

European and External Affairs Committee
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Programme of the Belgian Presidency of the EU Council



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SIX-MONTH PROGRAMME

DRAWN UP BY THE BELGIAN PRESIDENCY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK	4
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	11
GENERAL AFFAIRS	11
ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS	15
COMPETITIVENESS (INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY AND RESEARCH)	21
EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS	25
TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY	30
ENVIRONMENT	34
EDUCATION, TRAINING, YOUTH, SPORT, CULTURE AND AUDIOVISUAL POLICY	36
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES	39
JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS	42
EXTERNAL RELATIONS	46

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

'Europe in action!'

The European Union, our Union, faces many challenges. The current crisis, on a scale without precedent during the last 50 years, has worsened unemployment and further accentuated social inequalities. The financial system has been shown to have serious deficiencies. Our public finances have greatly deteriorated as a result and must be restabilised. Our competitiveness continues to be eroded. Our demographics, as well as environment and climate-related pressures, are forcing us to restructure our economies and societies. New forces are emerging on the world stage.

In order to respond to these numerous challenges, we require a stronger, more coherent and determined Europe, focused on guaranteeing and developing its social model and prosperity, as well as on closing the gaps in economic development between its regions. We also require a Europe that is more accessible and in which there is closer dialogue between the Union and its citizens.

As a result of a process that has taken nearly 10 years, since it was first initiated by the Laeken Declaration, the Union now has a new founding treaty and a new legitimacy. The Treaty of Lisbon has led to the creation of new institutions. Created together, these institutions should allow us to lend new impetus to European development.

Europe and the European single currency have made it possible to protect our economies better from the upheavals which are transforming the face of the world in which we live. Yet the crisis and its impact on public finances now require the Stability and Growth Pact to be strengthened. This means moving towards a more economic form of government. The European Council must make strategic decisions based on concrete proposals from the Working Group.

Globalisation is dramatically changing the balance of power. In order to consolidate the role played by Europe, its external policy must be rendered more harmonious, ensuring that it speaks with a single voice.

The Belgian Presidency intends to contribute to meeting all these challenges through collective action and by establishing intensive dialogue with institutions and Member States.

It will only be possible to achieve economic recovery and respond adequately to the current crisis by mobilising all the forces at our disposal. The European Union must become a driving force for structural reform, the creation of jobs, financial stability and increased competitiveness. We have to bring about a return to maintained, sustainable and balanced growth throughout the European Union. Moreover, it will have to make sure that it speeds up the transition towards a green and knowledge-based economy, whilst ensuring strong social cohesion.

The EU 2020 strategy for employment and growth aspires to establish an intelligent, sustainable and inclusive economy. This assumes growth in employment, a greater mobilisation in support of innovation and education, as well as making ambitious commitments on climate issues and, lastly, a strengthening of social cohesion. The fulfilment of the major objectives defined by the European Council will underpin the **socio-economic priorities** of the Belgian Presidency's programme.

In view of the role and responsibility of the financial sector, the Belgian Presidency will be committed to implementing a new regulatory and supervisory structure for the financial sector. It will pay particular attention to the legislative initiatives of the Commission to strengthen crisis prevention and resolution mechanisms and protect savers and businesses from systematically-failing financial institutions.

Employment will be one of the central themes of the Belgian Presidency. Investment in human capital and the creation of jobs in a modernised labour market are fundamental for the development of our socio-economic model. The Belgian Presidency will focus in particular on the question of *green jobs* and *white jobs*. The consequences of economic restructuring, the fight against discrimination at work, as well as the promotion of equality of pay between men and women also call for renewed attention.

Following the work initiated by the Spanish Presidency and after seeking the opinion of the European Parliament, the Council will adopt employment guidelines under the Belgian Presidency.

The Belgian Presidency will continue the work set in motion by the Monti report dedicated to identifying the bottlenecks, missing links and new frontiers of the internal market.

Barriers to both the protection of innovative ideas and administrative simplification remain a challenge that the Belgian Presidency intends to overcome.

The protection of intellectual property and negotiations for a European patent will be other priorities.

The Belgian Presidency will also seek to lend momentum to a sustainable industrial policy, with the main aim of developing a green European economy, competitive at the global level. It will maintain an integrated approach, covering all facets of innovation and targeting the needs of businesses, in the main, and those of SMEs in particular.

Research, development and innovation will be the subject of in-depth discussions at the European Council in December 2010. As a priority, it must define guidelines for better coordination of Member States' policy in this area. The Belgian Presidency will focus on defining indicators to measure both the extent to which the crucial objective of 3% is being met, as well as the progress achieved through the creation of a European Research Area. Particular attention will be devoted to the free flow of knowledge within this European Research Area and to the simplification of Community programmes.

Teaching and training play an important role in the move towards a knowledge economy. This role involves more than just simply transferring knowledge. The transformation of our economy also requires acquired knowledge to be adapted and constantly updated, taking the needs of the labour market into account. Special effort must therefore be devoted to professional training and lifelong learning, as well as to combating failure to complete schooling.

Amongst the bottlenecks impeding growth, the Commission has also identified shortcomings in terms of infrastructure. The response to this challenge cannot come from the Member States alone. The Union must also contribute, particularly where cross-border infrastructure is concerned. The Belgian Presidency will strive to make progress on this issue, in conjunction with both the Commission and the European Investment Bank. In this context, particular attention will be focussed on the issue of securing the energy supply.

The Presidency will ensure that all its common policies, including agricultural policy and cohesion policy, support the Europe 2020 Strategy. These policies contribute significantly to growth and employment, as well as to the promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion.

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Our social model must be strengthened. Special emphasis must be placed on the necessity of **social cohesion**. Social progress is just as important a challenge as economic performance: this sums up the very spirit of our European model. In this context, the Belgian Presidency will seek to develop an ambitious access to employment policy.

As part of the Social Agenda and ongoing structural reforms, the Belgian Presidency will seek to encourage social convergence towards higher standards by the setting out of objectives and performance indicators. This approach should extend to cover issues of social protection, social inclusion, pensions and healthcare.

The Belgian Presidency aims to make tangible progress in the debate on social services of general interest.

2010 is the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. As part of this framework, the Belgian Presidency will examine how social protection can be strengthened.

The Presidency wishes to make progress in the struggle against discrimination and for equality.

The Union's adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will also be a matter on the Council's agenda.

Furthermore, the Belgian Presidency will also highlight the added value offered by the European Union in the improvement of public health.

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Bringing about the transformation to a low-carbon economy, by using energy and natural resources as efficiently as possible, represents the major challenge of the coming decade. In the years to come, a major part of the European Union's efforts will be devoted to the **environment** and the **climate**.

The Belgian Presidency will work together with the Commission to ensure that the European Union's voice is heard in international negotiations on the follow-up to the Copenhagen Conference. The goal that has been set is to achieve tangible progress and results to be brought to the table at the Framework Convention on

Climate Change meeting to be held in Cancun in November 2010. The international community must set ambitious objectives for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and must make firm commitments in support of developing countries. The European Union must put all its weight behind these debates and remain the driving force for change.

In addition, the Belgian Presidency will seek to link this process to new objectives for the European policies on energy and transport, with a view to encouraging the transition to a green economy. The adaptation of taxation regulations must also be considered in order to achieve these objectives. The Belgian Presidency will follow up the efforts made by the Council to reach agreement on European legislation which would allow Member States to recover the external costs generated by road transport from users.

Biodiversity, as well as the sustainable management of materials will also be prominent themes on the European agenda. The Belgian Presidency will prepare for the European Union's participation in the 10th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Nagoya in October 2010.

Special attention will be paid to the improvement of our legislative instruments related to the environment.

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The creation of an open and safe Union, which is there to serve its citizens, guarantee their fundamental freedoms and protect them represents a major challenge. It can only be met by the reinforcement and completion of the **European Area of Freedom, Security and Justice**. The Lisbon Treaty offers new possibilities in this respect. The Belgian Presidency intends to take advantage of these opportunities to set a new dynamic in motion in this area, in close consultation with the Commission and Parliament. It is in this context that we will implement the Multi-annual Stockholm Programme (2010-2014).

