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OF THE
LITHUANIAN
PRESIDENCY OF THE
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FOR A CREDIBLE, GROWING AND OPEN EUROPE

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PART I: PRESIDENCY APPROACH

In the second semester of 2013, Lithuania will assume the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (hereinafter the EU) for the first time. The Presidency places a great responsibility on Lithuania and its public service. It is also an opportunity to present the country, strengthen links to Europe, and contribute to the well-being of all European citizens.

Lithuania will focus the efforts on enhancing the EU's abilities to provide adequate response to economic, financial, social and energy challenges. For this purpose, Lithuania will first of all seek to carry out the obligations already undertaken vis-a-vis the EU citizens. The primary focus will be on further strengthening the financial stability and competitiveness of Europe, as well as the implementation of the Growth Agenda. Further EU integration and strengthening of the Single Market, including energy, will bring new opportunities to combat unemployment, in particular youth unemployment,

and will make the European economic and social model more solid. The openness of the EU to new members, neighbours and trade partners will not only advance the EU economy, but will also reaffirm the aims of the EU, i.e. to develop a prosperous, peaceful, democratic, free and open Europe.

In the course of the Presidency, Lithuania will act as an honest broker and will cooperate with Member States and the EU institutions. Active dialogue and close partnership with the European Parliament and the European Commission is essential in order to ensure the successful completion of the Presidency tasks. Lithuania, having tackled the economic and financial crisis with determination, will be guided by the same principles of efficiency and result-orientation during its Presidency. To ensure the continuity of the EU agenda Lithuania will actively cooperate with partners in the Trio (Ireland and Greece) and will rely on the 18-month programme of the Trio.

PART II: A CREDIBLE, GROWING AND OPEN EUROPE

The objectives of the Lithuanian Presidency will be as follows:

- **Credible Europe** with a stable financial sector and public finance and effective growth oriented EU economic governance and stronger social dimension,
- **Growing Europe** through greater investment into research and technological development, deeper integration of the internal market, as well as better employment opportunities and sustainable social security,
- **Open Europe** able to tackle global challenges effectively, promoting democratic values, contributing to safe neighbourhood, and actively protecting the rights of EU citizens.

A. CREDIBLE EUROPE

2013 marks a cornerstone in dealing with the consequences of the global financial crisis. During the Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will focus on ensuring the right environment for long term and sustainable growth in Europe. To achieve this, we must further develop the competitiveness of the Member States, continue responsible policies of public finance, conduct the necessary structural reforms, and restore the credibility of financial markets so that conditions favourable to investment in the economy can be provided for and restored. On the path to recovery in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, engaged in strengthening institutions of the Economic

and Monetary Union, the EU has met some extraordinary challenges for economic growth and employment. Over the last few years and particularly more recently, the EU has taken some key decisions in terms of economic and financial policy, which now serve as a cornerstone for the economic and social environment beneficial to economic growth and ensuring financial stability.

A 1. Sustainable Finance

The EU has reached some key agreements required for the further strengthening of the Economic and Monetary Union. Stricter monitoring of the fiscal policy of the Member States, with guiding principles included in the Intergovernmental Treaty effective since 2012 and the second economic governance package, will ensure the uniform and sustainable implementation of financial policy throughout the EU. For Member States facing financial difficulties, the scope of application of the European Stability Mechanism has been expanded. Together with the efforts of the European Central Bank in restoring the lending channels necessary for the recovery of economies, these timely steps have successfully prevented the spread of the public debt crisis, and have established the necessary conditions for restoring confidence in public finance throughout the EU.

Lithuania will seek to strengthen further this restored confidence, and will also support the enhanced integration of fragmented financial market. In order to accomplish these objectives, Lithuania will rely on the report

by the President of the European Council “Towards a Genuine Economic and Monetary Union”, and the “Blueprint for a deep and genuine Economic and Monetary Union” by the European Commission, as well as legislative initiatives by the European Commission, and following up on the decisions taken by the European Council in June 2013 on further strengthening the Economic and Monetary Union. Lithuania will pay attention to the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union. An informal discussion of the Council will be held on this subject. Lithuania will continue the work towards establishment of the Banking Union. Once the European Commission makes a proposal on the Single Resolution Mechanism, Lithuania will seek to ensure a smooth discussion of the proposal in order to reach an agreement before the 2014 European Parliament elections.

A 2. Better Economic Governance

The global financial crisis has revealed shortfalls in the EU economic governance, and also certain inconsistencies in the competitiveness of Member States. This has served as an impetus to strengthen the surveillance of the Member States public finances and monitoring of macroeconomic imbalances by adopting the respective legislative packages referred to as the ‘six-pack’ and the ‘two-pack’ instruments. Despite the sudden recession and consequent social challenges, the Member States have stepped up their responsibility to citizens and their obligations to continue with the structural reforms. During the Presidency, Lithuania will seek to ensure a favourable environment for the implementation of key social and economic reforms within the Member States.

The Presidency will focus on the smooth and effective implementation of the newly agreed rules on the stronger ex-ante budgetary monitoring process of the euro area Member States. Lithuania will also seek to ensure the smooth application of provisions contained in the Stability and Growth Pact. Attention will also be dedicated to processes of the transposition of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance into national systems.

Within the context of the European Semester, and taking into account the current consultations with the Member States on communications by the European Commission concerning ex-ante coordination of major economic reforms and the instrument on convergence and competitiveness, Lithuania will ensure a follow-up discussion on these issues, according to the decisions by the June 2013 European Council..

A 3. Fight Against Tax Evasion and Fraud

In the period of fiscal consolidation, combating tax fraud and tax evasion will be treated as a particular priority. Unless the EU acts in concert and in a coordinated manner, it will be difficult to achieve tangible results in this field. According to the estimates of the European Commission, the budgets of the EU Member States lose some EUR 1 billion in proceeds that could otherwise be allocated for the implementation of structural reforms.

Lithuania will, taking into account the political guidelines of the European Council of 2013, continue the work in the field of combating tax fraud and tax evasion, with particular focus placed on expanding the automatic exchange of tax information.

Lithuania will also duly consider protecting the financial interests of the EU, including the fight against fraud, using the instruments available in criminal law.

A 4. Citizens' Europe

2013 is the European Year of Citizens, dedicated to raise awareness and knowledge about the rights and duties related to EU citizenship, so that EU citizens can fully exercise their rights to move and settle freely within EU, as well as benefit from other opportunities granted by EU citizenship. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the EU citizenship, as well as the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty. This is an opportunity to assess the achievements of the Union and to draw further guidelines in the changing European area of freedom, security and justice. The Lithuanian Presidency will continue the work in the field of Justice and Home Affairs and focus on strengthening the protection of fundamental rights, raising public awareness (especially among youth) of shared EU values, supporting the agenda for growth, strengthening common area for effective judicial cooperation, and highlighting the interests of citizens and ensuring their safety.

To highlight the European Year of Citizens, Vilnius will host an International Conference on 12-13 December 2013.

B. GROWING EUROPE

Despite the fact that economies of the Member States have undergone structural transformation and gradual restoration of lost competitiveness, the consequences of the financial crisis are still very tangible. This is especially true for the social situation which remains complicated in the Member

States, given higher unemployment and slow economic recovery. These challenges can be tackled gradually through the establishment of a competitive internal market, setting socially responsible and environmentally friendly conditions with the clear strategy of attracting investment into research, development of technologies, green economy and labour-intensive areas.

In order to progress in these fields, Lithuania will rely on the Europe 2020 strategy and the European semester, and will make sure attention is given to the implementation of the Compact for Growth and Jobs.

B 1. Focus on the Future

In February 2013, the European Council reached political agreement on the future and growth orientated Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020. This agreement foresees increased funding for competitiveness and employment, in particular for research, youth education and employment, as well as the development of transport, energy and telecommunications networks.

Lithuania will make targeted efforts to complete the legislative process and ensure that the package of EU financial programmes under MFF, including some 70 pieces of draft legislation, can be adopted in time, i.e. by 1 January 2014. The Presidency will also adopt the first annual EU budget for 2014. The budget will serve as a starting point for the implementation of new programmes.

B 2. Digital Agenda, Research and Innovation

In the context of the mid-term review of the Digital Agenda, the public support, acceptance and confidence in new technologies

play a particularly important role. So does the security of networks and information. In this context, the establishment of a single EU digital market and agreement on initiatives such as electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market and the Guidelines for trans-European telecommunication networks gain special significance.

Lithuania will dedicate adequate attention to the implementation of initiatives seeking the establishment of an operational common market for knowledge, research and innovation, as well as career opportunities for scientists and the international dimension of science, technologies and innovation. Once the report on progress in the European research area is presented, the Council will have the opportunity to discuss these matters. Lithuania will seek to ensure that the Horizon 2020 programme involving the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and the Euratom programme are implemented starting early 2014.

