Directive, (ii) the Proposal for a Qualification Regulation to replace the current Qualification Directive, (iii) the Proposal for an Asylum Procedure Regulation replacing the existing Directive, and (iv) the EU Resettlement Framework Proposal



▶ External Border Management

External border management remains a key issue in ensuring security while also maintaining smooth border crossings. In view of this, the Maltese Presidency will aim to register significant progress with regard to Smart Borders, namely the conclusion of negotiations on the proposals relating to the Entry/Exit System and will take forward negotiations on the establishment of a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS).

▶ Internal Security and Terrorism

Given the current security situation, the implementation of the Agenda for Security 2015-2020 and the Renewed Internal Security Strategy is of key importance. The Maltese Presidency intends to take forward the discussion on the fight against terrorism and serious and organised crime. On the latter, the Maltese Presidency aims to steer the conclusion of the current Policy Cycle (2013-2017) and advance plans for the next Policy Cycle. Also, in line with the Commission Action Plan for Strengthening the Fight Against Terrorist Financing, the Maltese Presidency will take forward discussions on the proposed legislative instrument on combating fraud and counterfeiting on non-cash means of payment. Moreover, this Presidency will also take forward the legislative negotiations relating to the Schengen Information System (SIS II).

The Maltese Presidency will also ensure follow-up on the Roadmap to enhance information exchange and information

management including interoperability solutions in the Justice and Home Affairs area, for instance by following up on the work of the High Level Expert Group on Information Systems and Interoperability.

▶ Other Issues

The Maltese Presidency will continue to work towards the implementation of the EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020. It will take forward the preparations of the Action Plan for the period 2017-2020², following the external mid-term assessment of the EU Drugs Strategy in 2016. The Maltese Presidency will also strive towards the finalisation of the New Psychoactive Substances legislation and the proposal amending the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). It will also co-ordinate the process following the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS 2016) and the preparations for the 2019 review of the 2009 Political Declaration.

The Maltese Presidency will also take work forward in the newly formed Cyber Issues Horizontal Working Party, with meetings taking place at both Attaché and Capital levels. Special attention will be given to increasing Cyber Security Awareness, emphasising dialogues on the potential impacts incurred by SMEs and citizens when connected to Cyber Space, highlighting the importance of Cyber Hygiene. The Presidency will also include discussions on the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox scheduled for presentation by the European External Action Service in February 2017.

² The current Action Plan is for 2013-2016.



► Employment and Social Policy

The main theme of the Maltese Presidency in the field of Employment and Social Policy will be Making Work Pay. To this end, Malta will prepare draft Council conclusions with the aim of promoting initiatives aimed at incentivising those in unemployment to enter the labour market. Consequently, this will help attract individuals back into employment, preventing labour inactivity and thus minimising the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The Maltese Presidency will place considerable importance on the labour mobility package, and will strive to facilitate the negotiations regarding the targeted revision of the Posting of Workers Directive, for which discussions have been held under both the Netherlands and the Slovak Presidencies. The Presidency will strive to guarantee that workers across the Union can enjoy a level playing field, while safeguarding the competitiveness of service providers, therefore working towards achieving a free and fair internal market.

In addition to this, the Maltese Presidency will initiate the discussions on the revision of Regulation 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems.

The Maltese Presidency will also seek to continue the work related to the protection of workers against work-related cancer through the negotiations on the revision of the Carcinogens Directive. The Maltese Presidency will enter into discussions with the European Parliament and the European Commission, on the first batch of carcinogens

on which a General Approach was reached in October 2016, and will also facilitate the discussions on the proposal for a second batch of carcinogens to be adopted by the European Commission, with the aim to reach a General Approach.

The Maltese Presidency will also seek progress in the negotiations with the European Parliament on the revision of the Founding Regulations of the three tripartite agencies (European Agency for Health and Safety at work (EU-OSHA), European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND) and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)).

Equal treatment will be one of the main objectives of the Maltese Presidency in the field of employment and social policy. With the objective of addressing the lower participation of women in the labour market, the Maltese Presidency will support discussions on measures aiming to eliminate current challenges hindering women's economic independence. The Maltese Presidency will be discussing draft Council conclusions on the Upscaling of Skills of Women and Men in the EU Labour Market. Furthermore, the Maltese Presidency will undertake to progress the discussions on outstanding files related to equal treatment, particularly on the proposal for a Directive on improving gender balance among directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures, as well as on the proposed Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, which



would prohibit discrimination on such grounds (Anti-Discrimination Directive). The Maltese Presidency will also facilitate the coordination of an EU position and presence at the UN Commission on the Status of Women. A Ministerial Level Conference on LGBTIQ issues will also be held in order to further explore the Commission's roadmap on LGBTIQ rights, which was presented during the Netherlands Presidency. The Presidency will also strive to take forward the discussions on the European Accessibility Act.

Further to the outcome of the public consultation launched by the Commission in 2016 with regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Maltese Presidency will initiate the discussions in Council on this dossier that will cover initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families, access to social protection, as well as the implementation of the Working Time Directive, among others.

The Maltese Presidency will also ensure that the EPSCO Council will, together with the other relevant Council formations, take forward the European Semester process.

► Health

In the field of Health, the Maltese Presidency will build on the EU momentum in tackling the increasing incidence of childhood obesity which has reached epidemic proportions across the globe. The negative impacts that childhood obesity bears on health, productivity, quality of life,

longevity and the significant related social and economic costs are well known. The Maltese Presidency has, therefore, identified the fight against childhood obesity as one of the most pressing priorities.