The objective of establishing a single asylum procedure and a uniform international protection statute by 2012 will be actively pursued. The fight against terrorism, organised crime, illegal immigration and human trafficking, in particular, will be priorities in the field of internal affairs. Legal migration will also be a priority for the Presidency. Mutual recognition of judicial decisions will be the central theme for the Belgian Presidency's programme in the field of justice.

The undeniable progress brought about by the free movement of persons must be matched by establishing a genuine common European Area for Freedom, Security and Justice.

Particular attention will be paid to the external dimension of these questions. Migration, the fight against organised crime, human trafficking, drug trafficking and the fight against terrorism are all challenges that must be addressed as an integral part of the European Union's external policy.

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Thanks to the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union is now equipped with robust institutions which will allow it to be stronger in **external action**. The power of attraction of the European Union, as the largest regional organisation in the world and as a key player in peace and prosperity, remains intact.

In order to give the Union access to an efficient diplomatic service, the establishment of a European External Action Service is to be finalised by the second half of 2010. As regards external representation of the Union, the Belgian Presidency wants to optimise the potential of the new treaty and place emphasis on uniqueness of representation.

The Union is ready to continue its enlargement process. The rate at which new members are integrated will depend on each candidate's own merits. Negotiations with Croatia could potentially move into their final phase and negotiations with Turkey are progressing. In June the European Council took the decision to open accession negotiations with Iceland. In the second half of the year, the Council will continue to examine the Commission's recommendation to start negotiations with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In line with the message conveyed at the Ministerial Meeting held in Sarajevo on 2 June 2010, the Presidency will also work to establish closer relations with the Western Balkans, in compliance with established procedures and the respective state of progress on reforms.

The Heads of State or Government of the European Union will meet their Asian and African counterparts at two summits. The aim is to strengthen cooperation and partnership with these continents and to address global challenges together.

The Union will continue to plead the case for the opening of markets and to resist the temptation of protectionism. In this context, the Presidency will

encourage the continuation of the work embarked upon by the Doha Development Round with a view to bringing it to a conclusion. In addition, the Union will continue to negotiate and ratify bilateral and regional trade agreements with its key partners.

The protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and their full integration into all areas of EU action will remain a priority for the EU's external relations.

Special attention will be paid to preparations for the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to mark the 10th anniversary of the Millennium Declaration.

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The potential of the new treaty must be exploited in all Union policies. In order to ensure the necessary resources are available for the implementation of these policies, the 2011 budget must be finalised under the Belgian Presidency. In the longer term, the Presidency will also seek to stimulate debate on future financial prospects.

To pursue efforts already undertaken to make the European construction more tangible and accessible to its citizens, the Belgian Presidency will continue the work done under the Spanish Presidency in order to adopt the Citizens' Initiative, envisaged as part of the Treaty of Lisbon.

We believe in the strength of our model and the common values that we have built together over the last five decades. The European Union has opened the way for the development of our continent and now guarantees that more than 500 million citizens can live in peace and prosperity. However, this model is a demanding one. And that is precisely why the Union cannot simply rest on its laurels.

Let's put Europe back into action!

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon

The Belgian Presidency will continue the work carried out under previous presidencies to implement the Treaty of Lisbon. It will ensure this work is performed in a such way as to fully meet a prime objective: to make the Union's activity more efficient, coherent and transparent. Building on the knowledge acquired by the Spanish Presidency, the Belgian Presidency will ensure, by working together directly with all individuals involved, that working methods and the sharing of responsibilities are consolidated and stabilised in full compliance with the Treaty of Lisbon.

Creation of a European External Action Service

The decision on the organisation and operation of the European External Action Service must be adopted, along with the associated instruments. This will provide the Union with an essential tool for improving the coherence, continuity and efficiency of the European Union's external action. The Belgian Presidency will support the High Representative so that the European External Action Service can be effectively created and fully operational as soon as possible.

European citizens' initiative

The citizens' initiative is one of the major innovations of the Treaty of Lisbon. It will allow European citizens to become more involved in European matters and encourage the strengthening of European public space. The Belgian Presidency will continue the work initiated under the Spanish Presidency for adoption, by the European Council and Parliament, of rules establishing the procedures and conditions for effective and efficient implementation of this initiative.

Delegated and implementing acts

The Belgian Presidency will continue the work performed for the implementation of dispositions relating to delegated and implementing acts.

The Treaty of Lisbon specifies that the rules establishing the Member States' mechanisms of control upon the Commission's exercise of implementation

competences must be subject to a regulation. The Belgian Presidency will continue the work initiated under the Spanish Presidency for the adoption of this regulation by the Council and European Parliament.

Solidarity clause

The Union and its Member States are, under the terms of the Treaty of Lisbon, to act jointly and in a spirit of solidarity should a member state be subjected to a terrorist attack or fall victim to a natural or man-made disaster. The terms for the implementation of this solidarity clause must be established by a decision. If the joint proposal of the High Representative and the Commission is to be presented during the second half of 2010, the Belgian Presidency must begin work to enable this clause to be operational as quickly as possible.

Economic governance and Europe 2020

In accordance with decisions taken by the European Council, based on proposals by the working group chaired by the President of the European Council, the Belgian Presidency will ensure the implementation of measures aimed at reinforcing the Stability and Growth Pact and improving economic governance.

The Belgian Presidency will devote due attention to the effective launch of the European Strategy for employment and growth in each Council concerned, taking account of multi-level governance. As part of its Europe 2020 Strategy in particular, the Belgian Presidency will ensure that the main stakeholders, including those at regional and local levels, are brought together in order to implement the strategy in such a way as to obtain optimum results.

At the end of 2010, the national reform, and stability and convergence programmes will be presented simultaneously by the Commission. Furthermore, the Member States must take account of their national objectives and bottlenecks identified based on dialogue with the Commission.

In accordance with the European Council's decision of March 2010, the October European Council will focus its attention on research and development and specifically examine the resources required to increase Europe's innovation potential and competitive capacity in light of the challenges it faces. The Belgian Presidency will ensure that the debate is properly prepared and monitored by all sittings of the Council concerned.

Economic, social and territorial cohesion

The Belgian Presidency intends to continue the debate on the future of the Economic, social and territorial Cohesion Policy initiated by the European Commission in 2007. For this purpose, it will continue the work performed by previous presidencies and will base its work on the different evaluation exercises and exploratory studies carried out by the Commission. The 5th Report on Cohesion, to be adopted by the Commission between now and November 2010, will be at the heart of the considerations addressed by the informal meeting of ministers responsible for the Belgian Presidency's Cohesion Policy.

As part of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Belgian Presidency will place greater emphasis on the role of the Cohesion Policy and Structural Funds, as a long term instrument aimed towards achieving priority targets for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth at member state and regional levels. It will also highlight the issue of industrial reconversion. The dynamic role to be played by towns and cities, as well as their sustainable social and economic development, must be more clearly emphasised. Lastly, the Belgian Presidency will focus its attention on the future objectives of the Cohesion Policy, its geographic and thematic targeting and the connection between cohesion and regional competitiveness.

The Belgian Presidency will continue the work done by the Spanish Presidency on the partnership between the EU, Member States, local and regional authorities and, more specifically, through "multi-level governance".

Financial framework

The Belgian Presidency will deal with a series of budgetary questions, such as revision of the agreement between Parliament and the Council on questions of management of the respective budgets, the effects of modifications to majority rules as a result of the Treaty of Lisbon coming into force, or the approval of new rules relating to the financial framework.

As regards the financial framework for 2007-2013, the Belgian Presidency will provide the Council with an appropriate follow-up to the evaluation of the multi-annual financial framework presented by the Commission. The conclusions must be integrated into the 2011 budget.

The Belgian Presidency will provide appropriate follow-up to the global evaluation of the budget for the future, for which a communication from the Commission is expected for the third quarter of 2010.

Enlargement

The enlargement process represents a powerful incentive for the implementation of political and economic reforms by countries aspiring to EU membership. In accordance with the renewed consensus on enlargement of December 2006, the Belgian Presidency will continue ongoing negotiations that depend on each candidate's own progress and merits.

