

Priorities of the Luxembourg Presidency

July 2015¹

Luxembourg holds the Presidency of the Council of the EU for the twelfth time this semester, from July to December 2015. Italy and Latvia are its trio partners. Luxembourg is currently ruled by a coalition government composed of the Democratic Party, the Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party, and the Greens.

This brief presents the Presidency's priorities relevant for the work of the Open Society Foundations.



Internal policies

- **Asylum, migration and free movement:** Accelerate work on: recasting the **EU Visa Code**, introducing a **travel visa, relocating and resettling** migrants, “**Smart Borders**”². Fight against **smugglers** of human beings and in particular their resources. Continue to create links between the internal and external components of immigration policy, and strengthen **cooperation with third countries** of origin and transit (including on return and multi-purpose centre in Niger). Monitor the implementation of the **Common European Asylum System**. Conclude the negotiations on **unaccompanied minors** in the ‘Dublin procedure’. Work on the definition of **safe countries** and accelerated procedures for their nationals. Help to develop the EASO, Frontex and eu-LISA **agencies**. Make every effort to complete the negotiations on the proposed **Directive on Students and Researchers**.
- **Rule of law and fundamental rights:** Launch the **dialogue between Member States** on the promotion and safeguard of the rule of law (on the agenda of the General Affairs Council meeting for November). Continue the process of **accession to the European Convention on Human Rights** with a period of reflection following the CJEU’s opinion (a declaration in this sense should be issued by next General Affairs Council meeting).
- **Justice:** Implement the **reform of the CJEU**. Advance negotiations on the creation of a **European Public Prosecutor’s Office** and the reform of **Eurojust**. Continue the negotiations on the three **procedural safeguard directives**: the rights of children, legal aid and the presumption of innocence (conclude the negotiations on the latter).
- **Data protection:** Finalise the **EU data protection reform** (including ensure that the harmonization of the CJEU’s judgement of 8 April 2014 on Directive 2006/24/EC, on the retention of data, is initiated)
- **Counter-terrorism** (focus on foreign fighters): Pursue the implementation of actions set by the Heads of State and Government on 12 February 2015, including the implementation of a

¹ The presidency of the Council rotates among the EU member states every 6 months. During this 6-month period, the presidency chairs meetings at every level in the Council, helping to ensure the continuity of the EU’s work in the Council. Member states holding the presidency work together closely in groups of three, called ‘trios’. This system was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. The trio sets long-term goals and prepares a common agenda determining the topics and major issues that will be addressed by the Council over an 18 month period. On the basis of this programme, each of the three countries prepares its own more detailed 6-month programme. The current trio is made up of the presidencies of Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/presidency-council-eu/>

² The “Smart Borders” package aims to improve the management of the external borders of the Schengen Area through the use of new technologies.

European Passenger Name Record (PNR), the fight against **internet content promoting terrorism** or extremism, the fight against **illicit trafficking in firearms**, as well as the reinforcement of **external border controls, information exchange and operational cooperation**. Full respect of human rights and civil liberties and proportionality principle.

- **Internal security:** Support the implementation of the renewed **Internal security strategy** (including legal aspects: extension of the European Criminal Records Information System to third country nationals and mutual recognition of confiscation orders). Develop the Policy Cycle on the **fight against organized crime**, overseen by the Standing Committee on Internal Security (COSI), and promote cross-border police cooperation. Finalise the negotiations on new **Europol Regulation**.
- **Equality:** Promote the **principle of non-discrimination** and continue efforts to adopt the Directive 2008/0140 (CNS) on **equal treatment of persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation**. Regarding **gender equality**, particular attention will be paid to increasing the rate of female employment and to a balanced representation of women and men in political and economic decision-making as factors of competitiveness.
- **Transparency and taxation:** Simplify the circulation of a number of **public documents**. Conclude the negotiations on the proposal on **transparency and exchange of information regarding tax rulings**. Make progress with work on the **directive on the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB)**. Discuss the reinforcement of the mandate of the **Code of Conduct for Business Taxation** in the Council.

Foreign affairs

- **ENP and EaP:** Work towards the consensual adoption of the annual ‘enlargement’ conclusions in December, on the basis of the 2015 ‘**Enlargement package**’, for which the Commission will apply a new methodology. Conduct **7 informal meetings with candidate countries** that have open negotiations, and **additional effort will be made to help candidate countries** focus on the content and scope of council debates. Encourage new negotiation chapters to be opened with **Turkey, Montenegro and Serbia** once the necessary conditions have been fulfilled, and will continue work towards the European integration of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania. In addition, **trade negotiations may be launched with Tunisia**.
- **Trade:** Focus on continuity and coherence in the field of trade policy, notably in terms of growth, job creation, opening third markets and sustainable development. These objectives define **current trade policy** (2010 communication) for both external (trade negotiations) and internal (legislation) affairs: **an update to this communication should be submitted during the second semester of 2015**. Advance discussions on the **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)** which will intensify during the second semester of 2015, when issues of substance will be addressed.
- **New foreign policy strategy:** Prepare, together with the institutions and Member States, a **new foreign policy strategy which takes account of the changes that have taken place in the global international environment since 2003**, on the basis of a mandate from the European Council of June 2015.
- **Africa, Caribbean and Pacific:** The Cotonou Agreement, which governs relations between the EU and the 79 ACP States (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) will expire in 2020. **Present a**

green paper and launch a public consultation to contribute to efforts to draw up a new framework for cooperation which will begin in 2015.

- **Post-2015 development goals:** Host the closing ceremony of the **European Year for Development in December 2015**.

For your information

- It will be the Luxembourg Presidency's responsibility to hold the **annual budget negotiations** at Council level and with the European Parliament in order to reach an agreement on the 2016 EU budget
- Notable events during this Presidency include:
 - 19 October: [Conference](#) on the response that justice can give to radicalization.
 - 23-24 November: Fundamental Rights Agency seminar on hate crimes.
- Additional information can be found under the links below:
 - [The Luxembourg Presidency website](#)
 - [The Luxembourg Presidency work programme](#)
 - [Who is who? Guide de la Présidence](#)
 - [Provisional calendar of meetings under the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council](#)
 - [Provisional agendas for Council meetings during the Luxembourg Presidency](#)
 - [Priorities of the 2016 Dutch Presidency](#)
- Do not hesitate to get in touch in case of further questions:
Open Society European Policy Institute
Rue du Trône 130
Brussels, B-1050
Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 505-46-46
Email: osepi@opensocietyfoundations.org
Twitter: [@osfEUpolicy](#)