► Non-Communicable diseases

To this effect the Maltese Presidency will build on the work being done at EU level in collaboration with key technical experts across Member States to further the work done in this area. The Maltese Presidency will work to identify evidence-based interventions across Europe in tackling childhood obesity and disseminate such as good practice. Furthermore, the Maltese Presidency, together with the European Commission, will look into the findings of the mid-term evaluation report (2014-2020) on the EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity and identify key areas that call for further actions. Following this, the Maltese Presidency will present draft Council conclusions for negotiation, with the aim to determine actions in order to achieve the overarching goal, that is, to halt the rise in overweight and obesity in children and young people (0-18 years) by 2020.

Public entities are amongst the largest procurers which have the power to influence eating behaviours. Having this in mind, the Maltese Presidency, together with the High Level Group on nutrition and physical activity and the Joint Research Council, are drafting voluntary guidelines for the procurement of healthy food for consumption in schools. The ultimate aim of this exercise is to encourage healthy eating behaviours at an early stage in life.





▶ Structured Cooperation between Health Systems

The Health Systems of Member States face common challenges which can be mitigated when Member States work together in synergy. The Maltese Presidency will work to identify mechanisms of voluntary structured cooperation between health systems driven by Member States, to further support Member States and provide tangible benefits for health professionals and patients. The two areas which have been identified are: structured cooperation to improve access to innovative health technologies for Rare Diseases in the EU and cooperation to address the EU health workforce challenges, with a focus on that associated with the provision of highly specialised health services. These initiatives would need to be backed by appropriate cross-border IT infrastructure that facilitates the secure and efficient exchange of personal health data and other health-related information between authorised healthcare providers.

“Data for Health” - The key to personalised sustainable care is the central theme underpinning the eHealth Week 2017 organised by the Maltese Presidency together with the European Commission, the World Health Organisation and HIMSS Europe. eHealth Week 2017 will gather stakeholders from across the globe to address international topics related to healthcare IT, including cross-border exchange of personal health data and European Reference Networks.

European trends showing an upsurge in levels of HIV call for immediate fast track concerted public health action at EU level. The Maltese Presidency, in collaboration with the European Commission and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), will bring together leading experts on HIV prevention and control to discuss how Europe can improve its response to HIV and achieve the targets outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals, the actions agreed at the UN High-Level meeting on HIV/AIDS and those adopted in the Global Health Sector Strategy at the 69th World Health Assembly.



COMPETITIVENESS



▶ Internal Market

Boosting the Digital Single Market and removing barriers in the Single Market are essential means for driving economic growth across the Union. As the smallest EU Member State with an open services economy, Malta remains a strong advocate for the internal market, and will work as a Presidency to strengthen it for the benefit of European businesses, particularly SMEs, as well as consumers. The Maltese Presidency is committed to making progress on the legislative dossiers issued under the Digital Single Market strategy, presented in May 2015 and the Single Market strategy on goods and services presented on 28 October 2015. In the context of the Digital Single Market strategy, the Maltese Presidency will give priority to the e-commerce package and take forward discussions on the proposed Regulation on cross-border portability of online content services in the internal market. The Maltese Presidency will also take forward discussions on the copyright reform.

Furthermore, the Maltese Presidency intends to build on the work done by the Slovak Presidency on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws, with the aim to reach a General Approach.

The Maltese Presidency also welcomes the Commission's plans, in the framework of the Single Market strategy, to issue its Services Package. It will seek to take forward the debate on the legislative initiatives under this package while it will initiate discussions on the upgrading of SOLVIT and the Single Market Information Tool which are part of the Enforcement Package together with the Single Digital Gateway.

The Maltese Presidency will continue to promote the Better Regulation Agenda and will focus on the reinforcement of existing tools, including simplification tools and initiatives such as the Regulatory Fitness and Performance (REFIT) Programme, the REFIT Platform, the REFIT Scoreboard and Quantification of impacts on competitiveness.

Evaluation and impact assessments of Single Market legislation with a sharper focus on SMEs, competitiveness and the digital dimension will be the priorities for the Maltese Presidency in this regard. Furthermore, the Maltese Presidency intends to adopt a practical approach by linking Better Regulation to improving Europe's industrial competitiveness through the exchange of best practices and experiences between Member States.

▶ Industrial Competitiveness and Small and Medium Sized Enterprise Policy

European businesses continue to face a number of challenges. Competitive pressure and access to finance for SMEs, are amongst the challenges encountered. Financial support for SMEs and fostering the Union's international competitiveness are, therefore, core priorities for the Maltese Presidency. It will endeavour to further build on the work carried out by its Trio partners on the Digitisation of Industry, logistics, and improving the overall investment and ecosystem for SMEs. The Maltese Presidency will also be working on the Commission Communication on the Start-up and Scale Up initiative and relating this to the non-legislative areas of the Capital Markets Union Action Plan.





▶ Company Law

The Maltese Presidency intends to build on the work carried out by the Netherlands and Slovak Presidencies continuing the work on the Country By Country Reporting dossier. It is our intention to keep contact with both the Commission and the European Parliament pending the EP's report on the Commission proposal. The Presidency will continue the work started by the Slovak Presidency with regard to the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a Union programme to support specific activities in the field of financial reporting and auditing for the period of 2014-2020 - prolongation for European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG) 2017-20. Our objective is to find an agreement with the European Parliament in a timely manner, in order to allow for the continuity of financing of EFRAG which is the basis for continuity of its operations.

▶ Tourism

Tourism is a major contributor to the European economy. The Maltese Presidency will encourage discussions on how to maintain and strengthen the EU's market share and increase competitiveness in this sector through the improvement of the overall European tourism product in a sustainable manner. The Maltese Presidency also believes that the completion of the Digital Single Market can serve as an opportunity for the European Tourism industry to tap into new global markets while increasing intra-EU tourism. A high level conference which will bring together policy makers and stakeholders to discuss these issues will be organised during the Maltese Presidency.