Accession negotiations with Croatia have moved into their final phase. The Belgian Presidency will accompany and support the Croats in order to finalise its accession negotiations as soon as the conditions have been met. The Belgian Presidency intends to encourage Turkey to continue its reforms in order to fully satisfy the Copenhagen Criteria, as well as to be able to open negotiations on chapters of the Community '*acquis*'. These reforms must contribute to maintaining the pace of the accession negotiations started in October 2005.

The Belgian Presidency will be committed to implementing the formal decision of the European Council of 17 June 2010 to open accession negotiations with Iceland and will be devoted to encouraging the reaching of a consensus within the Council on the examination of the Commission's recommendation to begin accession negotiations with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Belgian Presidency will fully support the respective progress of other Western Balkan countries towards stabilisation of the region and the establishment of closer relations with the EU, along the lines proposed at the Zagreb and Thessaloniki summits. To this end, the Presidency encourages these countries to strengthen cooperation at regional level and use all instruments available, notably within the framework of the stabilisation and association process.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

In recent months, major initiatives have been taken at European level to ease the economic and financial impact of the crisis affecting our economies, as well as to restore the confidence of investors and citizens and pave the way towards smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

However, additional measures must be taken to guarantee financial stability and overcome major challenges, such as those linked to the ageing population, the loss of competitiveness of some of our economies, the stabilisation of public finances and the financing of efforts to combat climate change. The Presidency will duly monitor the work done by the working group established by the European Council in March 2010, examining the measures required to ensure better economic coordination and greater rigour in terms of budgetary discipline.

Financial sector reforms

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council intends to consolidate financial integration, create a new architecture for supervision of the financial sector, improve stability of the financial system and increase consumer and investor protection. The Belgian Presidency will draft a multi-annual action plan, in cooperation with the Commission and the European Parliament, determining all financial service reforms to be introduced within the European Union, in particular taking account of projects and work-in-progress within the G20.

The creation of a new supervisory structure at European Union level by the end of the year, in accordance with the conclusions of the “Larosière” committee, will be of crucial importance. At macro-prudential level, the European Systemic Risk Board must detect and identify systematic risks for financial stability. At micro-prudential level, European Supervisory Authorities will, in cooperation with national supervisory authorities, implement the European financial supervision system, and should work towards the finalisation of a *single rule book* and encourage convergence in supervisory practices. They will seek to do this whilst guaranteeing more effective application of Community law, better management of systemic cross-border risks and a faster rate of response in the event of a crisis. Based on discussions in cooperation with Parliament and the Commission, the Presidency will ensure that these new institutions are fully operational by the beginning of 2011.

Crisis prevention and resolution tools must be improved, in particular those intended to deal with systematically-failing institutions and cross-border problems.

In view of the financial sector's responsibility for the crisis, the Council will seek appropriate contributions from the financial sector to be channelled into crisis management and prevention mechanisms and to protect savers from failing financial institutions.

In order to improve the resilience and stability of financial institutions in the event of a crisis, it is important to set requirements in terms of capital and liquid assets at the most appropriate levels, in compliance with directives resulting from work undertaken at international level, particularly by the Basel Committee and the Financial Stability Board. The Belgian Presidency will pay due attention to the coherence and cumulative effect of these various reforms.

Based on the Commission's proposals, the Council will examine legislative initiatives relating to:

- promoting greater security of derivatives markets, by increasing transparency and reducing counterparty risk, in particular by central counterparty clearing for standardized derivative products;
- short selling and *Credit default swaps*;
- continuing reform of European legislation on deposit guarantee schemes and investor protection in order to increase consumer protection by applying the Council's decision to increase the level of deposit guarantees to €100,000 and ensure greater effectiveness of the directive on deposit guarantees;
- reinforcing the internal market through initiatives such as revision of the directive on financial conglomerates or setting a deadline date for the completion of migration to a Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA).

Revision of the market abuse directive will also be on the Council's agenda. In addition, the Belgian Presidency will pursue negotiations concerning the directive on Alternative Investment Fund Managers (AIFM directive) which aims to regulate hedge funds and private equity firms in accordance with G20 commitments.

Based on the European Commission's proposal, the Council will entrust the supervision of credit rating agencies to the *European Securities Markets Authority*.

Budgetary policy

Stability and Growth Pact

Owing to the current global situation, the short term priority will be to re-establish the credibility of the Stability and Growth Pact's curative measures. For several Member States currently subject to excessive deficit procedures it is important that the deadlines approved for carrying out adaptations are strictly respected. With this in mind, under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will accelerate, where appropriate, plans aimed at bringing about budgetary consolidation and structural reforms, in order to guarantee sustainability of public finances as well as sustainable and reinforced growth within the Union.

Particular attention will be paid to monitoring the implementation of a European financial stabilisation mechanism.

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will proceed with the implementation of the proposals of the working group created in March 2010 to the extent that they are backed by the European Council. The purpose of these measures is to strengthen the economic governance of the European Union and to provide a solid framework for the management and resolution of crises, respecting the principle of the budgetary responsibility of each Member State.

The governance of Eurostat in the monitoring and auditing of the quality of public finance figures for stability programmes will be further strengthened to ensure the credibility and quality of public finances.

Euro area

The Council will have to formally approve the decision allowing Estonia to adopt the euro as its currency on 1 January 2011.

Growth and competitiveness

The Council must seek to restore confidence and increase smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of the European Union in order to overcome future challenges. This will require strong structural reforms and policy measures to be included in the Europe 2020 Strategy. For this growth potential to be realised, it will be necessary to act in parallel to address bottlenecks, missing links and new frontiers within the internal market.

The crisis has shed light on the inequalities and the changes in current competitiveness between Member States. The EU must act urgently to address these issues by rectifying the losses in competitiveness highlighted by balance-of-payments and current account balance deficits. These problems are of great significance for the Eurogroup countries, which have, until now, benefited from their accession into the economic and monetary Union, but are now confronted with major demands and constraints in terms of adaptation.

Innovative financing

Throughout the duration of the Belgian Presidency, the Council will study various innovative financing proposals as part of the international agenda, and on the basis of preparatory work carried out by the European Commission. It will also examine their interactions with other international, European or national initiatives taking account of the necessity to maintain a *level playing field* between economic players. The Belgian Presidency will also continue work on a *global transaction tax*.

Taxation

Regarding direct taxation, discussions on methods for the extension and improvement of levies on savings income within the European Union and with regard to third-party countries will be continued.

In addition, the Council, under Belgian Presidency, will attempt to reach an agreement with third-party countries on cooperation and the exchange of information with regard to direct taxation and on broad approval of good governance principles concerning taxation.

The three Presidencies are committed to providing their ongoing support of the work of "Code of Conduct" groups in the field of business taxation, concerning the rollback of harmful business taxation measures and other issues featured in its work programme, specifically the fight against abuse, relations with third-party countries, transparency and the exchange of information concerning transfer pricing and administrative practices.

The Council will support the initiative concerning fiscal policy, ranked as a priority for the citizens. As part of the reopening of the single market, the objective will be to determine citizens' areas of interest for which soft initiatives will be launched.

Regarding indirect taxation, the modernisation of rules applied to the general VAT system and the combating of tax fraud will be encouraged.

Concerning the VAT system, it will involve continuing the work relating to dealing with insurance and financial services, as well as the overhaul of the implementation regulation for the directive relating to a common VAT system.

The handling of VAT on postal services will also be discussed.

Work on the special framework for travel agencies, the VAT handling proposal for face value vouchers, and the minimum standardised VAT rate, applicable from 2010, will also be encouraged.

The Council will examine the *reverse charge* mechanism to prevent fraud concerning duties on certain types of goods, either by means of individual derogations to be agreed with some Member States, or by extending the mechanism to include intangible goods such as gas and electricity.

A shift in labour taxation towards brackets related to behaviours harmful to the environment must be encouraged while ensuring overall fiscal pressure is not increased. An exchange of best practices may help in this respect. This process must integrate the potentially beneficial aspects of environmental taxation, as well as the need to significantly reduce fiscal pressure on labour in some of our economies. As soon as the Commission submits a proposal for a directive on energy taxation, particular attention will be devoted to the matter.

External role of the European Union

At a worldwide level, the European Union must have more influence on political decisions by strengthening the international role of the EU in various forums. This is particularly true for G20 Finance, where the Presidency will ensure coordination of a European position to reinforce the legitimacy of conclusions and their approval by all Member States. The Belgian Presidency will also guarantee the monitoring and implementation of the agreements reached.