Lithuania will contribute to the preparation of the meeting of the European Council that will discuss the digital agenda, strengthening of research and innovation policy, scheduled for October 2013. This meeting will provide an opportunity to consider ways of developing a new telecommunications market, and will focus on new services, cyber security and deployment of digital and broadband infrastructure, as well as other matters to ensure that a common EU digital market is developed by 2015. Lithuania will continue the implementation of other model initiatives regarding the digital agenda and innovations, and will run wider discussions on these topics. On 6-8 November 2013 Lithuania will, together with the

European Commission, host the ICT 2013 international conference in Vilnius, which will debate the development opportunities for digital technologies and innovation throughout the EU.

B 3. Effective Single Market

An effective EU Single Market is a prerequisite for economic growth and employment. Lithuania will seek the implementation of adopted measures on effective functioning of the internal market, especially as regards the Services Directive, and will seek to ensure that an agreement is reached on Single Market Act I measures. In this respect Lithuania will seek an agreement regarding the Regulation on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market, dedicated to increasing trust and providing better access to electronic verification services in the internal market; regarding the Posted Workers Directive, dedicated to establishment of fundamental rights allowing for the minimum protection of workers. An agreement on the Connecting Europe Facility and Guidelines for trans-European telecommunication networks would ensure the development and funding of infrastructure for transport, energy and telecommunications.

Lithuania will seek progress in discussions on priority action measures in twelve priority areas of the Single Market Act II, with special emphasis put on proposals on Product Safety and Market Surveillance Regulations, on electronic invoicing in public procurement, and on reducing the cost of deploying broadband communications. These initiatives aim to enhance the consumer confidence in the internal market, cut the operating costs of companies, including

small companies, and enhance the efficiency of the development of electronic communications infrastructure.

Lithuania will seek to provide a more favourable environment for small and medium enterprises, taking into account the issues of application of the mutual recognition principle, as well as the implementation of recommendations in line with the ten principles included in the Small Business Act. Due attention will also be given to issues aimed to reduce regulatory burdens.

B 4. Internal Energy Market

Once established, the internal energy market will provide a significant impulse for an effective Single Market and the entire EU economy.

The EU has set an objective to establish the internal energy market by 2014, and eliminate the energy isolation of certain Member States by 2015. Therefore, acting in concert with the European Commission and the Member States, Lithuania will seek to strengthen implementation of the commitments by the Member States in this field, with particular focus placed on the Third Energy Package and issues of market design, infrastructure and renewable energy resources. In November 2013, Lithuania will host a high-level conference, concentrating on relevant issues in developing modern EU energy infrastructure, and discussing the first list of energy projects of common interest.

Lithuania will seek progress in strengthening the external dimension of the EU energy policy. In view of the discussions in the Council and the report to be delivered by the European Commission, Lithuania will aim to review the 2011 Council conclusions

on this subject.

Lithuania will pay special attention to the implementation of decisions taken by the European Council in February 2011 and May 2013, and will draft a Presidency report on this issue.

B 5. Promotion of Social Cohesion

The economic and financial crisis has brought about some severe social consequences. Youth unemployment has reached record heights and has caused some further tensions in the societies of European countries. This demonstrates the need for enhanced social policy and for taking immediate and active measures to encourage employment.

Taking into account the ever more acute consequences of long-term unemployment and growing social exclusion, youth employment will be a priority for the Presidency Lithuania will take every step required for the implementation of the youth employment package, with a special focus on implementation of the Youth Guarantee Initiative and encouragement of apprenticeships. With regard to the promotion of sustainable growth and the reduction of social exclusion, Lithuania will encourage the implementation of the Social Investment Package, with a special emphasis on investment in children. Lithuania will organize discussions on this subject in the Council. Better protection of worker rights, including the protection of migrant workers, will also be included in the list of priorities of the Presidency.

B 6. Sustainable Growth

Short-term measures to increase the competitiveness of the EU economy must be developed with due regard to long term

competitiveness perspective. This is feasible through a greener economy, renewable energy and better use of natural resources, allowing the safeguarding of growth potential in the future. The Lithuanian Presidency will pay due attention to climate change and the integration of the principles of environmental protection into other fields of EU policy to ensure a more favourable environment for growth in the future.

The Lithuanian Presidency expects to take up and complete ongoing negotiations regarding transit measures for the Common Agricultural Policy, and to initiate a review of information and promotion measures of agricultural products, and the organisation of the fruit and vegetable sector market. In the field of the Common Fisheries Policy, Lithuania will continue to work in order to prepare for the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy reform, which will be important to ensure sustainable fisheries in the long term. Lithuania will also seek political agreement regarding fisheries opportunities in 2014, which is balanced in both the economic and environmental terms.

B 7. Europe of Macro-regions

The Lithuanian Presidency will focus on the regional dimension of sustainable growth. By end of June 2013 the European Commission is expected to publish the overall assessment of macro-regional strategies. On this basis and taking into account the best practice of the implementation of Baltic Sea Region and Danube macro-regional strategies and the lessons learned from these strategies, Lithuania will continue the debate regarding further measures for effective implementation of macro-regional strategies. Particular attention will be given

to the coordination and synergy of respective EU policies, aiming at better results in various policy fields, by encouraging the growth of regional economies, and by creating further impetus for the increased competitiveness of the EU internal market, as well as by improving the environmental situation.

On 11-12 November 2013, Vilnius will host the 4th Annual Forum on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, where the implementation of the Strategy will be discussed with partners, with a particular focus on environmental protection.

C. OPEN EUROPE

EU competitiveness, sustainable economic growth and jobs will be safeguarded, provided that EU citizens feel safe, and that the EU institutions remain active in their protection of fundamental human rights both within the EU and abroad. For this purpose, the EU, acting through concerted effort of the Presidency and EU institutions, has to promote further democratic principles in the neighbourhood, ensure regional stability, openness for trade, promote interpersonal contacts and development aid, and together with international partners tackle global challenges.

C 1. Safe European Neighbourhood

EU security is influenced by the processes taking place in its neighbourhood. The EU supports the political, economic and social reforms taking place in the Eastern and Southern neighbourhood countries, and is strengthening relations with these countries, thereby contributing to the establishment of a safe neighbourhood offering new opportunities.

On 28-29 November 2013, Vilnius will host the third Eastern Partnership Summit which is expected to mark progress in political association and economic integration with Eastern Partnership countries by finalizing association agreements including the establishment of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. The Summit will be an opportunity to welcome partners' achievements in visa liberalisation plans, to discuss further opportunities for sectorial cooperation, and to enhance the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership. The Summit is also expected to set out new strategic guidelines for the implementation of the Eastern Partnership policy.

Regarding the Southern neighbourhood, Lithuania will support the EU focus on more effective implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy aiming at promoting democracy and inclusive and sustainable growth, based on promotion of human rights, especially the equal rights and freedoms of women, as well as closer cooperation with civil society.

C 2. Enlargement Agenda

The start of the Lithuanian Presidency is marked by the accession of the Republic of Croatia- the 28th Member State.

EU enlargement policy is based on the firm and clear implementation of the EU membership criteria by the EU candidate countries. This principle is key for further negotiations regarding the EU membership of Turkey and Montenegro, and to ensure European perspective for the remaining countries of the Western Balkans.

During the Lithuanian Presidency, EU Council will set EU Enlargement policy guidelines for 2014, where Lithuania will

seek to ensure continuous enlargement process based on principles of own merits and clear conditionality.

C 3. Trade for Growth

External trade has to make a significant contribution to EU economic growth and job creation. For this purpose, the Presidency will strive to take forward broad and ambitious EU external trade agenda, focusing on free, fair and open trade, driven in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual benefit.

In development of bilateral trade relations particular focus will be given, first of all, to further deepening of economic and trade relations with the European Neighbourhood Policy countries, including the steps necessary for the immediate establishment of a deep and comprehensive free trade area with Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia, and secondly, to free trade negotiations with the US and Japan, as well as to further improvement of trade and investment conditions with China and Russia. In parallel, efforts will be made to ensure the long-term EU's strategic objective to strengthen the rules-based multilateral trading system as well as to create the appropriate legal environment for the EU business.

C 4. Effective Management of External Borders

Seeking to be both open and at the same time provide security for its citizens, the EU must ensure the effective management of its external borders. Lithuania will strive to achieve further progress in discussing the "Smart Borders" package, encompassing the establishment of the Entry / Exit System, as well as the Registered Travellers Programme. Based on the latest technologies, this will

allow to ensure and continue the effective management of the EU's external borders and strengthen the security of the EU and its citizens, to improve the monitoring of border crossings, speed up and facilitate border control procedures for citizens of third countries frequently travelling to the EU.