▶ Research and Innovation

Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in Research and Innovation, primarily through the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) will be a priority during the Maltese Presidency. Malta's role will be that of ensuring progress on the legislative deliberations on the PRIMA initiative.

The Maltese Presidency also intends to focus on streamlining the research and innovation monitoring and reporting landscape, the aim of which would be to identify areas where monitoring and reporting burdens in the European Research Area (ERA) could be reduced.

Negotiations on a revised financial framework for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) are also expected to occupy a prominent place during the Maltese Presidency. Preparatory work on the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020 may also be undertaken, when necessary and appropriate, and respecting the Commission's envisaged timeframes on the interim review exercise.

▶ Space

The Space Strategy for Europe will be the primary focus of discussions within the Space Working Party in the first half of 2017. The Maltese Presidency will aim to reach an agreement on a set of Council conclusions in reaction to the Strategy. Other space-related dossiers may be included in the Presidency's agenda, depending on the timing and pace of the Commission's work in this respect.







TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY



► Strategy for a European Energy Union

The objective of a resilient Energy Union with an ambitious climate policy aimed at giving EU consumers secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy will steer the work of the Maltese Presidency. Work will focus on the Commission's legislative proposals underpinning the Energy Union Strategy and its mutually reinforcing dimensions: supply, security, a fully internal energy market, energy efficiency, decarbonisation of the economy, research, innovation and competitiveness. The Maltese Presidency intends to build on the work done by the Netherlands and Slovak Presidencies.

A key element during the Maltese Presidency semester will be to commence and advance discussions on the Energy Efficiency proposals with the intention of reaching a general approach. The proposals will consist of the review of the Energy Efficiency Directive and the review of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, as a first step towards the ambitious goal of achieving a low-carbon, competitive and sustainable EU economy.

The Maltese Presidency will also endeavour to reach a political agreement with the European Parliament on the review of the Regulation on Security of Gas supply. The Presidency believes that this Regulation is a key element in ensuring a strengthened security of energy supply for all EU citizens particularly in times of crisis. In addition, the Maltese Presidency will also seek to initiate discussions on the remaining proposals of the 'Clean Energy for all Europeans Package' published by the European Commission on 30 November 2016. In addition, the Maltese Presidency will also work towards reaching a political agreement with the European Parliament on the Energy Efficiency labelling proposal.

► Euro-Med Cooperation on Energy

Regional cooperation is encouraged across all five dimensions of the Energy Union and the engagement of Member States together with other actors in regional initiatives. This is a clear acknowledgement of the importance of a regional dimension to energy policy, especially in view of the Commission's non-binding guidance on horizontal elements of regional cooperation, such as the organisational structure and regional processes.

In its endeavour to strengthen and further the work on regional cooperation, the Maltese Presidency will strive to highlight the enriching potential of the Mediterranean region as a source of energy diversification. The opportunities for Euro-Med cooperation will also be the subject of the High Level Ministerial meeting scheduled to be held in Malta in May 2017, whereby EU Member States and Euro-Med countries will be able to build on the best practices of existing regional cooperation.

► Integrated Maritime Policy

The EU is, and will increasingly be dependent on the seas and oceans. It has therefore adopted a holistic approach to all marine and maritime issues through the EU Integrated Maritime Policy. In addition, the maritime sector provides a diverse spectrum of innovative research activities that could be tapped into and developed into high value-added job opportunities, in line with the Blue Growth Initiative towards growth and competitiveness. The Integrated Maritime Policy is the ideal framework for an expansion of the Blue Economy in a sustainable manner and it ensures the safeguarding of the sea environment and marine biodiversity.







In this context, the strategic geographical position of Malta which has been at the centre of maritime activity in the Mediterranean for ages, provides a good opportunity for the Maltese Presidency to further evaluate the potential of the seas and oceans. Malta's exclusive position provides additional thrust to develop and conclude dossiers in relation to Nautical Tourism. Nautical and maritime tourism is considered an important subsector of tourism, and the largest maritime activity in Europe, which could foster sustainable growth and jobs in the blue economy for Europe. The Maltese Presidency will address the results of the Commission's study on nautical tourism with a focus on recognition of qualifications of skippers and the recycling of small boats.

International Ocean Governance will also be formally put on the Maltese Presidency's agenda, with the aim of ensuring sustainability of our oceans. The Commission put forward a Communication, together with a set of recommendations, on how best to develop a more coherent, comprehensive and effective EU policy to improve the international ocean governance framework. The Maltese Presidency's role will be to try and reach a political endorsement on the way forward with respect to Ocean Governance through a Ministerial Declaration and stand alone Council conclusions. An Informal Ministerial Conference organised in Malta will also encourage further discussions under the blue growth umbrella. Furthermore, this will prepare the groundwork and be the main thrust towards the preparation for the "Our Ocean" Conference which will be organised in Malta in October 2017.

Furthermore, as a Mediterranean country, Malta as a Presidency intends to work on developing a Western Mediterranean Sea Basin Initiative in the context of blue growth whilst ensuring a sustainable approach. The Western Mediterranean Sea Basin Initiative is expected to be launched in Spring 2017, provided that the necessary endorsement by the Member States is forthcoming. The

Initiative will build on existing structures to improve maritime governance (with the aim of achieving a level playing field in the region), exploit strengths and address weaknesses, whilst ensuring a sustainable approach. In this regard, the Maltese Presidency will push forward the development of a Maritime Initiative for the Western Mediterranean. The work done in this regard will feed into the Ministerial Declaration and Integrated Maritime Policy Council conclusions..