The reforms of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), including the role of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), as well as the mandate of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the resources at their disposal must be adapted in order to better respond to the challenges presented by the global financial system and to improve and extend the efficiency of supervisory mechanisms.

In addition to *fast-start* financing, for which a report is expected from the UNFCCC in Cancun at the end of 2010, the Council must contribute to finding solutions for long-term financing problems, sources and methods of financing (*principles for global contributions, level of public and private financing, market-based instruments, innovative financing*), as well as to shaping the governance of the international financial architecture of the future.

Based on the legislative proposal of the Commission relating to external mandates of the European Investment Bank (EIB), the mid-term revision of mandates for 2007-2013 will be pursued in order for a decision to be reached between the Council and Parliament. In addition, the study of additional long-term options will require the establishment of a procedure in order to examine them further.

Union budget

The Belgian Presidency will conduct the initial procedure for drafting the budget (2011) according to the rules laid out under the Treaty of Lisbon, which gives the European Parliament and the Council the same powers of budgetary authority. The Presidency will ensure that this procedure is carried out smoothly.

The Presidency must also address the revision of the agreement between Parliament and the Council on questions regarding management of their respective budgets, the effects of modifications to majority rules as a result of the Treaty of Lisbon coming into force, or the approval of new rules relating to financial prospects.

COMPETITIVENESS (INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY AND RESEARCH)

Internal market

Our primary concern is to strengthen the internal market. The Monti report contains recommendations relating to bottlenecks, missing links and new frontiers within the internal market. Based on this report, and the communication by the Commission referring to it, the Belgian Presidency will reopen the debate on the reinforcement and completion of the internal market, as well as the implementation of and compliance with its rules. This will involve preparing the ground for the Commission's White Paper.

In this respect, the creation of a genuine online market and "internal digital market" are priorities. The Commission must present its proposals to ensure an online market that works better for consumers, citizens and SMEs. The internal market cannot develop without efficient competition rules, effective protection of intellectual property, and without respect for the rights of the consumer. The Belgian Presidency will support initiatives to reopen the debate on the effectiveness and future of the internal market.

The Commission communication concerning *smart regulation* instruments will be debated at the Council under the Belgian Presidency.

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will, where necessary, examine the Commission's initiative concerning services of general interest.

Based on the evaluation by the Commission, the Presidency will review the state of progress on the transposition and implementation of the Services Directive.

As a result of the work conducted under the Spanish Presidency, the Belgian Presidency hopes to be able to adopt a final agreement on the late payments directive.

Intellectual property

Adequate protection of intellectual property has been identified in the Europe 2020 Strategy as one of the most significant obstacles to successful operation of the internal market. Appropriate innovation and protection of innovative ideas form a whole at a European level. Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will continue its work on the resolution of questions which remain open, both for the EU patent and for the unified patent litigation system.

Regarding copyright, under the Belgian Presidency, the Commission's legislative initiative on orphan works will be the subject of an initial policy debate at the Council. Taking into account the digital development of libraries such as *Europeana* and other private initiatives, the Council will seek to make the most of an opportunity for European legislation on the matter.

Among the various initiatives in progress concerning the respect of intellectual property rights, at both a European and an international level, the Belgian Presidency will give special priority to negotiations on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) with a view to their conclusion before the end of 2010.

Gambling

In accordance with the Commission's consultations on gambling, the Council will continue discussions in an attempt to reach a single solution for cross-border problems linked to the growth in online gaming.

Industry, research and innovation

The Belgian Presidency will promote the launch of "Industrial policy in the era of globalization" as a flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 Strategy, while ensuring the articulation of the horizontal approach and the dimensions associated with these sectors. In particular, this new industrial strategy seeks to ensure the development of a proactive consultation process concerning the transition of the European economy to a green economy which is competitive on the world stage, and to provide a response to the challenges and opportunities which this poses to European industry.

For policies linked to competitiveness and the internal market, special emphasis will be placed on taking the needs of SMEs into account. In this context, the implementation of the *Small Business Act* will be re-examined. The internationalisation of SMEs, access to external markets, administrative simplification and access to finance and training will be key themes.

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will seek to adopt the revised Regulation on State aid to the coal industry.

Research, development and innovation will be highlighted as priorities during the second half of 2010 within the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy through the "Innovation Union" flagship initiative. In compliance with conclusions adopted by the European Council in March 2010, the Council must make a contribution on this

subject in preparation for the European Council in December. The Belgian Presidency will focus on formulating guidelines, defining policy objectives and developing indicators which allow progress on the creation of a European Research Area (ERA) to be measured.

On the basis of the Commission communication concerning the plan for research and innovation, the Belgian Presidency will favour an integrated approach covering multiple facets of innovation – technological, non-technological, and social – which promote its distribution throughout the economic fabric and which respond to the current challenges and the needs of businesses, particularly SMEs. In the context of the knowledge triangle, the role of *clusters* and the relationship between research centres, training and business will be examined.

In light of the development of the 8th Framework Programme, under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will conduct work relating to the simplification of administrative procedures and financial controls from the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development.

Throughout the Belgian Presidency, particular attention will be given to the development of the following three initiatives relating to free circulation of knowledge within the European Research Area:

- definition of framework conditions for the “joint-programming” initiative with social challenges as the priority;
- continuation of the execution of the European partnership for researchers, in particular to increase their mobility and improve their status;
- promotion of improved integration in universities and research institutes within the knowledge triangle.

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will work to develop the role of the regions in the development, implementation and monitoring of research and European Scientific Policy.

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will examine the contribution of R&D to a sustainable society through strategic bio-economy initiatives, the plan for the development of low carbon technologies, (SET Plan) and marine and maritime research,.

The Council will continue the discussion on the ITER project and examine the possibility of extending the 7th Euratom Framework Programme (scheduled to end

in 2011) so that it comes to an end at the same time as the 7th Research Framework Programme due to end in 2013.

In the space sector, the Presidency will seek to ensure progress is made in the definition of a European vision for space exploration in order to allow the European Union's flagship programmes for the space sector to operate sustainably as soon as possible. Finally, the implementation of competence in the space sector, accorded to the EU by the Treaty of Lisbon, will receive the undivided attention of the Belgian Presidency which will seek to bring together existing European expertise and infrastructures in the space sector, in particular those of the European Space Agency.

Consumer rights

Regarding the Directive on Consumer Rights, the Council will continue to work on the harmonisation of the rights of consumers while ensuring a high level of protection of such rights.

Furthermore, the Belgian Presidency hopes to initiate a far-reaching debate on the urgent need for continued harmonisation of the effective supervision of the acquired benefits of consumer rights, as well as the necessity for respect of the economic rights of the consumer within the internal market. The Belgian Presidency, in conjunction with the European Commission, will formulate a proposal aimed at improving substantive cooperation between the various national supervisory bodies.

Tourism

Based on the proposal by the Commission dealing with the subject, the Belgian Presidency will contribute to the implementation of a coordinated action in favour of the tourism sector. This sector has a transverse impact which extends across, and is not limited to training, employment, social affairs, quality of life, consumer protection, economy and taxes, transport and mobility, and the environment.

EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Employment

The Belgian Presidency will be the first presidency to implement the European Employment Strategy, updated in light of objectives defined within the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy for employment and growth. It will ensure that this Strategy is an ambitious one, and that the implications for employment policies are taken into account in all structural reforms and in debates on competitiveness. Direct cooperation with the Parliament and the other institutions within the EU will be ensured. The national parliaments, the regions and the other stakeholders will be involved in the implementation of the strategy. The Presidency will ensure the involvement of social partners. During the course of the Belgian Presidency, following on the work initiated by the Spanish Presidency, the Council will adopt a decision on employment guidelines.

In conformity with conclusions adopted at the European Council of March 2010, the Presidency will ensure, in the short-term, that exceptional support measures adopted to respond to the crisis are repealed in a prudent manner, taking account of macroeconomic stability, public finances and the situation of employment markets.