In the field of the fight against smuggling, Lithuania will rely on the communication by the European Commission "Stepping up the fight against cigarette smuggling and other forms of illicit trade in tobacco products - a comprehensive EU Strategy", and support its implementation. For that purpose, Lithuania will strive to adopt Council conclusions.

C 5. Global European Leadership

In the light of global economic, demographic and climate changes, the role of the EU in the global world also changes. Having laid down foundations for the management of the financial and economic crisis, the EU is ready to take on leadership in protecting human rights, principles of democracy, ensuring regional stability, and seeking to combat the consequences of global warm-

ing. In the field of development and humanitarian aid, Lithuania will continue the work on the establishment of an overarching post-2015 agenda, will seek agreement on a new action plan for European humanitarian aid, and will take steps to prepare for the implementation of the 11th European Development Fund.

Lithuania will support the further development and strengthening of the Common Security and Defence Policy. In December 2013, the European Council is expected to discuss security and defence issues, seeking to provide consistent strengthening of the EU's role in the assurance of security, both regarding its members and internationally. Lithuania will encourage dialogue and practical cooperation with the EU's Eastern Partners, contribute to the development of the EU ability to respond to new security challenges in the field of energy, cyber and maritime security, as well as strengthening practical EU and NATO cooperation and transatlantic relations, and enhancing the efficiency of EU battle groups and EU missions and operations.

PART III: AGENDA OF THE PRESIDENCY ACROSS COUNCIL CONFIGURATIONS

A. GENERAL AFFAIRS

The General Affairs Council coordinates preparation for the meetings of the European Council, discusses its conclusions, monitors their implementation and undertakes other related activities. The Council examines documents with a horizontal impact on multiple policies of the EU, e.g. enlargement of the EU, the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), institutional and administrative issues.

A 1. Multiannual Financial Framework

Finalization of MFF-related legislative framework will be at the core of General Affairs Council agenda.

The Lithuanian Presidency will seek to ensure that the Council and the European Parliament reach a timely agreement regarding all measures, programmes and funds included in the MFF. For that purpose, Lithuania, in cooperation with the EU institutions and the Trio partners, will continue discussions with the European Parliament regarding specific legislation implementing the MFF 2014-2020, so that it enters into force on 1 January 2014.

When drafting the agreement regarding procedural provisions and measures to be funded by financial programmes, effort will be made to ensure better access to the programmes, better flexibility and result orientation, i.e. economic growth and job creation by improving competitiveness and promoting employment, developing European infrastructure networks, strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion, strengthening sustainable growth and use of natural resources, improving the security of European citizens, strengthening the European role in the world, and guaranteeing that EU institutions provide due services to citizens.

A 2. Cohesion Policy

The Cohesion policy of the Union contributes to reducing economic, social and territorial differences among the EU regions, and simultaneously has a positive effect on economic growth and employment throughout the EU. The reformed cohesion policy will ensure a more efficient and result orientated use of available resources, while implementation of regional priorities will contribute to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Presidency will continue negotiations with the European Parliament on Cohesion Policy Regulations for the new period, aiming for their adoption and entry into force as early as possible before the end of 2013. The informal meeting of ministers in charge of Cohesion policy, scheduled for November 2013, will be an opportunity to reflect on the state of play as regards preparations for the implementation of the new period programmes.

Lithuanian Presidency will also work to ensure that a timely decision is taken concerning the proposal by the European Commission regarding the amendment of the General Regulation for the period of 2007-2013, in order to provide for certain measures for the Member States experiencing serious difficulties in relation to the economic and financial crisis..

A 3. European semester

The Presidency will start the fourth European semester, i.e. coordination cycle of the economic policy of the Member States. Once the European Commission presents the annual growth survey in November 2013, Lithuania will organise its presentation in different Council configurations with the most direct connection to the coordination of economic policy (The Competitiveness, the Economic and Financial Affairs and the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs), as well as the General Affairs Council, which coordinates preparation for the European Council and will discuss lessons learned during the European semester of 2013.

In cooperation with the EU institutions, Lithuania will continue discussions on enhanced economic governance via the European semester, i.e. regarding monitoring the implementation of specific recommendations made to the Member States. The monitoring will include specific steps to eliminate macroeconomic imbalances and lack of competitiveness, and will establish binding contractual obligations as well as financial incentives for reforms promoting growth and employment.

A 4. Macro-regional Strategies

Based on the report by the European Commission regarding the added value of macro-regional strategies, as well as the results of implementation of the Baltic Sea and Danube regional strategies, Lithuania will propose the adoption of Council conclusions regarding the added value of macro-regional strategies, emphasising the elements of the added value and proposing actions leading to the further strengthening of regional and thematic role of these

strategies.

On 11-12 November 2013 Lithuania, in close cooperation with the European Commission, will host the 4th Annual Forum of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy, dedicated to discuss the implementation of objectives in environmental protection. The participants of the Forum will include the representatives of the Member States implementing the Strategy, EU institutions, priority area coordinators, non-governmental organisations, business and regions.

A 5. Outermost Regions

The Lithuanian Presidency will seek to amend the respective legislation in force, in order to include provisions regarding the application of the transitory period for the Mayotte region, which under the decision of the European Council of the 11 July 2012, from 1 January 2014 will become the outermost region of the EU. Furthermore, once the European Commission adopts legislative proposals, the issue of extending the application of certain tax exemptions applicable to the respective outermost regions will be examined.

A 6. Enlargement

The start of the Lithuanian Presidency is marked by the accession of the Republic of Croatia- the 28th Member State. This event is a further proof of the strong commitment of the EU to continue the enlargement process based on agreed principles.

The Presidency will seek the continuous implementation of the EU enlargement policy, which is based on firm obligations, conditionality, clear communication, and the ability of the EU to integrate new members. Each candidate country is assessed individually and solely on the basis of its progress.

Lithuania will ensure the continuity of negotiations with Montenegro and Turkey, and continue the development of the European perspective for the Western Balkans.

Further progress in negotiations with Montenegro will depend on the progress made by the candidate country in implementing requirements in the negotiation chapters on judiciary and fundamental rights, as well as justice, freedom and security, which will be assessed by the European Commission. Based on the progress made by Montenegro in implementing the action plans, Lithuania will seek to open the chapters on judiciary and fundamental rights, as well as justice, freedom and security.

Lithuania will support the further negotiation process with Turkey, and will seek to retain the momentum of membership negotiations and to take further steps to reinforce the cooperation of the EU and Turkey in other fields of negotiations.

The Presidency will seek the implementation of the Council decision of June 2013 regarding the opening of EU membership negotiations with Serbia, as well as negotiations with Kosovo on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

Lithuania will aim at agreement regarding the opening of accession negotiations with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and will take steps to advance the European perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A decision to grant the EU candidate status to Albania depends on her progress in implementing internal reforms, including a positive assessment of the conduct of the parliamentary elections held in June, 2013.

On the basis of the progress made by the candidate countries and proposals by the European Commission regarding further steps, Lithuania in cooperation with the European Commission and the European

External Action Service, will make a proposal to the Council to adopt conclusions regarding the way forward of the European Union enlargement process.

A 7. Institutional Issues

During the Lithuanian Presidency, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will make proposals on review of the organisation and activity of the European External Action Service, and where necessary, submit proposals on amendment of respective decisions by the Council. The European External Action Service should be an effective institution protecting the interests of EU Member States and their citizens, providing timely and effective response to security challenges, both regional and global, and simultaneously strengthening the role of the EU at the global level.

A 8. Integrated Maritime Policy

In order to implement objectives under the Europe 2020 strategy, key issues included in the Integrated Maritime Policy agenda of the EU include the establishment of a maritime area planning system. Lithuania will continue discussions on the proposal for a Directive establishing a framework of special maritime planning and coastal governance, and expects to see agreement within the Council regarding a general approach. Should these proposals be adopted, they would allow for progress in implementing the long-term strategy, expected to serve as a basis for growth of the entire maritime sector (Blue Growth).

A 9. Nuclear Safety

Lithuania will start negotiations on the review of the Nuclear Safety Directive. This initiative is intended to strengthen the in-

dependence of the national regulatory authorities, enhance transparency, improve monitoring and peer-review mechanisms with the view to ensure continuous improvement of nuclear safety in the EU.

The Presidency will also continue discussions on the Council Regulation establishing a Community system for registration of carriers of radioactive materials and will seek

to agree on proposals related to the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020.

B. FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Foreign Affairs Council oversees and takes decisions in all fields of external activities of the Union, including Common Foreign and Security Policy, foreign trade and development cooperation. In recent years, one of the priorities of the Council has been insuring the consistency of external activities of the EU, closely cooperating with the European Commission, and making better use of the available instruments. The Council is chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, while Presidency chairs the foreign trade part.