► Maritime

With respect to the transport sector, the European Commission is dedicating 2017 to maritime transport. Challenging times are ahead. The maritime sector will be a key priority during the Maltese Presidency. The priority is not only a result of the geographical circumstances but also of the manner in which the sector has developed in Malta. To this effect, a Ministerial Stakeholders Maritime Conference will be held in Malta so as to stimulate dialogue between the industry and policy makers. In this regard, the stakeholders would come together to discuss issues that would have an impact on the maritime industry and other related industries. It is expected that the Commission would present the initial results of the eManifest "pilot" project, with the scope of instigating a number of political discussions on the way forward towards facilitating maritime transport of goods. In the first half of its Presidency, Malta will follow-up on the evaluation and revision process being carried out by the Commission on a number of maritime legislative files, including the Reporting Formalities Directive, to further enhance Digital Maritime Systems and Services.

The Port Reception Facilities Directive is a key instrument for achieving a Greener Maritime Transport, and aligning EU law with international obligations. The Directive is the main policy instrument for tackling sea based sources of marine litter. It is, therefore, the Presidency's intention to take up the





expected legislative proposal. Moreover, the Maltese Presidency looks forward to continue working on the review of Passenger Ship Safety legislation and the Proposal on Professional Qualifications in Inland Waterways, possibly concluding trilogues.

The Maltese Presidency is keen on working on the Review of the EU Maritime Transport Strategy 2018 with the possibility of adopting a Declaration focusing on enhancing existing policy areas to strengthen the competitiveness of the EU maritime sector. The Maltese Presidency intends to work towards establishing a sound EU political direction by endorsing the Maritime Declaration through Council conclusions. Future EU policies should be based on the same basic principles of the current strategy, that is the ability of the maritime transport sector to provide cost-efficient maritime transport services adapted to the needs of sustainable economic growth of the EU and world economies and the long-term competitiveness of the EU shipping sector, enhancing its capacity to generate value and employment in the EU, both directly and indirectly, through the whole cluster of maritime industries.

► Land Transport

In the area of land transport, the Maltese Presidency will take forward the discussions on the Proposal for a review of the Directive on the Certification of Professional Competence concerning the initial qualification and periodic training for truck and bus drivers. This contributes to the overall effort to increase safety on European roads and the overarching objective to reach the European Union's 2020 target of halving road fatalities. In this context, and also with a view to reducing serious

injuries on our roads, the Maltese Presidency will be holding a High-Level event on Road Safety bringing together industry stakeholders, road safety experts, and Ministers to discuss the current state of play on EU road safety and propose actions for improvement through Council conclusions providing future political direction. Moreover, the Maltese Presidency intends to work on a proposal for Rail Passenger Rights, as well as proposals on the international road haulage market.

► Aviation Package

The Aviation Package is an initiative which generates growth, fosters innovation, develops the internal market and strengthens Europe's role as a global actor. In this regard, the Maltese Presidency is set to address the challenges by addressing regulatory concerns, while at the same time facilitating development of the economic aspect of aviation which would contribute to economic growth and job creation.

During its Presidency, Malta will seek to reach an agreement with the European Parliament on the revised European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Regulation. Moreover, it will kick-off discussions on the Unfair Pricing Regulation and strive to achieve as much progress as time permits. Furthermore, in consultation with other Member States, Malta will also seek to make further progress on negotiating mandates for air transport agreements with third countries stemming from the Aviation Package.

Regarding the Gibraltar issue, should there be a political solution, or a possible compromise that can be supported by both Spain and the United Kingdom, the Maltese Presidency will continue to work on the blocked files.