Within the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy and its “Employment and Skills” flagship initiative, under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will address four priority areas for action based on the priorities and work of the European Commission, Parliament and Employment Committee:

-In the context of a move to a low-carbon economy, the Council will adopt conclusions under the Belgian Presidency to stimulate *Green Jobs* and the *Greening of All Jobs*, by setting targets and policies enabling them to be achieved, in particular, new qualifications (*green skills*) and training, and through the adaptation of production methods and workplaces.

- In light of changing demographics, the Belgian Presidency wishes to promote a *work and ageing society* pact by adopting conclusions on new career management techniques, and by identifying niches in the employment market created by an ageing demographic (*white jobs*).

- Acting in favour of the integration and mobilization of all talents available on the employment market, as well as against all forms of discrimination in the workplace (in terms of gender, diversity and target groups) to ensure inclusive employment markets with a view to promoting greater social cohesion.

- Developing *flexicurity* through the concept of *making transition pay*, by ensuring that the transition of workers on the employment market will benefit both the employee and the economy as a whole, by developing quality transitions and by fighting against segmentation in employment whilst creating the conditions for better job security.

In this context, the Belgian Presidency underlines the importance of motivating the unemployed, improving skills and providing continuing training in order to meet the needs of the job market. The Presidency will also stress the role of public employment services.

Another point that requires attention is the inclusion of those unemployed who are the most excluded from the employment market.

The Commission's communication on youth unemployment will be the subject of a policy debate by the Council, examining measures to increase employment, learning and training for young people.

On the basis of work undertaken by the Commission, the Belgian Presidency will also initiate a consultation by the Council to ensure that economic changes and restructuring of businesses proceed in a socially-responsible way.

Finally, the Belgian Presidency will ensure that the European Union implements the Decent Work Agenda, as well as the Global Jobs Pact in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), and ensures the defence of social norms in its external relations.

Employment law

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will ensure the continuation of work done under the Spanish Presidency on the proposal for a directive concerning the implementation of measures aimed at promoting the improved health and safety of pregnant workers, those having given birth, or those breastfeeding at work. Similarly, the Council will proceed with an initial policy debate on the working time directive according to the results of consultations with social partners.

Among other legislative initiatives relating to employment law, the council will address:

- the proposal for the revision of the directive on the risk of exposure of workers to electromagnetic waves, for which the Belgian Presidency hopes to successfully reach a policy agreement in the Council;

- the proposal for a directive on the application of employment law to seafarers.

Social policy:

Within the context of the work undertaken by the social protection committee, the Council will ensure that the social impact of the crisis continues to be monitored and debated by the Ministers of Social Affairs, concerning the role of automatic economic stabilizers in particular.

In conjunction with the European Commission, the Belgian Presidency will continue to work to improve the effectiveness of the open method of coordination in the domains of health, pensions and social inclusion. Debates on the flagship initiative to reduce poverty shall contribute to the adoption of initiatives within the domains of social protection and active inclusion which go beyond the fight against poverty.

Based on the work undertaken in preparation for the Council, and in addition to the Commission's Green Paper, the Council will adopt the conclusions relating to the longevity, suitability and portability of pensions within a context of an aging population. The sustainability of long-term financing of pensions must also feature on the agenda.

Conclusions of the Council regarding social services of general interest will be supplemented by work undertaken by the social protection committee for the Third Forum on services of general interest, as well as by the Second Biennial Commission report.

The Belgian Presidency will proceed with the conclusion of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion by ensuring that lessons for the future are drawn from it. It will be proposed that the Council adopts conclusions relating to child poverty, universal access to quality healthcare, homelessness and the prevention of poverty.

The Belgian Presidency will organize a Conference on disability concerning the coordination and implementation of tools envisaged by the United Nations convention on the subject.

Equality

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will adopt conclusions on the basis of the communication by the Commission relating to the new strategy on equality

between men and women (2011-2015). In addition, the Council will adopt conclusions concerning equality of salaries between men and women within the context of the implementation of the Beijing action plan (UN Conference 1995).

The Belgian Presidency will continue the work of the Spanish presidency concerning the implementation of the principle of equality of treatment of individuals without distinction of religion, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Finally, combating violence against women is another matter which will receive the Presidency's full attention.

Health policy: solidarity and innovation

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will enter into policy discussions on the way in which Member States and the Commission manage public health risks together, in particular as a result of evaluation of the influenza pandemic.

Based on a communication by the Commission, the Council will adopt conclusions on nuclear medicine and radioisotopes.

Under the Belgian Presidency the Council will continue negotiations on the draft directive relating to cross-border healthcare.

Particular attention will be devoted to the question of professionals from the healthcare sector, to the determining social factors of health, to the fight against cancer and chronic illnesses, as well as to solidarity and innovation in the proprietary medicinal products sector.

The Council will continue to work on legislative initiatives constituting the pharmaceutical package. Particular attention will be paid to proposals aimed at combating the counterfeiting of medicines, and *pharmacovigilance*.

At an international level, the Belgian Presidency will ensure preparation and coordination of the European of the Conference of the Parties on the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Foodstuffs

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will continue to work on the proposal for a regulation relating to information for consumers regarding foodstuffs.

The Presidency will work closely with other institutions to reach an agreement on the proposal for a regulation concerning novel foods and their release on the market.

TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY

A sustainable future for transport

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will start a policy debate regarding the new White paper on sustainable transport for 2010-2020 presented by the Commission. Particular attention will be paid to the interconnection between several modes of transport, the development of intelligent transport systems, high-quality public transport, logistics for goods, urban mobility, road safety and the protection of vulnerable users.

The Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) must assign a central role to sustainability. For this reason, under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will proceed with a review of this policy and the methods intended to establish an integrated European transport network. In particular, a special effort will be made to ensure a place for all modes of transport, including maritime and inland ports, as well as their environs, which must be integrated into the European transport network.

Throughout the Belgian Presidency, the Council will continue its efforts with a view to reaching a framework agreement on the Eurovignette directive (1999/62/EG) which allows Member States to recover the external costs generated by road haulage. The ultimate objective is to reach agreement on a set of regulations to apply to all modes of transport.

Within the context of the implementation of an Urban Mobility Action Plan, the Council will devote specific attention to sustainable modes of transport, such as river and rail transport for goods, as well as low-impact public mobility (public transport, cycling and pedestrian transport in urban areas).

The Council will examine the Commission's mid-term evaluation of the NAIADES (*Navigation and Inland Waterway Action and Development in Europe*) plan, aimed at promoting river transport.

Depending on the presentation by the Commission of a proposal for the revision of the initial rail transport package, the Council will proceed with the drafting of a progress report under the Belgian Presidency.

The topic of logistics is important and requires a cross-border approach. The implementation of the 2007 action plan relating to logistics for goods will be evaluated in 2010. This evaluation will result in an adaptation of approach and in new measures being launched under the Belgian Presidency.

Safety and protection of different modes of transport

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will adopt the draft conclusions of the 4th Road Safety Action Plan for the period 2011-2020 presented by the European Commission. In October 2010, "European Road Safety Days" will be organized.

In April 2010, the new air safety regulation came into force. The Belgian Presidency will ensure its implementation and, in particular, the advancement of technical cooperation and partnerships with the United States, and African and Asian countries within the framework of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

If the publication by the Commission of a roadmap for the integration of maritime surveillance is confirmed, the Belgian Presidency will initiate a debate on the matter.

Innovation within the transport sector

The Council will, under the Belgian Presidency, conduct a policy debate on the mid-term evaluation of the European navigation satellite programme (EGNOS - GALILEO).

According to the progress made in negotiations for the framework directive on the support and implementation of the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Action Plan, the Presidency will ensure the implementation of this document providing intelligent applications for the regulation of traffic information and safety.

Telecommunications

The Commission has adopted a digital agenda for Europe aimed at the deployment of next-generation broadband networks giving citizens and businesses access to innovative on-line services. The implementation of the points for action contained in the digital agenda is part of the Belgian Presidency's programme.

Work relating to the adoption of the "Radio Spectrum" strategy will be started during the Belgian Presidency.

The purpose is to allow the development of new cellular telecommunications services through the improved management of the radio spectrum in Europe, while taking into account the importance of digital TV and radio broadcasting, linguistic and cultural diversity, and the diversity of the media.

The goal is to generate social benefits and economic growth from the migration to digital television.