B 1. Common Security and Defence Policy

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is an integral part of EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and presents the key instrument in crisis management. EU Member States ensure the military and civil capabilities required for EU operational activities by implementing the CSDP. 2013 is an important year for the further development of the CSDP. In close cooperation with the President of the European Council, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the European External Action Service (EEAS), Lithuania will actively contribute to the preparations for the discussion on security and defence issues scheduled for the European Council in December 2013, thereby seeking consistent strengthening of the EU role in assuring EU Member States', and international security

In the field of CSDP, Lithuania emphasizes that the Union would ensure security in the European neighbourhood, respond to new security challenges, and, in cooperation with its closest partners such as the NATO, the UN and the US, become actively involved in dealing with international crises. During the course of the Presidency, Lithuania will promote the strengthening of dialogue and practical cooperation with the EU's Eastern Partners in the field of CSDP in order to develop mutually beneficial part-

nerships in the field of security and defence, and involve the Eastern Partners in missions and operations under CSDP. Lithuania will emphasize the need to enhance the EU's ability to provide an appropriate response to any new security challenges, with focus placed on energy security within the CSDP. Lithuania will support the activities of the European Defence Agency on military green, particularly in regard to the search for synergies with other EU policies.

Lithuania will also highlight the need to strengthen practical EU and NATO cooperation and transatlantic dialogue, as well as the need to enhance efficiency of the EU Battle groups, missions and operations. Special focus will be called on enhanced civil and military cooperation, and further integration of border management aspects into EU missions and operations.

B 2. European Neighbourhood Policy

One of the key priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency is the development of EU relations with the Eastern Partnership countries, and strengthening their political association and economic integration with the EU. Lithuania will offer its full support to the President of the European Council, the European Commission and the European External Action Service to accomplish these objectives. Political association and economic integration of the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries offers mutual benefits and will

contribute to a wide range of political, economic and social reforms in the partnership countries. This will have a direct influence on the development of trade links between the EU and the Eastern Partners, promotion of investment, and reduction of the number of barriers to freedom of movement.

In cooperation with the President of the European Council and the EU institutions, Lithuania will host the third Eastern Partnership Summit on 28-29 November 2013 in Vilnius. The meeting is expected to assess the progress of EU relations with the Eastern Partnership countries since the last Summit in Warsaw in August 2011, and to draw further guidelines for the implementation of the Eastern Partnership policy.

Lithuania believes that the Summit in Vilnius will create opportunities for both partner countries and the EU. Key priorities in this context include the signing of an association agreement with Ukraine, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade part. The realization of this objective will depend on specific actions and progress made by Ukraine. Lithuania will also seek to ensure that negotiations on respective agreements with Moldova, Georgia and Armenia are completed before the Summit in Vilnius. Tangible progress in negotiations with Azerbaijan is expected.

Given that key Eastern Partnership objectives include the promotion of freedom of movement and people-to-people contacts, Lithuania will seek progress in facilitating and eventually liberalising the EU visa regime with the Eastern Partners.

The Presidency will duly focus on the development and strengthening of the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership. It is the objective of Lithuania to see this cooperation to expand beyond the limits

of the governmental sector – in addition to the traditional Eastern Partnership business forum and Conference for local and regional authorities (CORLEAP). In October 2013, Lithuania also plans to hold the first meeting of the Eastern Partnership Youth forum. Fields where multilateral work could be enhanced include closer sectorial cooperation. In October 2013 Lithuania will host the first Eastern Partnership Transport and Justice and Home Affairs meetings.

The outcome of further development of the EU relations with the Eastern Partners will depend on individual goals and ambitions, but in the first place on progress in implementing a wide range of political, economic and social reforms foreseen in the Association agreements.

Lithuania will seek progress in the Council in order to approve draft negotiation provisions regarding the simplification of the visa regime and readmission agreements with some Southern Mediterranean countries, in order to establish a dialogue with these countries concentrating on migration, mobility and security issues. This initiative will offer support and encouragement to the implementation of reforms in the Southern neighbourhood countries in order to provide their citizens with greater mobility opportunities with regard to the European Union, and simultaneously deal with key issues caused by migration flows.

B 3. Common Trade Policy

Trade policy plays an important role in promoting economic growth and job creation. In this field, the Presidency will seek to ensure continuity of the EU external trade agenda, focusing on further trade liberalisation based on mutual interests and benefits, strengthening EU business ability to compete in the global

economy, as well as promoting open, fair and rules-based trade and investment relations.

a) EU Strategic Partners: US, Japan, China and Russia

As far as negotiations on the bilateral comprehensive free trade agreements with strategic partners, US and Japan, are concerned, efforts will be made to achieve progress in the areas of the key interests of the EU, including the need to address regulatory and non-tariff trade barriers.

In the context of further developing economic relations with China, focus will be placed on improving market access conditions in China as well as on future negotiations on an ambitious bilateral investment agreement, covering both investment protection and market access.

In developing trade relations with Russia priority will be given to proper implementation of Russia's WTO commitments. If necessary conditions are in place, continued efforts will be made in seeking to advance bilateral negotiations on ambitious Trade and Investment Chapter of the EU-Russia New Agreement.

b) European Neighbourhood Policy Countries

In relation to European Neighbourhood Policy, due attention will be paid to both directions – East and South.

Particular focus will be placed on the establishment of a free trade area with the Eastern Partnership countries. The Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius is expected to confirm the conclusion of deep and comprehensive free trade agreements (DCFTA) negotiations with Moldova, Georgia and Armenia. The Presidency will also strive to complete the work, necessary to prepare for the provisional application of the DCFTA with Ukraine.

The Presidency will also aim at further deepening trade and economic relations with the Southern neighbourhood countries, according to their level of preparedness.

c) Canada, India, ASEAN, MERCOSUR, Countries of the African and Caribbean Region and Other Countries

The Lithuanian Presidency will seek to achieve progress in other on-going negotiations on free trade agreements and on economic partnership agreements, taking into account the readiness of the partners to negotiate and their level of ambition. Lithuania will also continue working on the procedures needed for signature of the agreements with countries with which the negotiations will be completed.

d) Multilateral Trade Negotiations

The Lithuanian Presidency will contribute to the implementation of the EU strategic trade policy objectives by strengthening the multilateral rules-based global trade system. In preparation for the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ninth Ministerial Conference scheduled on 3-6 December 2013 in Bali, the Presidency will continue working in order to achieve partial results of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations, first of all on trade facilitation and also on other aspects of DDA on which sufficient progress could be achieved. As part of strengthening of the multilateral trade system, appropriate attention will be given to countries making progress in the accession process, expecting that the Ninth Ministerial Conference will approve the results of the WTO accession of individual countries, as well as to the negotiations on the review of the WTO Information Technology Agreement, with a view to complete them by the Ninth Ministerial Conference.

e) Improved Legal Environment in the Field of External Trade

In the area of legislation, the Presidency will closely work with EU Member States and the European Parliament in order to create the appropriate legal environment for the EU business: the Presidency will seek for substantial

progress when considering the Regulation on financial responsibility linked to investor-state dispute settlement, as well as on the Regulation on the enforcement of EU rights under international trade agreements.

Seeking to ensure fair competition, due attention will be given to the effectiveness of the trade defence instruments (TDI). The work necessary for the smooth implementation of the EU General System of Preferences will also continue.

B 4. Relations with Western European Countries

The Lithuanian Presidency will focus on the further development of close relations with Western European neighbours in order to ensure homogeneity of the internal market and will explore possibilities to extend cooperation in areas of common interest. Particular attention will be paid to issues such as the functioning of the Agreement on the European Economic Area as well as examining possibilities for the improvement of the EU institutional relations with Switzerland and analysing perspectives for the closer integration of European countries of small territorial dimension, namely Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, with the EU. High importance will also be given to issues related to financial contributions from the European Free Trade Association countries, aimed at reducing economic and social disparities within the enlarged EU.

B 5. Development

The Lithuanian Presidency will place particular focus on the overarching post-2015 agenda, and will seek to ensure adequate preparation for the Special Event to follow up on efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, scheduled for September in New York within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly. The future agenda must provide an integrated and complete

assessment of new issues related to climate change, the changing demographic situation and human rights. Lithuania will seek to ensure that in shaping the post-2015 agenda, adequate attention is given to economic and social reforms within the partner countries, using the transition experience of the EU Member States.

Lithuania will seek to finish negotiations in the Council regarding a new decision on the association of the overseas countries and territories within the EU, and agree on implementing and financial Regulations of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) to define the implementation and funding of the EDF from 2014 to 2020.

Lithuania will seek to reach a final agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation for the Development Cooperation Instrument, providing for the implementation of development cooperation programmes in the period 2014 to 2020.

