

Eurodesk Information note

The Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

1. Introduction

On 1 July 2011, Poland will take over from Hungary the chairmanship of the rotating Council of the European Union and will kick-start a new Trio Presidency, together with Denmark and Cyprus. The main tasks of a Member State holding the EU Presidency are: setting up the EU priorities for the next six months, mediation and preparing ground for compromises among Member States, organizing work of the Council, as well as organizing and chairing meetings of committees and various working groups. The fourth and the largest country from Eastern Europe to withhold the Presidency, Poland has set up ambitious plans for the upcoming semester. This note for Eurodesk partners will briefly cover the priorities, youth related activities and main events of the Polish presidency, underlining at the same time how you can get involved and where to find other useful sources of information. The information provided here is based on currently available sources, while official announcements are not yet published on all matters. Eurodesk Brussels Link will continuously update.



2. Presidency Priorities

With the economic crisis still at large and potential threats to both the Eurozone and the Schengen area, Poland is reported as one of the EU countries not affected by the crisis and a strong proponent of freedom of movement and “Solidarity” throughout the EU. Poland has vowed to foster economic growth as its main priority. Also, during its presidency, negotiations will start for EU’s next financial framework 2014-2020, a crucial debate on Europe’s future priorities and funding. Overall, the Polish Presidency has organized its priorities under three main headlines:

A. European integration as the source for growth

- Developing the internal market – including electronic market
- Using the EU budget to enhance competitiveness
- Brokering new rules for economic governance
- Completing the Single Market and abolishing legal barriers (finalizing a European patent)
- Improving conditions for Small and Medium Enterprises

B. Secure Europe – food, energy, defence

- Improving macro-economic security and maintaining financial stability
- Securing energy for Europe and strengthening its external energy policy
- Reforming the Common Agricultural Policy – utilization of funds, food security and support for rural areas
- Secure borders, reform Frontex and effectively support member states in crisis situation, such as those taking place in North Africa and the Middle East
- Strengthening military and civil EU capabilities

C. Europe benefiting from openness

- Further EU enlargement (finalizing negotiations with Croatia)
- Creating Free Trade areas with countries from the Eastern Partnership
- Support democratic transformations in the Southern Neighbourhood
- Establishing a new cooperation framework with Russia

3. Education and Youth related priorities

In the area of education, Poland aims to start a debate on university modernization and improving mobility schemes for researchers and students, also in relation with countries from the Eastern Partnership and to elaborate European cooperation priorities in the sphere of education and training (ET 2020). With regards to Research, the Polish Presidency will focus its energy on the new Framework Programme of the Union in the field of research and technological development.

The Youth theme of the next Presidency cycle (1 July 2011-30 December 2012) will be *youth participation*, with a special emphasis on participation in democratic life in Europe. For this, the Polish Presidency has consulted with Denmark, Cyprus, the European Commission and the European Youth Forum. In an article for Eurodesk Poland, Klaudia Wojciechowska (Head of the Department of Youth from the Polish Ministry of National Education) has presented some of Poland's initiatives in terms of youth policy:

- "Youth and the world" – with the purpose to promote and strengthen cooperation between EU youth and their peers from Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (areas in which youth mobility encounters many barriers)
- Continuing the Structured Dialogue with Young People – the main event will take place in September in Warsaw, Poland
- Recognizing and creating a framework for informal and non-formal education and volunteering, with a particular reference to cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries.
- The Council will adopt a Resolution on the Eastern Dimension of Youth Mobility
- Adopting a schedule of a "European Sports Program" for the years 2012-2013
- Finally, during the presidency the European Commission will announce the draft decision on the new Youth programme, which will launch negotiations at the European level

4. Calendar of Events

Below, you can find an extract of some of the most relevant events of the Polish Presidency:

Date	Location	Event
1 July 2011	Warsaw/Brussels	Official Inauguration of the Polish Presidency of the Council
5-7 July 2011	Krakow (PL)	Conference "Science, Technology, Higher Education and Society in the Conceptual Age"
6-7 July 2011	Warsaw (PL)	Conference on Eastern Dimension of Mobility
28-29 July 2011	Sopot (PL)	Informal Meeting of Ministers of European Affairs: Discussion on the EU budget 2014-2020
5-7 September 2011	Warsaw (PL)	EU Youth Conference
8-11 September 2011	Wroclaw (PL)	European Culture Congress
9-10 September 2011	TBC	Picnic – "Youth on the Move"
9 September 2011	Wroclaw (PL)	Informal Meeting Of Ministers for Culture and Media
12 September 2011	Wroclaw (PL)	Conference "e-Volunteering"
26-27 September 2011	Warsaw (PL)	The "Marie Curie Action" Fellow Symposium
28-29 September 2011	Warsaw (PL)	Conference "Multilingual competences for the professional and social success in Europe."
29-30 September 2011	Warsaw (PL)	Eastern Partnership Summit
29 September – 1 October 2011	Rybnik (PL)	European Congress on Citizenship and Twinning
2-4 October 2011	Krakow (PL)	Single Market Forum
10-12 October 2011	Warsaw (PL)	European Heritage Forum
17-18 October 2011	Brussels (BE)	European Council

17-21 October 2011	Sopot (PL)	Conference “Mobility as a tool to acquire and develop competences: from childhood to seniority”. Informal meeting of Directors of National Agencies of Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action Programmes.
28-29 November 2011	Poznan (PL)	Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership
28-29 November 2011	Brussels (BE)	Education, Youth, Cultural and Sports Council – Education and Youth (EYCS)
5-7 December 2011	Warsaw (PL)	Eastern dimension of Volunteering - Closing Conference of the European Year of Volunteering 2011
9 December 2011	Brussels (BE)	European Council
31 December 2011	Warsaw (PL)	Handing over the Presidency

5. *How to get involved*

- Participate in events, conferences, debates and communicate about it;
- Contribute to the Structured Dialogue and to debates on recognizing informal and non-formal education and volunteering;
- Participate in Polish cultural events or try to discover more about Polish society and culture;
- Support “Youth in the world” and “Youth on the move” events;
- Stay informed and follow the presidency websites and Eurodesk for more news, information and opportunities and disseminate widely.

6. *Further information*

- Polish Presidency official website (active from 1 July 2011): <http://pl2011.eu/>
- Polish Presidency (provisional website): <http://prezydencjaue.gov.pl/en/>
- Polish Presidency priorities: <http://prezydencjaue.gov.pl/en/what-is-the-presidency/430-the-priorities-of-the-polish-presidency-of-the-eu-council>
- Eastern Dimension of Mobility (conference): <http://www.eap-mobility.pl/en>
- European Culture Congress: <http://www.culturecongress.eu/en/>
- Polish Presidency Cultural programme: <http://www.culture.pl/web/english/calendar-world>
- Poland prepares for EU presidency (European Youth week article): <http://www.youthweek.eu/poland-prepares-for-eu-presidency/>
- Center for Citizenship Education (PL): http://www.ceo.org.pl/portal/b_english
- The Polish EU presidency: Budget and Solidarity (Euractiv file): <http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/polish-eu-presidency-budget-solidarity-links-dossier-505551>
- Connect to the Euranet Debate from Warsaw -21st June 2011 – Poland EU presidency and how high are Youth on the agenda of the next presidency trio: <http://connect.uranet.eu/Connect/Debate-of-the-month>

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