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will also examine a new proposal for a European Commission Regulation concerning the security of networks and information. By adopting this regulation, the Council will confer a new mandate on ENISA, the European agency responsible for the security of networks and information.

The Presidency will organize an exchange of views between Member States to adopt the Council's conclusions on European broadband strategy. It will involve reducing the digital divide by offering all European citizens broadband access by 2013, which means promoting the deployment in Europe of next-generation (optical fibre) networks as much as possible. A suitable balance must be struck between promoting investment in optical fibre and maintaining a competitive market.

The European digital agenda is an essential element in the Europe 2020 Strategy. Based on the proposal by the European Commission, the Presidency is keen to adopt the 2015 e-government action plan.

Finally, the Belgian Presidency will devote significant attention to the Commission's interim evaluation report on changes in the price of roaming services for telephones, SMS and data transfer.

Energy

The Belgian Presidency will continue with preparatory work aimed at the adoption of the new Energy Action Plan (2011-2020) by the European Council in Spring 2011. On the basis of a Commission communication relating to the roadmap and the results of the public consultation associated to it, under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will seek the adoption of the conclusions concerning the content of the Energy Action Plan.

The Council will initiate debate on the creation of a roadmap for 2050 with a view to determining a Long-Term Strategy for a Low CO² Emissions Economy.

The Commission will also issue a communication on guidelines and best practice relating to initiatives for regional cooperation within the energy sector. On this basis, the Belgian Presidency will propose conclusions to the Council.

Furthermore, between now and the end of the year, the Commission will propose its new energy infrastructures package aimed at contributing to the supply of energy and the creation of an internal market. A policy debate will be organized at the Council under the Belgian Presidency. In this context, the Belgian Presidency will endeavour, through work on the *North Seas Countries' Offshore Grid Initiative* to lend substance to the development of offshore wind farms in Europe. The Presidency will pay special attention to the development of *Smart Grids* aimed at promoting energy savings and decentralized renewable energy sources. A review of guidelines for the Trans-European Networks for Energy Programme (TEN-E) will also be examined during the Belgian Presidency.

The Commission's legislative initiative within the energy sector, aimed at promoting the transparency and integrity of wholesale markets, will be the subject of a progress report to the Council. This proposal completes the third energy package approved in 2009 and is a pre-requisite for the creation of an internal energy market.

Within the context of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, the Belgian Presidency will, in conjunction with the Commission, organise a debate on the measures to be taken to make energy policy more favourable to consumers.

Given the importance of biomass in achieving renewable energy targets, the Belgian Presidency will seek to move the debate on the application of biomass forward with a view to the evaluation to be carried out by the Commission in 2011. The Presidency will also invite the Council to address the question of criteria for the sustainability of biomass as an energy source in its recommendations.

The report on the implementation of the European economic recovery plan will provide an overview of the implementation of energy projects. The revision of the regulation concerning the economic recovery plan relating to energy will be negotiated and adopted under the Belgian Presidency so that unused budgets can be redirected to projects for energy efficiency and renewable energy.

The external aspects of energy policy will be on the Belgian Presidency's agenda. In cooperation with the Commission, the Presidency will ensure that the European Union acts in a coordinated and effective manner in negotiations with third countries.

ENVIRONMENT

Climate change

The Presidency will assume its role in coordinating the position of the Member States within the Council within the framework of international negotiations on climate change. The priority will be the implementation of the Copenhagen Treaty, with a view to the 16th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Climate Change, scheduled to be held in Cancun from 29 November to 10 December 2010.

Throughout the Belgian Presidency, the Council will devote continued attention to the implementation of the climate and energy package. Measures must be adopted to set firm European climate change targets, including the directive on CO² emissions limits for light commercial vehicles and the “decarbonisation” of the transport sector.

Biodiversity

2010 has been declared the International Year of Biodiversity. The Presidency will prepare for the EU's participation in the 10th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Nagoya in October 2010. The aim of the conference is the development of a new policy on biodiversity based on adapted targets.

Depending on the date on which the Commission presents its proposals for ecosystem services, invasive exotic species, illegally harvested wood and the biomass sustainability criteria, an initial debate will be organised by the Council.

The Presidency will devote the necessary attention to follow up on the conclusions from the Environment Council of 4 December 2008 relating to genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Sustainable management of materials

At the Informal council to be held under the Belgian Presidency, the Environment Ministers will examine how the transition to an economy which makes efficient use of resources can be ensured in each phase of the lifecycle of materials, products and waste. On the basis of these debates, the Council will ensure that the conclusions are adopted.

In addition to this strategic approach, the Presidency will attempt to make progress on Council and Parliament negotiations pertaining to several proposals for legislation relating to hazardous substances from electrical and electronic equipment, their waste (RoHS and WEEE) and biocides.

The best instruments for environmental policy

In collaboration with the Commission and the European Parliament, the Belgian Presidency will improve the transparency, coordination and actual application of current environmental legislation.

In particular, the Belgian Presidency intends to ensure the adoption of the Council's conclusions on initiatives which relate to improving the application of legislation on waste, the harmonisation of environmental inspection criteria, the evaluation of the effects of environmental reporting, and the improvement of the system of environmental information.

Based on an in-depth evaluation of the 6th Environment Action Programme (EAP), this council will initiate a policy debate under the Belgian Presidency concerning the 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP). In this context, particular attention should be paid to improving the management, definition and application of environmental policy.

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will focus on economic incentives designed to bring about a change in behaviours that are damaging to the environment and to promote energy-efficient products and services.

EDUCATION, TRAINING, YOUTH, SPORT, CULTURE AND AUDIOVISUAL POLICY

Education and training

Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will adopt guidelines with a view to setting up a new work programme on the education and training of professionals until 2020. At the Informal Meeting of Ministers in Bruges, the candidate countries and countries of the European Economic Area will be invited to join this work programme. Draft conclusions on this matter will be submitted to the Council.

Within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and the need for a green, sustainable and skills-based economy, the Council will adopt conclusions on education in the field of sustainable development.

The Presidency will continue the work embarked upon by previous Presidencies concerning the strengthening of European cooperation in the domain of school education. In line with the conclusions of the European Council, the Presidency will pay particular attention to the problems associated with the failure to complete schooling, and to core skills, as well as to the role of education and training in social inclusion.

Depending on the presentation by the Commission of its flagship initiative "*Youth on the move*", under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will adopt the recommendation on the promotion of mobility for young people.

Finally, the Belgian Presidency will work towards modernising higher education in Europe and on the interaction between higher education, research and innovation.

Culture

Within the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Presidency undertakes to highlight the potential of cultural and creative industries and the contribution they make to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), growth and employment in Europe. Under the Belgian Presidency, the Council will devote particular attention to policies and processes to be implemented to develop and support these cultural and creative industries. In this context, the role of SMEs will be particularly emphasized.

The Presidency subscribes to three strategic objectives on the European Cultural Agenda. These are the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity and the promotion of culture as an essential element in international relations. On the basis of communications by the Commission, the Belgian Presidency will ensure the successful completion of the evaluation of the Council's Work Plan for 2008-2010 in favour of culture and the adoption of a new post-2010 Work Plan.

The Belgian Presidency will continue discussions aimed at the adoption, by the European Parliament and Council, of the proposal for a decision by the Commission to create a European Heritage Label which will allow the shared history of Europe to be celebrated by highlighting the importance of the European dimension of its cultural heritage.

Within the framework of the "European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion," the Presidency will propose draft conclusions which seek to demonstrate that the fight against poverty and the fight against social exclusion are challenges of a transverse nature which, in particular, require the introduction of favourable cultural policies.

Audiovisual

The Presidency will initiate a consultation process on mechanisms to support European cinema to cover the entire cinematographic creative process from screenwriting to the promotion and distribution of European productions.

To rise to the challenges posed by the digital age, the Presidency will propose a draft conclusion to the Council on the protection and safeguarding of audiovisual heritage, and will focus on the resources to be provided at national and European level to support cinemas wishing to invest in digital equipment.

The prospects for development of public libraries in the digital age and of *Europeana* will also be examined by the Council as will, more generally, the challenges presented by the conservation of European digital cultural and audiovisual heritage in the long-term.