B 6. Humanitarian Aid

The Presidency will continue discussions regarding the efficiency of the European humanitarian aid policy, and the dissemination of humanitarian principles both within and outside the EU.

In order to implement the provisions of the EU treaties, Lithuania will seek to ensure that the Council completes coordination, and together with the European Parliament adopts the Regulation on the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC). The proposal aims to establish a system of European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps, whereby European volunteers would be entitled to jointly contribute to the performance of the EU humanitarian aid.

C. ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

The Economic and Financial Affairs Council examines issues on the coordination of economic policy, fiscal monitoring of the public finances of Member States and the euro, financial and capital markets, and economic relations with third countries as related to the policies of the European Union. The Council together with the European Parliament approves the annual budget of the European Union.

When chairing the Economic and Financial Affairs Council, Lithuania will seek to strengthen confidence in the effectiveness of EU financial policy and provide for an environment of sustainable economic and employment growth in the long term, as well as ensure the financial stability of the euro area and the entire EU.

Lithuania will continue the necessary work to deal with problems caused by the economic and financial crisis, and will seek to ensure that the Council provides impetus for the economic recovery of the EU and further strengthening of the Economic and Monetary Union.

In order to deal with key issues on EU financial stability agenda and ensure further strengthening of economic and financial policy coordination, the Presidency will focus on further discussions regarding deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union, general supervision and resolution of the banks, as well as other areas of the Regulation of financial services, effective implementation of enhanced economic governance, and fighting tax evasion and tax fraud.

Given that the second package of Economic Governance measures is already operational, the euro area Member States will be involved in the ex-ante budget review for the first time in autumn of 2013. Lithuania will seek to implement other necessary steps contributing to the deepening of Economic

and Monetary Union that shall be agreed on at the European Council scheduled in June 2013.

During the Lithuanian Presidency, efforts will continue to review the implementation of the European semester recommendations with respect to the Member States; the Presidency will also seek to ensure appropriate compliance with the provisions of the Stability and Growth Pact, and will devote attention to the implementation of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance within the Economic and Monetary Union.

C 1. EU Budget 2014

The Presidency will seek timely adoption of the EU budget for 2014. It will be the first annual budget under the new Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020. In order to adopt the budget, Lithuania will seek to coordinate the various interests of the Member States, and represent the view taken by the Council in negotiations with the European Parliament. Timely adoption of the EU budget for 2014 will ensure the resources necessary for implementation of the EU priorities in the fields of growth, employment, competition and cohesion.

C 2. Strengthening the Economic and Monetary Union

The economic and financial crisis has revealed the weak aspects of the function-

ing Economic and Monetary Union; correspondingly, a number of decisions have been taken to strengthen the Economic and Monetary Union in order to avoid or at least reduce possible future threats. Further strengthening of the Economic and Monetary Union will be an important priority for the Lithuanian Presidency as well. The report by the President of the European Council and European Commission's communications regarding further deepening of EMU have already set guidelines for possible further integration.

The Presidency will seek progress in discussions regarding concrete proposals on strengthening the ex ante coordination of major economic reforms among the Member States, and the proposal to establish a corresponding instrument of EU convergence and competitiveness instrument that would inter alia provide for financial incentives to implement the agreed structural reforms in the Member States.

C 3. Banking Union

The Presidency will seek progress in establishing the Banking Union, by working on proposals on Bank Recovery and Resolution, Deposit Guarantee Schemes and Single Resolution Mechanism.

Lithuania will seek a final agreement with the European Parliament regarding proposals on the Bank Recovery and Resolution and Deposit Guarantee Schemes, which aims at ensuring financial stability, protecting tax payers from covering banks failures costs and protecting depositors' assets.

In December 2012, the European Council agreed on a roadmap for the completion of the Economic and Monetary Union that provides for the establishment of Single

Resolution Mechanism. The establishment of a new mechanism is expected to provide a common and consistent approach for resolving banks in those Member States participating in the mechanism. In summer 2013 the European Commission will bring a proposal on the Single Resolution Mechanism, while Lithuania will seek to ensure an effective discussion on the proposal, and seek progress in order to come to an agreement before the elections of the European Parliament in 2014.

C 4. Strengthening the Regulation of Financial Markets

The Presidency will continue working on strengthening the Regulation of financial services.

Lithuania will seek a final agreement with the European Parliament on the Directive and Regulation on the Markets in Financial Instruments to ensure effective and credible market structures, take into account any latest technological innovations, ensure better market transparency, strengthen the protection of investors, and bring more powers to the supervisory authorities to carry out effective market supervision.

Lithuania further expects to seek progress in negotiations regarding the Regulation on Central Securities Depositories, and in reviewing the Laundering and Terrorist Financing System that would implement the recommendations by the Financial Action Task Force at the EU level.

In the insurance field, Lithuania expects to renew negotiations concerning the Omnibus II Directive that aims to grant operating powers to new financial supervisory authorities, and to provide for transitory periods of the implementation of the Solvency II Directive.

Once the European Commission submits a

proposal on structural bank reform that will seek to reduce the excessive interconnectiveness of extremely large banking groups, facilitate the supervision of such groups and reduce the possibility of resolving banking issues using tax payers' money, Lithuania expects to initiate negotiations on the proposal. The Presidency will seek progress in the Council on negotiations regarding the proposal on bank accounts that will facilitate bank account switching and provide better transparency of payment account fees for consumers.

C 5. Tax

In the area of tax, Lithuania will focus on issues related to combating tax evasion and tax fraud. For that purpose, Lithuania will initiate discussions on a new initiative by the European Commission on the Directive of administrative cooperation that is expected to improve measures for automatic information exchange by extending the automatic exchange to new types of income. Lithuania will further seek agreement on amendments to the Directive on the taxation of savings income.

Lithuania will also proceed with further examination of other measures combating tax fraud, including possible solutions on the question of double non-taxation caused by mismatches in cases of hybrid structures.

Lithuania will seek progress on the rules governing VAT treatment on vouchers, and will continue discussions regarding the draft Directives on common consolidated corporate tax base, financial transactions tax and energy taxation.

C 6. Combating Smuggling and Other Types of Illegal Trade

According to the European Commission, the

illegal tobacco trade, primarily the smuggling of cigarettes, accounts for a loss of approximately EUR 10 billion in unpaid taxes and custom duties, forfeited by the Member States that otherwise could have been used for public needs. This is how proceeds fail to reach national budgets, the shadow economy grows, legitimate business suffers, and human health is put at risk.

In the field of fighting smuggling, Lithuania will support the measures under the communication by the European Commission entitled "Stepping up the fight against cigarette smuggling and other forms of illicit trade in tobacco products - A comprehensive EU Strategy", and support its implementation. For this purpose, Lithuania expects to see the adoption of Council conclusions. The initiative provides for measures on stepping up the fight against the illegal tobacco trade, primarily cigarette smuggling, and establishes several coordinated measures at the national, EU and international level.

C 7. Representation of the European Union at the G20

Together with the European Commission and the European Central Bank, the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU will seek adequate representation of the EU interests at the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' meetings. In preparation for these meetings, Lithuania will contribute to the coordination and agreement of the common EU position in priority areas of the G20 format regarding the global economy situation and growth, financing for investment, financial market regulation, reform of the international financial architecture and other relevant issues.

D. JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

The Justice and Home Affairs Council sets political directions and ensures the implementation of European Union policy in the area of freedom, security and justice. The Council dedicates particular attention to the protection of interests and the needs of citizens and other EU residents, in order to ensure respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms and the integrity thereof, as well as the guarantee of European security.

The Presidency will continue the implementation of the Stockholm programme providing for EU priorities in the area of freedom, security and justice for the period of 2010 to 2014.

Lithuania expects to start discussion regarding the future strategic guidelines for legislative and operational planning within the area of the freedom, security and justice, taking into account the results of the Stockholm programme. Lithuania, seeking to ensure continuous financial support for measures implementing the objectives of justice and home affairs, will seek agreement within the Council and with the European Parliament regarding the financial regulations of justice and home affairs, so that smooth programme funding and implementation is possible as of 1 January 2014.

The Presidency will further strengthen cooperation of the EU with the Eastern Partnership countries in the sphere of justice and home affairs. The Presidency will organize the first Eastern Partnership Justice and Home Affairs meeting to discuss closer cooperation.

Furthermore, political dialogue will continue on matters of justice and home affairs involving the US, Western Balkan countries and Russia.

The Presidency will seek that Justice and home affairs policies also contribute to the implementation of the growth agenda.