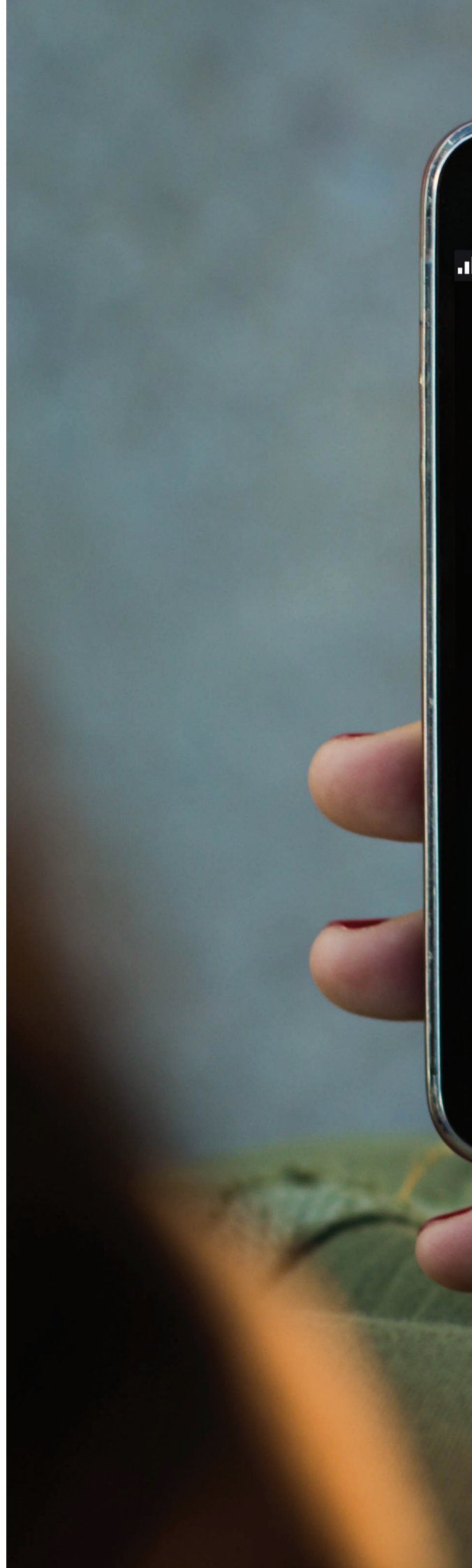






► Telecommunications sector

The global economy is rapidly becoming digital. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is no longer a specific sector. The Digital Single Market (DSM) strategy has garnered great importance at EU and Member State level. It is a step in the right direction that proposes a number of initiatives to help maximise the growth potential of the digital economy. The immediate priority of the Maltese Presidency will be the conclusion of the wholesale roaming review file. Malta will be hosting the Digital Assembly in mid-June. This event will coincide with the end of roaming charges in Europe. The Maltese Presidency will also push forward the discussion on the Telecoms Framework review. Malta will pursue the negotiations on the framework review and will strive to advance as much as possible. A modern regulatory framework will strengthen competitiveness and investment in the telecommunications sector. Other dossiers which will feature during the Maltese Presidency include the Cross-Border Parcel Delivery proposal and the recent proposal on WiFi4EU.





14:59 PM



ROAMING



ON





AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES



► Agriculture

Notwithstanding the challenges faced by the agricultural sector in recent months, following persistent difficulties and unprecedented developments, the first signs of improvement within the agricultural markets have been observed. Despite the registered upturn, the Maltese Presidency will continue to monitor the situation and facilitate discussions so that an appropriate way forward is sought and pursued. The Maltese Presidency is also committed to lead discussions with regard to the Omnibus Proposal. The Council will be regularly updated with respect to ongoing trade negotiations to give Member States the opportunity to express their views.

In recent years most Member States have been affected by extreme weather events and changing rainfall patterns. Owing to the interdependence of agriculture and climate, the Maltese Presidency will endeavour to explore ideas on how to adapt to changing climate regimes. This will be achieved through the sharing of best practices with a particular focus on research and innovation in the field of water management.

With respect to the agenda for forests, the Maltese Presidency will ensure that sustainable forest management and trade in legally produced timber are promoted at an international level. The Presidency will strive to reach a balanced EU position which reflects the EU efforts to protect and sustainably manage forests, eventually presenting this position at the 12th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in New York in May 2017.

With respect to ongoing legislative proposals, the Maltese Presidency will strive

to build on the work carried out by its predecessors to ensure continuity in the work of the Council.

► Emergency Preparedness for Plant and Animal Health

The new legislative framework for animal and plant health reflects the need for improved systems of emergency preparedness across the EU as they aim to respond to the growing challenges of changing climatic conditions and trade trends. The Maltese Presidency will actively support Europe's shift towards greater resilience in the fields of plant and animal health, by promoting the need for a higher level of preparedness and awareness within Europe and in its neighbouring regions.

► Antimicrobial Resistance

The Maltese Presidency will build on progress made by previous Presidencies to combat antimicrobial resistance by making concrete and substantial progress on the Regulations on Veterinary Medicinal Products and Medicated Feed.

► Common Fisheries Policy

The Maltese Presidency is fully committed to sustainability and will work relentlessly towards this goal. The Presidency will continue with the Trio's work towards the adoption of a number of key legislative texts, intended to put the reformed Common Fisheries Policy into practice. In addition, it will work in hand with delegations, the European Parliament and the Commission. In particular, the Presidency will support a Commission initiative intended to deliver an international





declaration outlining a way forward for the Mediterranean, by facilitating dialogue between Member States and Third Country partners.

► **Technical Measures Regulation**

On 11 March 2016, the Commission put forward a Proposal on the conservation of fishery resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures. This seeks to bring together the numerous Regulations containing technical measures in the fisheries sector. This key dossier will be high on the agenda and will help the EU to achieve the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy reform. It is being envisaged that a general approach or negotiating mandate be reached during the Maltese Presidency. Malta will also start trilogues with the European Parliament under its term.

► **ICCAT Transposition**

The Commission presented its proposal for a Regulation laying down conservation, control and enforcement measures applicable in the Convention Area of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) on 17 June 2016. The proposal aims at implementing ICCAT recommendations into EU law, with the exception of the existing ICCAT recovery plan for Bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The Slovak Presidency initiated and concluded an article by article examination of the proposal with the aim of reaching a negotiating mandate. The Slovak Presidency has reached a negotiating position, and trilogues can take place under the Maltese Presidency. Efforts are being made with the European Parliament in order to accelerate their work on this file.

► **North Sea Plan**

The article-by-article examination on the proposal on establishing a multi-annual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea will continue during the Maltese Presidency. The Maltese Presidency will aim to obtain a general approach on this file.

► **Small Pelagic Species in the Adriatic**

An article-by-article examination is expected to take place during the Maltese Presidency with regard to the proposal regarding a multiannual plan on small pelagic species in the Adriatic.

► **External Fishing Fleet**

The main aim of the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the sustainable management of external fishing fleets is to modernise and simplify the current framework for EU vessels outside EU waters, by setting a level playing field and creating transparency. Negotiations with the European Parliament are expected to be in an advanced stage under the Maltese Presidency.

► **Demersal Fisheries in North Western Waters, South Western Waters, and Western Mediterranean**

During the Maltese Presidency, the Commission may present three other multiannual plans. The Maltese Presidency will work on an article-by-article examination of these proposals once presented.









ENVIRONMENT



The Environment Council agenda during the Maltese Presidency will strive to deliver tangible results in the EU's gradual shift towards smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, while also safeguarding the environment and human health. The Green and Blue Growth agendas will be crucial for achieving these results. The Presidency will, therefore, focus on initiatives that will promote a competitive, resource-efficient and low-carbon economy within the framework of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

On the proposal on the revision of the Emissions Trading Scheme, the Presidency will seek to make concrete and substantial progress. The Maltese Presidency will also advance discussions on the Commission proposals on the sectors not covered by the Emissions Trading Scheme, namely the Effort Sharing Regulation and the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry Regulation. The Presidency will also give due attention to the EU's follow-up on aviation emissions, following the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) General Assembly.