Sport

Now that the Treaty of Lisbon has come into force, the European Union has increased competency in the field of sport. Based on the communication by the Commission presenting the guidelines for future European policy on sport, the

Belgian Presidency will initiate work within the Council with a view to drawing up a resolution on future European sport policy. In this context, special attention will be paid to establishing closer dialogue with the world of sport.

Depending on the presentation by the Commission of a proposal for the European Sport Programme (2012-2013), the Council will start work on the matter during the course of the Belgian Presidency.

The Belgian Presidency will start a debate within the Council on the role of sport in society, including *Fair Play*. This includes education and training in the sector, the fight against doping in sport, as well as the role of poverty and social exclusion.

Youth

The updated Framework of European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) makes provision for a new role for youth workers. The Belgian Presidency will initiate work by the Council relating to a resolution on youth work. Within the context of the "European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion", a paragraph of this resolution will be dedicated to the accessibility to this sector for children and young people who live in poverty.

The structured dialogue on the subject of employment and youth (youth@work) is a project shared between the Team Presidency, the Commission and the European Youth Forum. Each Presidency organises a "European Youth Conference" to pool the results of national consultation processes and prepare for the next step in the process. The Belgian Presidency will submit the mid-term results of the structured dialogue to the Council in order to arrive at a political outcome during the course of the Hungarian Presidency (May 2011).

On the basis of the European Commission study of access to culture for young people, the Council will present its conclusions under the Belgian Presidency.

Finally, the Belgian Presidency will present a memo concerning an inventory of the European and international policy agenda regarding children, young people and children's rights.

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

The Common Agricultural Policy

The Belgian Presidency will continue the consultation process initiated by previous presidencies regarding the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) beyond 2013, in particular based on the results of the public consultation organized by the Commission.

The communication by the Commission on the CAP post-2013, expected by the end of the year, will be the subject of a policy debate within the Council. The Belgian Presidency will commence work aimed at reaching conclusions for the Council on this communication.

For the dairy sector, which has been particularly severely affected over the last two years, the Presidency will have the recommendations from the Report of the High-Level Group of Experts examined by the Council. The same will be done for the Commission's interim report on changes within the milk market and the management of the system of milk quotas until 2015.

The Presidency will commence work on all Commission initiatives which result from recommendations of the High-Level Group of Experts.

The Belgian Presidency will initiate a debate on the review of European policy regarding the quality of agricultural produce, for which the Commission's legislative initiative is expected by the end of 2010.

Other legislative dossiers, as part of the simplification of the CAP or the improved operation of the food supply chain, will be placed on the agenda of the Council in consultation with the Commission.

The Belgian Presidency will work to reach a political agreement relating to legislative proposals for the improvement and simplification of rural development policy.

The position of the European Union on agriculture to be defended in trade negotiations of the DOHA development round will be subject, where necessary, to consultation within the Council.

Phytosanitary, veterinary and food safety issues

During the Belgian Presidency, the Council will conduct an evaluation of the Commission's audit report on the review of plant health policy.

The Belgian Presidency will coordinate Europe's position in negotiations with third countries with a view to facilitating the sanitary and phytosanitary conditions applicable to imports and exports.

In terms of animal health and, more specifically, the control of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs) such as BSE, the Council will debate its position on the roadmap presented by the Commission. At the same time, the Belgian Presidency intends to enter into discussions on the question of financing the prevention and control of animal diseases.

With reference to animal welfare, it will be examined whether Community measures may be taken on the basis of Article 13 of the TFEU.

The Belgian Presidency will devote the necessary attention to conducting a review of work done by the Council relating to genetically-modified organisms (GMOs).

Forests

The Belgian Presidency will ensure that work is finalised on the proposal for establishing the obligations of operators who place wood and derivative products on the market.

Fisheries

The reform of the Common Fisheries Plan will also be a priority for the Belgian Presidency. During the Council Meeting of November, the Presidency will organise a debate on this theme, placing the emphasis on cooperation between the scientific community and the fisheries sector.

The Belgian Presidency will work to reach a political agreement on fishing opportunities for 2011 and 2012.

The Belgian Presidency will be committed to making progress on the work concerning multi-annual fishing management plans. The multi-annual plans concerning anchovy stocks in the Gulf of Gascony and western stocks of Atlantic horse mackerel must be adopted during the second half of 2010. In addition, the

Presidency will contribute actively to the evaluation of the plan for managing stocks of plaice and sole in the North Sea, and shall commence work concerning the future long-term plan for salmon in the Baltic Sea.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

The reinforcement and effective implementation of the European Area of Freedom, Security and Justice represents a challenge for the European Union. The Belgian Presidency will continue with the effective implementation of the Multi-annual Stockholm Programme (2010-2014). The Treaty of Lisbon makes new instruments available in this respect. In close consultation with the European Parliament and the European Commission, the Belgian Presidency hopes to take full advantage of the new institutional and procedural opportunities in order to generate positive momentum in this area.

The concept of "internal security" expressed in the Treaty of Lisbon must be a far-reaching, integrated concept which covers prevention, repression and the judicial dimension. The Treaty of Lisbon has set up the Standing Committee on operational cooperation on internal security (OCIS), which will also take responsibility for reaching a common accord with the Commission, for the translation and operational monitoring of the Internal Security Strategy for the EU approved under the Spanish Presidency.

The Presidency also supports the intention of the European Commission to map information systems, particularly those which contain personal data, with a view to organizing an in-depth examination of information systems architecture as part of the integrated management of borders.

In the fight against terrorism and organised crime, the need for security must be reconciled with the rights and individual freedoms of the European citizen. In this context, the agreement between the European Union and the United States concerning the transfer of data from the European Union to the United States within the scope of the American Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP) programme must be approved. It will also be appropriate to enter into negotiations with the United States on the subject of a universal agreement on data protection and to continue discussions on the use of data from passenger files (PNR - *Passenger Name Records*) within the EU based on a new Commission proposal.

The negotiations with the Council of Europe concerning the accession by the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights will be launched on the basis of the mandate granted by the Council.

In matters of judicial cooperation on criminal matters, the development of a European system for the taking of evidence, as described in the Stockholm Programme, will be a priority for the Belgian Presidency, which will base its action in this area on an initiative by a group of Member States.

The development of a common policy on immigration requires a global approach, including a vision for the future of legal migration.

The Stockholm Programme confirms the objective of implementing a shared asylum procedure and a uniform status for persons benefitting from international protection by 2012.

In addition, the strengthening of Frontex, the European Agency for the management of operational cooperation at external borders, is a priority on the agenda.

Finally, the fight against human trafficking is a major priority for the Belgian Presidency.

Home affairs

The development of a coherent European policy (analysis of criminality, determination of priority phenomena and the monitoring of Action Plans) is a central objective of the Presidency. The development of a general analysis of criminality constitutes the first stage in linking the different levels of power.

In the framework of the implementation of the action plan against terrorism, particular attention must be given to the prevention of radicalisation, as much through the actions of local police forces in the fight against criminality as by administrative prevention. The Belgian Presidency will also launch projects relating to problems such as international criminal gangs, illegal trade in large-calibre firearms in major European cities, identity fraud, soccer violence and security of rest areas along Europe's motorways.

The strengthening of the shared action by the European Union during major disasters, both internally and externally, shall also feature prominently on the agenda. The debate will be conducted on the basis of the evaluation of the existing mechanism for civil protection, to be undertaken by the Commission.

Justice

Mutual recognition of judicial decisions is the cornerstone of the European Justice and Security Area. In addition to the work of the Belgian Presidency on the introduction of a new universal system for taking evidence, particular attention will be paid to the effective implementation of existing instruments.

In terms of criminal justice, the adaptation of the legal framework following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon will be continued. As part of the reformatting of previous framework decisions for the harmonisation of national criminal legislation, priority will be given to instruments aimed, on the one hand, at the prevention of human trafficking and the fight against this phenomenon, as well protection of victims, and, on the other hand, sexual exploitation and abuse involving children and child pornography.

In collaboration with the European Commission, the Presidency wishes to make progress with the implementation of the roadmap aimed at reinforcing the protection of suspects and persons pursued within the context of criminal proceedings. In the fight against fraud, the Belgian Presidency also intends to promote practical cross-border cooperation between magistrates in neighbouring zones for the request, use and exchange of information at an international level in the domains of tax affairs, social security and justice.