D 1. Justice

In the context of the European Year of Citizens, Lithuania will seek to strengthen confidence in the EU and its institutions and will focus on the protection of the interests and needs of citizens. The Presidency will also discuss the enhancement of fundamental rights in the EU, including the necessity to foster a collective historical memory.

a) Justice for Growth

The Presidency will seek progress on the Regulation on the Common European Sales Law. This legislation aims to enhance the competitiveness of the internal market, to reduce obstacles for entry into cross-border sales contracts, and to deal with costs-related issues of entering into these transactions. Lithuania will continue negotiations on the Regulation creating a European account preservation order, and will seek a general approach within the Council. This important instrument will facilitate more efficient cross-border recovery of debts.

Lithuania will also seek substantial progress in negotiations as regards the better regulation of insolvency proceedings. The proposal envisages easier procedures for the insolvency of natural persons and legal entities, and provides for conditions to protect companies on the brink of insolvency.

Lithuania will also continue negotiations on the abolishment of legalisation formalities. The purpose of the proposal is to reduce the burden on citizens and enterprises, and

abolish current requirement to legalise (certify by apostille) official documents issued in another Member State.

b) Data Protection

The Presidency will continue intensive negotiations seeking substantial progress on the Data Protection package. The proposed reform aims to react to globalisation and rapid technological developments (such as emergence of social networks and cloud computing), and to provide for an adequate environment for citizens to better control their personal data in the digital environment. Greater confidence in online services should enable them to be developed further and to innovate, and will directly contribute to the growth of Europe's digital economy.

c) Criminal Law

In the field of criminal law, the key focus will be the protection of EU financial interests. Lithuania expects to start negotiations with the European Parliament on the Directive on the fight against fraud by means of criminal law. The proposal aims to impose an obligation on Member States to define criminal offences, and provide sanctions for fraud affecting the financial interests of the EU and those of tax payers as well as for other fraud-related criminal offences.

Once the European Commission submits a proposal on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, Lithuania intends to launch examination of the proposal in the Council. This proposal will aim to establish a European Public Prosecutor's Office on the basis of Eurojust, which will be responsible for investigating, prosecuting and bringing to justice the perpetrators of, and accomplices in, offences against EU financial interests.

Lithuania expects to reach general approach

in the Council on the Directive on the protection of the euro and other currencies against counterfeiting by criminal law. The proposal seeks to define criminal offences and provide for additional investigative tools, as well as adequate and proportionate sanctions in the field of counterfeiting of the euro and other currencies.

In order to eliminate the financial motivation of criminality, negotiations will continue with the European Parliament on the Directive on the freezing and confiscation of proceeds of crime, with the aim to reach final agreement on the Directive.

The Presidency will also seek substantial progress in negotiations on the European investigation order in criminal matters. The initiative seeks to improve judicial cooperation in criminal matters thereby establishing a comprehensive system for obtaining evidence in cross-border cases.

d) Policy on Supply and Demand of Drugs

Once the European Commission submits proposals on a new Regulation to facilitate information exchange on new psychoactive substances, the Presidency will seek progress within the Council on this matter.

D 2. Home Affairs

Key priorities of the Presidency include the completion of negotiations on Regulations providing funding of home affairs within the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020. Lithuania will seek final agreement with the European Parliament regarding legislation implementing financial programmes to ensure their application from 1 January 2014.

a) Border Control

The Presidency will seek further progress in

the Council when discussing the “Smart Borders” package. Proposals on the “Smart Borders” package using the latest technologies will strengthen the integrated management of the EU external border and migration flows crossing the external border, and facilitate conditions for the arrival and departure of registered travellers.

The Registered Traveller Programme would allow preferential entry to the EU for frequent travellers and citizens of third countries. This initiative would, with respect to third country citizens, upon prior assessment and verification by the competent institutions of the Member States, reduce waiting periods at border control posts and ensure simplified border control procedures. The Entry / Exit System would allow border guards to ascertain the duration of stay of third country citizens in a Member State. The system will register dates and place of arrival and departure of third country citizens travelling within the EU, and will facilitate the establishment of whether these third-country citizens comply with legitimate limits on staying in a Member State. The system would replace the current system of manual registration, would electronically calculate the duration of legitimate stay, and would warn the national institutions responsible when the legitimate period had been exceeded. This will allow for optimised border control procedures and enhanced security within the EU.

Lithuania will also seek as much progress as possible when discussing Regulation on rules for monitoring external sea borders when implementing operational cooperation coordinated by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders. The proposal

aims to ensure the application of uniform rules for sea border monitoring activity, carried out by Member States involved in operations coordinated by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders.

b) Migration

In the field of legal migration, the Presidency will seek to complete negotiations with the European Parliament and adopt Directives regarding the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of seasonal employment, and on conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals in the framework of an intra-corporate transfer. Once these proposals have been adopted, a more favourable environment would prevail for third country citizens seeking to arrive for the purposes of seasonal employment, as well as providing for more favourable immigration rules applicable to third country citizens who are temporarily transferred for employment on an intra-corporate basis, where companies are established in third countries, and to branches of these companies established within EU Member States.

Lithuania will also seek to progress as much as possible with the negotiations on the proposal for the Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, remunerated and unremunerated training, voluntary service and au pairing. The proposal will aim to enhance the attractiveness of the EU as a hub of science and culture, encourage the international academic dimension, and contribute to improved competitiveness for the European Union.

In the field of illegal migration, Lithuania will

continue to work with the EU action plan regarding the pressure of migration and plans to initiate discussions within the Council. In accordance with the global approach to migration and mobility, Lithuania will seek to ensure compliance with a consistent and complete approach on external relations, when developing cooperation with EU strategic partners and regions in the field of migration. Once the European Commission has submitted the first progress report on global approach on migration and mobility, Lithuania will initiate discussion of strategic operating activities within the Council. Lithuania will also continue initiatives in the field of the establishment and implementation of mobility partnerships and common agendas regarding migration and mobility involving third countries. The Presidency will also strengthen EU cooperation within the framework of regional processes.

c) Improved Cooperation of Law Enforcement Agencies

In the field of cooperation of law enforcement agencies, Lithuania will seek to enhance the efficiency of EU law enforcement agencies, helping Member States to combat serious cross border crime and terrorism. The Presidency will seek substantial progress in discussing a proposal regarding a Regulation on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training (Europol). The proposal aims to improve the cooperation of EU law enforcement agencies, and strengthen and support their actions and develop training policy. Lithuania will seek progress in negotiations with the European Parliament on the use of Passenger Name Record data, and strengthen procedural measures in order to ensure the prevention of terrorist offences and seri-

ous crime. Once the proposal is adopted, it would enable Member States to establish general conditions and obligations for regulated air carriers transporting passengers between the territory of a third country and a Member State (including EU territory), and to transfer the Passenger Name Record data to the competent institutions. The proposal would enhance cooperation by the police and other law enforcement agencies in order to prevent terrorism and serious crime.

Lithuania will seek to approve the Hercules III and the Pericles 2020 financial programmes, thereby providing the environment for implementation as of 1 January 2014. These programmes aim to ensure further EU support for the activities by the European Commission and Member States against fraud, euro forgery; corruption and other illegal activities; damage to EU financial interests, including smuggling and counterfeit of cigarettes; seeking better awareness; carrying out studies; organising training and providing technical and scientific aid.

d) Cyber Security

Lithuania will seek the smooth implementation of the EU Cyber Security Strategy. Efforts will be taken to ensure the external and internal security of networks and information systems, strengthen the fight against crimes in cyberspace, as well as strengthen the competitiveness of information technology industry and safe services, and thus contribute to the implementation of the EU digital agenda. For that purpose, Lithuania expects to hold a discussion within the informal Council and to discuss the issue of cyber security at the Eastern Partnership Justice and Home Affairs ministerial meeting.

e) Visa policy

The Presidency will devote particular attention to the current negotiations regarding the simplification of the visa regime and readmission agreements, as well as the visa liberalisation processes with third countries. Where necessary, Lithuania will continue negotiations on the amendment of Visa Regulation 539/2001, providing for mechanisms of visa liberalisation suspension and the mutual assurance of visa regime. The Presidency will also seek the approval of the proposal by the European Commission regarding the amendment of the annexes to this Regulation.

f) Schengen Information System

The Presidency will seek agreement on Council conclusions as regards the implementation of EU international sanctions, in order to improve the practice of the entry of personal data into the Schengen Information System. Adoption of Council conclusions would allow for agreement on more

efficient implementation of EU international sanctions.

g) Civil Protection

The Presidency will seek agreement with the European Parliament regarding a decision on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The proposal aims to improve the planning of response actions, as well as increased EU response capabilities and the general level for emergency preparedness. Lithuania will take steps to ensure that the decision is adopted and enters into effect as of 1 January 2014.