► **Follow-up to the Paris Agreement and the international climate agenda**

The Maltese Presidency will continue to build on the momentum achieved through the Ratification of the Paris Agreement, and will focus on the UNFCCC negotiations in the aftermath of the COP22 in Marrakech. The Paris Agreement has given fresh impetus to the climate change adaptation discussion and the Presidency will seek to address this topic, also in the context of the ongoing work on of the EU's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

► **Circular Economy Package**

The Maltese Presidency will further advance the Circular Economy agenda, by making substantial progress in the negotiations relating to the legislative proposals to amend six Waste Directives. The Maltese Presidency will also attempt to promote discussions on marine litter and the plastics strategy expected by the end of 2017.

► **Emissions reduction in the Emissions Trading Scheme and non-Emissions Trading Scheme sectors**

The Maltese Presidency will build on the work already carried out on the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework.

► **Other issues**

The Maltese Presidency will also attempt to make progress on other open files where possible, such as the Euro 5/6 proposal, as well as new files, such as the amendment to the scope of the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) Directive, the recast of the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Regulation, the Fitness Check of the Birds and Habitats Directives, and the Environmental Implementation Review.



EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE AND SPORT



► Education

The Maltese Presidency will focus on the relevance of achieving a High Quality Education For All through 'Inclusion in Diversity' with a view to draw up Council conclusions on this theme. The quality and relevance of education should be linked to the requirements of the labour market and directed towards the provision of relevant skills, aptitudes and life-long values required to become active citizens. In this context, education systems should be more inclusive and capable of moving away from a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to one that is just, flexible, diversified and comprehensive. In this regard, focus will be placed on inclusiveness as a primary element for effective education mechanisms to ensure long-term effectiveness and quality retention, whilst concurrently taking into account the relevance, function and incorporation of digital skills.

The Maltese Presidency will also strive to make progress on the New Skills Agenda for Europe, the proposal for a Council Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, and the proposal for a Decision on Europass.

► Culture

The Maltese Presidency intends to take the Joint Communication 'Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations' forward by means of Council conclusions, with a view to providing the framework for our next steps in the field of cultural diplomacy, in full cognisance of EU and Member States' spheres of competence. The Maltese Presidency will also endeavour to bring the proposals for Decisions for a European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 and the European Capitals of Culture 2020 to 2033 to a close.

► Audiovisual

The Maltese Presidency intends to build on the work already carried out and achieve considerable progress on the proposal for a revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive, which it considers to be both timely, in view of the major market and technological changes in the sector and opportune, in light of achieving a connected Digital Single Market. The Maltese Presidency may also finalise a Council Implementing Decision extending the period of entitlement of the EU-Korea Audiovisual Co-Production Agreement by a further three years.



► Youth

The Maltese Presidency will focus on the role of youth work in supporting young people's development of essential life skills, facilitating their successful transition to adulthood, citizenship and working life, including those at risk of marginalisation, in order to draw up Council conclusions on this basis. In addition, the Maltese Presidency intends to finalise the Fifth Cycle of the Trio Structured Dialogue on enabling young people to engage in a diverse, connected and inclusive Europe, and to work towards setting the priorities for the incoming Trio Cycle. The Maltese Presidency also welcomes the Commission's mid-term review of the EU Youth Strategy and aims to respond to it by means of Council conclusions. It also welcomes the

Commission's first phase of the new Youth Initiative and intends adopting Council conclusions on this initiative.

► Sport

In line with the objectives set out in the EU 2020 Strategy, the Maltese Presidency intends to focus on sport as a platform for social inclusion through volunteering by means of Council conclusions, targeting in particular the most vulnerable. The Maltese Presidency is also tasked with preparing and developing an EU Sport Work Plan for the next period which will take into consideration the Commission's evaluation report of the current Sport Work Plan (2014-2017). A Resolution finalising this process is to be adopted during the Ministerial Council.





MALTA EU 2017

Prioritäten der maltesischen
Präsidentschaft des Rats der
Europäischen Union im Jahr 2017



Prioritäten der maltesischen Präsidentschaft des Rats der Europäischen Union im Jahr 2017

1. Migration

Unsere zwei Ziele in Bezug auf Migration sind das entschlossene Umsetzen der bereits vereinbarten Maßnahmen sowie das Sicherstellen des Verbleibs dieses Themas ganz oben auf der politischen Tagesordnung. Die Bürger verlangen nach unserem Handeln und wir können uns keine selbstgefällige EU leisten, die dieses Thema nicht mit der gebotenen Dringlichkeit und Aufmerksamkeit angeht.

Konkrete Ziele

- Stärkung und Straffung des Gemeinsamen Europäischen Asylsystems, wichtig für eine gerechtere Verteilung der Migrationslast zwischen den Mitgliedsstaaten;
- In Bezug auf Migration werden Versuche zur Überarbeitung der Dublin-Verordnung, welche den Mitgliedsstaaten die Verantwortlichkeiten in der Bearbeitung von Asylanträgen zuweisen, der Schlüssel sein;
- Die Umgestaltung des Europäischen Unterstützungsbüros für Asylfragen in eine vollwertige europäische Agentur ist ein wichtiges Element der Reformation des gemeinsamen europäischen Asylsystems;
- In Anbetracht dessen, dass der Zwei-Jahres-Zeitraum für die Umsiedlung 160.000 schutzbedürftiger Menschen näher kommt, sind wir uns der Notwendigkeit der vollen Umsetzung bewusst;
- Malta sieht die Schaffung eines holistischen Ansatzes in Bezug auf interne und externe Migration vor. In diesem Sinne werden wir die Vereinbarungen des Gipfeltreffens zur Migration in Valletta weiterverfolgen. Wir werden Anstrengungen zum Abschluss der Arbeiten im Zusammenhang mit dem Europäischen Externen Investitionsplan unternehmen und damit nachhaltige Investitionen in Afrika und den benachbarten Ländern fördern und so Ursachen für Migration bekämpfen.