Negotiations related to the improved regulation of judicial competence and law applicable to wills and testaments will be pursued in an intensive manner. The examination of a European instrument establishing closer cooperation in matters of cross-border divorce and separation law (ROME III) will be pursued.

Furthermore, the drawing up of a more effective regulation for the cross-border execution of judicial decisions, including via the seizure of financial assets, will also be on the agenda. The Belgian Presidency will pay particular attention to mediation in instances of parental kidnapping.

Asylum and migration

The creation of a common European asylum policy founded on the respect of fundamental rights with high standards of protection in accordance with the Geneva Convention and other international instruments, remains an absolute priority. To achieve this objective, debate needs to be conducted in an active manner on the conditions for the reception of asylum seekers and minimum standards of qualification for international protection. The Presidency will continue with work on the proposal by the Commission for the extension of the

scope of application of the "long-term residents" directive to all persons benefitting from international protection. The Presidency will also work on the 'Dublin' regulation which determines which State is competent to process a request for asylum.

In terms of the development of legal migration, and economic migration in particular, the Presidency will launch a debate on migration within the context of the demographic challenges faced, and will work on new proposals concerning procedures regulating the entry, temporary stay and residence of Intra-Corporate Transferees (ICTs), as well as entry and residence conditions for seasonal workers.

Work relating to establishing a single application procedure for a single permit for Non-EU Member Country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State will be pursued as far as is possible.

The issue of unaccompanied foreign minors and their protection constitutes one of the priorities, with the implementation of the plan of action approved under the Spanish Presidency.

The Belgian Presidency will ensure a strong correlation between policy on migration and other policies, in particular the external policy of the Union. Partnerships for mobility are, in this respect, a significant instrument in achieving extended cooperation with third-party countries. An initial stage in this process is to establish missions for migration to third-party countries via the major migration routes.

The external dimension of the European Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

Migration, the fight against organised crime, human trafficking, drug trafficking or terrorism are all issues which cannot be separated from the European Union's external policy. The external dimension of such questions is a key issue for the Belgian Presidency.

Adopted in October 2009, the implementation of the Washington Declaration on enhancing transatlantic cooperation in the area of Freedom, Justice and Security represents a major priority, as does regular dialogue with the Russian Federation in Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) within the scope of the Permanent Partnership Council. The cooperation with the countries of the Eastern Partnership within the domain of Justice and Home Affairs will be continued. The dialogue with the western Balkan states will be pursued within the wider scope of efforts made by countries of the region with a view to their eventually becoming members of the European Union.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The Treaty of Lisbon marks a true turning point in the organisation of the Union's external relations. It will strengthen the coherence of our Union's actions and its influence around the world. In the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the President of the European Council and the High Representative ensure the representation of the European Union on the international stage. On behalf of the Union, its High Representative conducts political dialogue with third countries and expresses the position of the Union within international organisations and at international conferences. The High Representative of the Union presides over the Foreign Affairs Council, including in its Defence and Development Cooperation capacities, and calls upon the support of European External Action Service.

In this transition period, in keeping with its European commitment, Belgium will do everything within its power, including the making available of personnel, to ensure the smooth application of the new measures introduced by the Treaty in support of the President of the European Council and the High Representative.

With regard to the Common commercial policy, coordination within the Foreign Affairs Council will continue to be provided by the rotating presidency.

External Policy of the Union

A new European External Action Service

For the European Union, the creation of the European External Action Service remains the main objective in the second half of 2010. The recruitment of personnel to the Service at all levels, and the progressive transformation of the European Union's delegations are priority tasks.

During this transition period, it will be necessary to avoid compromising the continuity of action and representation of the Union. To this end, Belgian political and diplomatic personnel will once again, in a transitional manner and under the direct authority of the High Representative and her services, assume support functions on behalf of the European Union.

Strategic relationships with our partners

The upcoming ASEM summit, which will be hosted by Belgium in October 2010, will provide an opportunity for privileged dialogue between Europe and Asia.

The partners will seek common ground on the reform of economic and financial governance in the wake of the crisis and on sustainable development in particular.

The forthcoming EU-Africa Summit will allow European and African partners to reaffirm the strength of the Euro-African partnership and to discuss issues of peace and security, development, Millennium Development Goals, as well as climate change.

As concerns the external representation of the Union, the Belgian Presidency wishes to maximise the potential of the new treaty, and to strengthen the coherence of the Union's influence, without harming the shared appropriation. It will promote the uniqueness of representation and ensure improved transparency and coordination.

A common security and defence policy

The implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon in terms of a Common Security and Defence policy will also require special attention. Notwithstanding the progress made in recent years, the European Union still does not possess the civil or military capacity to match its ambitions. Permanent Structured Cooperation as the European architecture for the planning and command of crisis operations, the capacity for rapid and coherent reaction, including for relief operations, civil-military cooperation, the training of civil and military personnel for crisis management, the strengthening of the European Defence Agency, and the strategic relationship between the Union and NATO are among the key themes requiring special attention.

Development cooperation and humanitarian aid

The Union's efforts in terms of Development cooperation and humanitarian aid will also benefit from the nomination of the High Representative, Vice-President of the Commission and the European External Action Service. The High Representative who presides over the Foreign Affairs Council, including when it sits with the Ministers for Cooperation, is responsible for ensuring the coherence of the Union's external action.

During the second half of 2010, the main political summit for the EU on development cooperation will be the United Nations Summit on Millennium Development Goals (MDG), to be held in New York in September. Its aim is to evaluate the progress made with a view to creating MDGs, and to identify the additional effort required in the run-up to 2015. As the major investor,

the European Union must play a primary role in the success of the Summit, taking the shared responsibility of aid donors and beneficiary countries as its guiding principle.

In this context, the European Union will pay particular attention to countries in a fragile state, as well as good governance and the respect and promotion of democracy and human rights. The European Union will continue its efforts to improve the effectiveness of its development aid, and work more specifically on the problems of budgetary aid and *accountability*.

The European Union will also work on strengthening synergies between development and the fight against climate change.

Recent crises, such as the Haitian earthquake in January 2010, have demonstrated the necessity of improving European coordination of humanitarian aid. The European Union will also work on a mid-term review of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. Finally, a start will be made on the creation of a European Volunteer Corps for humanitarian aid.

In conjunction with the European Commission, Belgium will organise the 4th round of European Development Days on 6-7 December 2010.

Common Commercial Policy

The conclusion of multilateral negotiations for the Doha Development Round within the WTO remains the priority of the Union's policy on trade.

In 2010, the procedures for the signature and approval of the free-trade agreement with South Korea will be on the agenda. Furthermore, procedures must be initiated for association agreements concluded with Central America and the multipartite agreement with Peru and Colombia. Progress is also to be made in negotiations with Canada, India, the Ukraine and countries from the Euromed zone, as well as in multilateral ACTA negotiations. Negotiations with the Mercosur region will be reopened. Negotiations recently opened with Singapore should pave the way for similar talks with several ASEAN partners.

The negotiation of Economic Partnership Agreements with ACP (Africa-Caribbean-Pacific) countries will be pursued in 2010. In matters of trade and development, the second half-year of 2010 will also provide an opportunity for initiating debate on the future Generalised System of Preferences arrangement.

The European Union will also pursue its Common Market Access Strategy for the major third countries as a result of diagnosis and shared action against major obstacles encountered by European exporters.

The Union will continue to develop a strategic dialogue, in particular in the domain of regulations, with certain key partners, including the United States, through the Transatlantic Economic Dialogue, and China. The relationship between the EU and Russia will also play an important role, as much from a bilateral point of view as within the context of Russian accession to the WTO.

The Belgian Presidency will work towards the effective implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon in terms of common trade policy, particularly concerning the new relationship which must be built with the European Parliament. The European Union's new-found expertise in terms of investment must also be given form.

The Belgian Presidency will, based on a new communication by the Commission expected in October 2010, take action to ensure that the Union's common commercial policy is defined in line with the external dimension of the new Europe 2020 Strategy. This evaluation will make it possible to develop a fresh vision which will take the new expectations of the European economy into account.