The Presidency will also seek adoption of Council conclusions regarding mass evacuation in the case of large scale natural disasters or accidents caused by human activities; these conclusions will provide for directions to enhance the efficiency of organisation of mass evacuation of EU residents, especially where there is a need to evacuate residents to other EU Member States.

E. EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) seeks to coordinate actions by the Member States and establish minimum protection standards regarding working environment (health and safety at work, social dialogue and involvement of workers in activity of companies), and public health and protection of consumer interests. Given the direct responsibility of the Member States for employment and social and health care policies, the European Union only sets out framework objectives and analyses national measures and proposes individual recommendations for Member States.

The Presidency will seek better implementation of EU employment, social and health policy.

In the field of social policy, particular focus will be placed on higher youth employment, and discussions regarding implementation of the social investment package that will seek sustainable growth and the reduction of social exclusion; the Presidency will also encourage consideration of opportunities within Economic and Monetary Union to assess the enhancement of the social dimension.

In the field of health, particular focus will be placed on the review of the Tobacco Products Directive, and discussions on modern, accessible and sustainable health systems, and a Proposal on Clinical Studies of Medicine and the Regulation of Medical Devices.

E 1. Greater Employment Opportunities – Focus on Youth

Taking into account the deeper consequences of long term unemployment and growing social exclusion, the Presidency in the field of youth employment will dedicate full political attention to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee Initiative seeking to deal with youth employment issues. The Presidency will also initiate discussions involving social partners and Member States regarding the European Alliance for Apprenticeship, combining actions by the Member States, social partners, business and other related entities and the European Commission when devel-

oping high quality apprenticeships and on-the-job skills training as a part of vocational training. In order to ensure the implementation of the objectives of the alliance within the Member States, Lithuania will seek the adoption of a Council declaration.

Lithuania will further seek agreement within the Council and with the European Parliament regarding the improved cooperation of Public Employment Services to contribute to the resolution of youth unemployment issue throughout the European Union.

E 2. Rights of Workers

The Presidency will seek improved implementation of the minimum protection of posted workers. Lithuania will continue negotiations at the Council as regards the enforcement of the Directive concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, and will seek agreement with the European Parliament. The Presidency will also seek agreement with the European Parliament regarding the Directive concerning the portability of supplementary pension rights. These initiatives aim to reduce obstacles for the mobility of workers, simultaneously providing better minimum worker protection in the case of postings, the right to a pension and pension transferability.

Expressing solidarity with workers dismissed due to structural changes in the global in-

dustrial sectors caused by globalization and supporting their active reintegration into the labour market, Lithuania will therefore seek agreement with the European Parliament concerning Regulation on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014-2020) so that it is effective from 1 January 2014.

Lithuania will also promote more straightforward use of the rights granted by free movement of workers. The proposal aims to combat nationality-based discrimination and improve implementation of the free movement of workers.

E 3. Social Investment

Lithuania will continue discussion within the Council as regards the social investment package that seeks to improve implementation and the social inclusion of programmes by the European Social Fund. Social investment will be used to provide an adequate environment for economic growth and structural changes. The obligations on implementation will be recorded in national reform programmes. During the Lithuanian Presidency, there will be an informal discussion within the Council as regards aspects of the social investment package with a particular focus on the part of the document 'Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage'.

In order to combat poverty and encourage social cohesion, Lithuania will seek agreement with the European Parliament as regards the establishment of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.

E 4. Social Dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union

The financial and economic crisis has demonstrated a negative effect in the fields of employment and social policy. High unem-

ployment and growing social exclusion as well as related issues revealed the importance and relevance of the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union. Lithuania will continue the discussions opened during the Irish Presidency on the issue, and expect to organise informal discussions within the Council.

E 5. Equal Treatment of Men and Women

In the field of equal opportunities for men and women, Lithuania will seek to address the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms, in order to speed up the de facto gender equality. On this issue, Lithuania will host a minister-level conference in Vilnius and expects to adopt Council conclusions. Supporting the objective to improve women's representation in decision making, Lithuania will continue negotiations within the Council started during the Irish Presidency on the Directive on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges.

E 6. Non-discrimination

The Lithuanian Presidency expects to continue discussions and seek progress as regards the non-discrimination Directive. The initiative aims to implement the principle of the equal treatment of individuals, regardless of religion or creed, disability, age or sexual orientation in areas other than those related to the labour market.

Once the European Commission submits recommendations regarding improvement to the Roma integration package, the Presidency will propose it for the Council's approval.

E 7. Representation of the European Union at the G20

Together with the European Commission,

the Presidency will seek to ensure adequate representation of EU interests at the G20 meeting of employment and labour ministers, and the joint meeting of ministers of finance and employment held for the first time. When preparing for the meetings, Lithuania will contribute to coordination and agreement on the common EU policy as regards obligations in the field of employment policy, as proposed by Russia for the countries included in the G20 in the short, medium and long term, particularly given the implementation of obligations in the youth field.

E 8. Health

The Presidency will urge adopting Council conclusions on modern, responsive and sustainable health systems. The conclusions will stress the necessity to enhance the abilities of the EU Member States to practically apply the principle of Health in All Policies and encourage confidence in best practice. The conclusions are expected to include the implementation of objectives under the Europe 2020 strategy in the health field, effective investment in the health sector and use of structural EU funds, innovations in the pharmaceutical field, integrated care models and better hospital management.

Lithuania will seek agreement with the European Parliament on the review of the Tobacco Products Directive. The proposal aims to reduce differences between the legislation of the Member States, harmonise labelling of tobacco products using health warnings, improve user information about the ingredients of tobacco products, and harmonise legislation regarding the restriction of substances hazardous to health, and legislation governing the availability of tobacco products in the market.

Lithuania also expects to reach a general ap-

proach within the Council regarding Regulation on clinical trials of medical products for human use. The initiative aims to simplify procedures on the submission of applications for clinical trials and issue of authorisation, in order to achieve harmonisation at the EU level, supplement rules on the performance of clinical trials during emergency situations, specify and simplify principles of compensation of damage during clinical trials to the persons involved in study, renew and modernise procedures for the submission of safety notices, and provide a clear definition of client responsibility in a clinical trial.

Lithuania will seek progress in negotiations as regards two legislative proposals in the field of medical devices: regarding Regulation on Medical Devices and Regulation of in vitro diagnostic medical devices. These proposals aim to abolish defects and oversights found in the legislation currently in force, provide stricter monitoring of notified bodies of medical devices, rules of clinical assessment, and provide stricter provisions regarding market surveillance and vigilance, increase traceability of medical devices and improve system management, establishing methods of effective cooperation of the institutions. These initiatives are expected to encourage innovations in the field of medical devices, ensure the smooth functioning of the internal market and set a high level of health and safety.

Lithuania will seek progress as regards the Directive relating to the transparency of measures regulating the prices of medical products for human use and their inclusion in the scope of public health insurance systems. The initiative aims to ensure that decisions regarding the setting of prices and reimbursement are taken in a timely and transparent manner.

F. COMPETITIVENESS

The Competitiveness Council combines European Union policies of internal market, industry and research; these seek to ensure the close coordination of political objectives in order to ensure the greater competitiveness of the European Union. The Council carries out a horizontal monitoring and implementation of activities in the fields of the internal market (public procurement, free provision of services and establishment, free movement of goods, intellectual and industrial property, competition and company law), smart regulation, small and medium enterprise policy, industry, development of competitive environment, innovation, and research and technological development.

Economic growth and strengthening of competitiveness remains a key priority of the EU when implementing the Europe 2020 strategy. In order to enhance international competitiveness, economic growth and job creation in Europe the priority of the Presidency will be placed on deepening the EU Single Market, activities in the service sector and network industry, competitiveness aspects of the digital agenda, steps to enhance industry competitiveness and innovation and research systems, a favourable regulatory environment for small and medium enterprises, and modernisation of public administration.

F 1. Single Market

A properly functioning EU Single Market represents a cornerstone for competitive European enterprises, competitive EU economy and economic growth. The Presidency will focus on improving the governance of the single market and the improvement of the implementation of the Single Market rules. Lithuania will devote due attention to the completion of the Single Market Act I and advancing on the Single Market II priority initiatives as regards the establishment of integrated rail, maritime, land and air transport, establishment of the Internal Energy Market, Single Digital Market and promotion of mobility of citizens and enterprises, social entrepreneurship and cohesion.

Lithuania will continue efforts on the improved implementation of the Services Directive. The Presidency will propose to discuss the results of the peer review of Regulations within the EU Member States, in order to eliminate disproportional restrictions applicable on legal form and shareholders requirements. The Presidency will also coordinate activities regarding improvement of the quality and scope of services provided by the Points of Single Contact. Within the Council, Lithuania will initiate a discussion on the implementation of a European retail action plan and electronic public procurement strategy. Lithuania will also seek to improve the governance of the Single Market, setting guidelines for further works in this field, including making wider use of measures under the European semester, and by discussing implementing problems not only within the harmonised sector but also in the field of mutual recognition. Lithuania will seek the adoption of Council conclusions that would review these aspects of the implementation of Single Market policy and draw further directions.