2. Der Binnenmarkt

Der Binnenmarkt ist die größte Stärke der Union. Wenn wir es gemeinsam schaffen, alle Vorteile des Binnenmarkts zu nutzen, den digitalen Binnenmarkt aufzubauen und den internen Energiemarkt zu erreichen, wird dies zusammen mit der Entfernung von Handelsschranken handfeste Vorteile für unsere Konjunkturen, unsere Unternehmen und unsere Familien bringen und den Schutz und den Zugang zu Dienstleistungen für Konsumenten ausbauen. Wir beabsichtigen, durch die Verbesserung und den Abschluss bereits auf dem Tisch liegender entscheidender Gesetze möglichst viel in diesem Bereich zu erreichen. Auch die Kapitalmarktunion wird während des Vorsitzes die ihr angemessene Aufmerksamkeit erfahren.

Konkrete Ziele

- Das Abschaffen der Roaming-Gebühren in ganz Europa, so dass die Bürger während des Reisens miteinander in Kontakt bleiben können;
- Fortschritte im Schutz vor Diskriminierungen beim Kauf von Waren oder Dienstleistungen in einem anderen EU-Staat, sowohl online als auch in Person, aufgrund von Nationalität oder Wohnland in Bezug auf Preis-, Verkaufs- und Zahlungsbedingungen (Geoblocking);
- Sicherstellen eines verstärkten Fokus in der EU-Gesetzgebung, wenn es um die Herausforderungen geht, denen sich kleine und mittlere Unternehmen (SMEs) gegenübersehen, z.B. Ermöglichung der Entwicklung eines breiteren Spektrums von Finanzierungsquellen durch Maßnahmen in der Kapitalmarktunion;
- Wachstum und Beschäftigung bleiben oberste Ziele für alle EU-Mitgliedstaaten und die EU als Ganzes. Die Erweiterung in Zeit und finanzieller Kapazität des Europäischen Fonds für strategische Investitionen ist eine Priorität der maltesischen Ratspräsidentschaft, um private Investitionen zu fördern und gleichzeitig die knappen Haushaltsressourcen intelligent zu nutzen;
- Überarbeitung des Energieeffizienzpakets mit dem Ziel, den Stromverbrauch in Wohngebäuden und in der Industrie durch effizientere Nutzung der Energie zu senken;
- Verbesserung der Energieversorgungssicherheit für alle EU-Bürger, besonders in Krisenzeiten;
- Konsumenten eines EU-Mitgliedstaates während eines vorübergehenden Aufenthalts in einem anderen EU-Land die Möglichkeit geben, ihr heimisches Unterhaltungspaket-Abo auch im Ausland genießen zu können;
- Neuzuteilung des zur Zeit für digitale Fernsehübertragungen und drahtlose Mikrofone genutzte 700 MHz-Hochgeschwindigkeitsbands (694-790 MHz) an kabellose Breitband-Dienste, so dass



dieses Band für 5G verwendet wird;

- Voranbringen der Errichtung von kostenlosem Wi-Fi in jedem Dorf, in jeder Stadt und jeder Großstadt der Europäischen Union.

3. Sicherheit

Nach den schrecklichen Terrorattacken der vergangenen 12 Monate müssen wir als Union wachsam bleiben, um die Sicherheit unserer Bürger zu schützen. Vor dem Hintergrund der internationalen, zunehmend volatilen Gegebenheiten wird der maltesische Vorsitz konkrete Vorschläge unterbreiten, die sich mit regionalen und globalen Herausforderungen befassen und gleichzeitig die Werte sichern werden, welche die Existenz der Union fördern. Hier besteht die Hauptaufgabe der EU in effektiver Diplomatie. In diesem Zusammenhang werden wir eng mit dem Europäischen Auswärtigen Dienst unter dem Dach der EU-Gesamtstrategie zusammenarbeiten, um den komplexen Herausforderungen von Migration, Terrorismus und anderen Bedrohungen zu begegnen.

Konkrete Ziele

- Fortsetzung des Kampfs gegen den Terror; Verstärkung des Kampfs gegen organisierte Schwerkriminalität durch den EU-Politikzyklus; Weiterverfolgen des EU-Strategieplans zur Verbesserung des Austauschs und des Managements von Informationen, einschließlich Lösungen zur Zusammenarbeitsfähigkeit mittels Datenbanken bezüglich nationaler Vollzugs- und Grenzbehörden; Weiterführen der Maßnahmen gegen die Finanzierung des Terrors durch unterschiedliche gesetzgeberische Maßnahmen, einschließlich eines Übereinkommens zur vierten Geldwäschebekämpfungsrichtlinie;
- Signifikanter Fortschritt in laufenden Initiativen mit dem Ziel des besseren Management der Unions-Außengrenze, einschließlich die Einrichtung eines EU-Systems zur Registrierung der Ein- und Ausreise Drittstaatsangehöriger sowie die Schaffung eines EU-Reiseinformations- und Genehmigungsprogramms (ETIAS) zur Feststellung des Anspruchs visumbefreiter Drittstaatsangehöriger auf die Einreise in den Schengen-Raum und eines möglichen Sicherheits- oder Migrationsrisikos. Diese Maßnahmen werden die interne Sicherheit unterstützen;
- Schritte zur Herstellung eines Konsens bezüglich der noch offenen Elemente zur Schaffung einer europäischen Staatsanwaltschaft zur Ermittlung und Strafverfolgung von Personen und Unternehmen, die den Finanzinteressen der EU-Bürger zuwider handeln;
- Verbesserung der Führung von Eurojust, um die grenzübergreifende Koordination der Strafverfolgungsbehörden zu stärken und somit die Bürger effektiver gegen internationale kriminelle Aktivitäten wie Menschenhandel, Terrorismus und Geldwäsche schützen zu können.

4. Soziale Eingliederung

Die Sozialpolitik liegt der maltesischen Regierung besonders am Herzen. In diesem Bereich hoffen wir, dass unsere europäischen Partner von uns lernen. Die Arbeit wird durch eine enge Zusammenarbeit mit den Sozialpartnern, der Zivilgesellschaft und den Bürgern bestimmt und soll die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter und die Rechte von Minderheiten und gefährdeten Gruppen fördern.

Konkrete Ziele

- Vergrößerung des Anteils der Frauen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt. Der maltesische Vorsitz wird versuchen, Fortschritte im Zusammenhang mit dem Geschlechterverhältnis zu erreichen, einschließlich des Vorschlags einer Richtlinie zur Verbesserung des Geschlechterverhältnisses in den Vorständen börsennotierter Unternehmen;
- Malta wird den Kampf gegen geschlechterspezifische Gewalt fortsetzen, insbesondere durch die Förderung des Teilens bewährter Praktiken und des Informationsaustauschs in Bezug auf bestehende Gesetzgebung, Richtlinien und Strategien sowie statistischer Daten und Studien;
- Malta wird eine Konferenz auf Ministerebene zu LGBTIQ-Themen organisieren, um den Strategieplan der Kommission in diesem Bereich weiter zu führen.

5. Europas Nachbarn

Die Sicherheit und der Wohlstand Europas sind mit denen unserer Nachbarn eng verknüpft. Die Länder an der südlichen Mittelmeergrenze sehen sich ernsthaften Herausforderungen gegenüber, dazu gehören bewaffnete Konflikte, Terrorismus, politische Instabilität und Radikalisierung. Im Bewusstsein der Auswirkungen von Instabilität außerhalb der EU-Grenzen wird der maltesische Vorsitz seinen Fokus auf das EU-Engagement in der Stabilisierung unserer Nachbarn richten. Hier wird die EU-Gesamtstrategie wichtiger Referenzrahmen für die Handlungen der Union sein und ihre Rolle als relevanter und effektiver Akteur definieren.

Konkrete Ziele

- Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird sich auf die südlichen Nachbarn der EU richten, mit der Stabilisierung von Libyen und dem Beitrag der Union zu einem friedvollen Übergang als den obersten Prioritäten;
- Der maltesische Vorsitz wird die Anstrengungen der EU und der internationalen Gemeinschaft zur Wiederherstellung des Nahost-Friedensprozesses zwischen Israel und Palästina unterstützen;
- Sicherstellen, dass die demokratische Umwandlung in Tunesien weiter voran kommt und das Momentum der Weiterführung von Handelsbeziehungen aufrecht erhalten;
- Beitrag zu internationalen und EU-Maßnahmen bezüglich des Konflikts in Syrien;
- Vertiefung des Verhältnisses zwischen der EU und der Arabischen Liga, um gemeinsamen Herausforderungen und Verantwortungen besser zu begegnen. Die Präsidentschaft wird ebenfalls den Versuch zur Wiederherstellung der Beziehungen zum Golfkooperationsrat unternehmen;
- Die Beziehungen zu den östlichen Nachbarn bleiben von großer Bedeutung, dazu gehört die Unterstützung der Ukraine und die Sicherstellung der Kooperation mit Russland in Bezug auf globale und regionale Angelegenheiten.

6. Maritimes

Die EU wird zunehmend von Meeren und Ozeanen abhängig; die Nachhaltigkeit und die fortgeführte Entwicklung des Seefahrtsektors gemäß der integrierten Meerespolitik der EU gehen Hand in Hand mit den Prioritäten im Bereich der Gesetzgebung einer nach außen gerichteten Inselnation im südlichen Mittelmeer. Zusätzlich bietet dieser Sektor ein weitgefächertes Spektrum innovativer Forschung und kommerzieller Aktivitäten, die in Abstimmung mit der "Strategie Blaues Wachstum" in Beschäftigungsmöglichkeiten mit hoher Wertschöpfung und damit in Wachstum und Wettbewerbsfähigkeit münden können.

Konkrete Ziele

- Internationale meerespolitische Governance wird ebenfalls auf Maltas Agenda stehen, mit dem Ziel der Sicherung der politischen Willensbildung in Richtung Zukunft hin zu einer kohärenteren, umfassenden und effektiven EU-Politik zur Verbesserung der internationalen meerespolitischen Governance und der Nachhaltigkeit unserer Ozeane;
- Die Initiative für das westliche Mittelmeerbecken wird voraussichtlich Anfang 2017 eingeleitet, abzielend auf ein bestimmtes geografisches Gebiet im Interessenbereich der Mitgliedsstaaten und ihrer Nachbarn. Diese Initiative wird im Zusammenhang mit der "Blue Economy" auf bestehenden Strukturen aufbauen und die meerespolitische Governance verbessern (mit dem Ziel des Erreichens der Wettbewerbsgleichheit in dieser Region), Stärken nutzen, an Schwächen arbeiten und gleichzeitig einen nachhaltigen Ansatz garantieren.