Greater efficiency of public procurement, simplification and switching to electronic procurement requires considerable attention and regular tracking of progress. Where necessary, Lithuania will continue to work in order to achieve agreement with the European Parliament on the adoption of a pack-

age of Public Procurement Directives. In the field of the technical harmonisation of motor vehicles, Lithuania will continue work regarding the approval of a proposal simplifying the transfer of motor vehicles registered in another Member State within the Single Market.

F 2. Intellectual Property

Building upon the progress accomplished during the Irish Presidency, Lithuania expects to start negotiations with the European Parliament regarding the Directive on the collective rights management and licensing music online with a view to adopting this document. The Directive as proposed will establish set standards for all collective rights management organisations within the EU and approve conditions for licencing music for online use.

Lithuania will seek progress regarding the reform of the European Trademark System. The proposal on the amendments of the Trade Marks Directive and Community Trademarks Regulation will aim to modernise trademark systems, both EU and national, establish a cooperation structure of the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market and national trademark agencies, and harmonise the practises of trademark agencies.

F 3. Smart Regulation and Small and Medium Enterprises

The Presidency will seek to ensure that the implementation of Smart Regulation initiatives would promote a favourable environment for business, in particular Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), and contribute to enhanced competitiveness and the cutting the compliance costs. In consulting with social partners and based on the best practice of the Member States, efforts will

be taken to improve the application of smart regulation tools, such as SME test, competitiveness proofing and ex-post evaluation. These aspects will be reflected in the Council conclusions expected for adoption.

Lithuania will focus on a key document dedicated to growth and sustainability of SMEs, i.e. the Small Business Act (SBA). Marking the 5 year anniversary of endorsement of the SBA, Lithuania will initiate political discussions on the progress made and measures still needed to implement the principles of SBA.

In order to implement decisions regarding the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 and improve financing conditions available to SMEs, Lithuania will seek to ensure that the new enterprise competitiveness and SME programme is implemented from 1 January 2014.

F 4. Industry

The Presidency will focus on of the framework for industrial competitiveness and the implementation of horizontal initiatives related to the 2012 EU industrial policy update by way of an action plan that will promote demand for innovative goods and services, strengthen the clustering of EU enterprises, and the application of key enabling technologies.

The Presidency will assess progress in implementation of the EU industrial policy measures, and will seek agreement on short to mid-term priorities. Once the European Commission has submitted a report on the implementation of industry policy, Lithuania will integrate the aforementioned proposals into an action plan that will be submitted to the Council for approval in the form of conclusions on competitive European industry.

F 5. Modernising Public Administration

The Presidency will focus on the importance

of public administration modernization in fields such as electronic public procurement, promotion of innovation via public procurement, improving effectiveness of State-owned companies, and improved SMEs environment (application of the "Think Small First" principle).

Once the European Commission submits a timely proposal on electronic invoicing in public procurement, Lithuania will seek agreement at the Council. The initiative will promote the use of electronic invoicing within the public sector and the enhanced interaction of national electronic invoicing systems. This would contribute to the competitiveness of enterprises, cut the operating costs of enterprises and procurement costs of public authorities, and encourage automated procedures related to invoices.

The Presidency will seek an exchange of opinions at the Council regarding the role of State-owned enterprises for strengthening economic growth and competitiveness, as well as discussing the best practise of the Member States in ensuring the effective operation of such companies.

Lithuania will seek to discuss issues on the improved operation of Points of Single Contact in implementing the Services Directive, as well as further guidelines in the field of Better Regulation (see also the section on the Single Market in the programme).

F 6. Company Law

Lithuania shall seek to finalise the negotiations with the European Parliament regarding proposals on statutory audits of annual accounts and consolidated accounts as well as on specific requirements regarding statutory audit of public-interest entities. The goal of the proposals is to strengthen the competitiveness of the EU internal audit market, improve

the quality of audit and contribute to the independence of auditors and audit entities notably through the mandatory rotation of audit firms also implement the surveillance of audit markets at the EU level.

The Presidency will also launch discussions within the Council regarding a proposal for the disclosure of non-financial information that aims to increase the transparency and comparability of information provided by large European companies on environmental, social and employee related matters, respect for human rights, aspects of anticorruption and bribery, as well as individuals in management bodies.

Lithuania will seek a general approach within the Council and an agreement with the European Parliament concerning funding in 2014-2020 for three international organisations, including the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG) and the Public Interest Oversight Board (PIOB). The funding would help to improve internal market conditions by supporting transparent and independent preparation of international financial reporting and audit standards.

The Presidency will continue discussions on the proposal on the Regulation of the Council on the statute for a European foundation that aims to establish a new EU level legal form of a legal entity. Lithuania will also concentrate on other initiatives that could possibly arrive during the Presidency based on the action plan by the European Commission that seek to modernise company law and governance.

On 8-9 October 2013, the 13th Conference on European Company Governance will be hosted in Vilnius; it seeks to discuss the key issues of company governance.

F 7. Consumer Rights

The Presidency will aim at substantial progress within the Council regarding the package of Common Product Safety and Market Surveillance, seeking to update common product safety requirements, simplify market surveillance procedures, and provide for measures for the more efficient coordination and cooperation of market surveillance authorities.

The Presidency will seek to close negotiations with the European Parliament regarding Regulation of a Consumer Programme 2014-2020, so that measures under such consumer programme are successfully implemented from early 2014.

The Presidency also expects to initiate negotiations regarding the review of the Directive on package travel, package holidays and package tours, to specifically include travel purchased via the internet.

F 8. Customs Cooperation

Once the European Commission submits a progress report, Lithuania expects to adopt Council conclusions regarding the enhanced cooperation of the EU and its Member States with the Eastern neighbours in the field of customs activities. The Presidency will seek to assess progress and propose additional measures for enhanced cooperation.

F 9. Tourism

In cooperation with the European Commission, the Presidency will run the 12th European Tourism Forum that will seek to provide for further activities and measures contributing to the attractiveness of Europe as a tourism destination, discuss the future trends of tourism, and tourism financing opportunities 2014-2020.

With view to the future initiative by the European Commission on the European Tourism Quality label, Lithuania expects to initiate discussion on this issue within the Council.

F 10. Research

Development of European research and innovation is integral to the objectives of increasing European competitiveness. In the context of the Europe 2020 strategy and model initiative, Innovative Europe, the Presidency will seek to ensure that Horizon 2020, the Common Research and Innovation Programme (including funding activities of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology as well as EURATOM programme) is implemented from early 2014.

Lithuania will also organize discussions on initiatives implementing the programme, with proposals by the European Commission to be presented in Q3 2013.

With a view to the political guidelines of the European Council, Lithuania will dedicate respective attention to the implementation of European Research Area in order to develop a single market of knowledge, research and innovation by 2014. Once the European Commission has presented a report on progress in the establishment of the European Research Area, Lithuania will arrange political discussions within the Council.

F 11. Space

The Presidency will continue discussion within the Council regarding the establishment of Space Surveillance and Tracking Support Programme in order to ensure the long term use and safety of European and national space infrastructure and services provided.

Lithuania will seek progress within the Council for Regulation on the European Earth Observation programme (Copernicus). The Copernicus is a long-term programme based on partnerships of the EU, Member States, European Space Agency (ESA) and other related European stakeholders.

G. TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY

The Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council examines issues relevant for the establishment of a modern and effective transport, energy and telecommunication system, with smooth operation as regards economic, social and environmental protection aspects. The coherent and sustainable development of infrastructure is a key purpose in order to accomplish the effective operation of the internal market, and economic and social cohesion of the European Union.

A single area of transport and telecommunications is a prerequisite for the efficient growth of the European economy. In order to accomplish this objective, adequate attention will be given to connecting Trans-European infrastructure networks, establishment of a single EU transport area, development of a digital market, and the implementation of measures promoting innovation and job creation. The Presidency will therefore seek to contribute to the implementation of these objectives.

In order to strengthen EU cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries, Lithuania will organise the Eastern Partnership Transport ministerial meeting.

Lithuania will cooperate with the European Commission and the Member States in order to oversee the completion of the EU internal energy market as planned in 2014. Lithuania will give priority to the implementation of the action plan drafted by the European Commission, and will initiate the enhanced monitoring of respective obligations..

G 1. Transport

In order to ensure the growth of the EU economy and the effective operation of the Single Market, the Presidency will focus on the development of infrastructure networks, the safety and security of vehicles, fair competition and the development of new technologies.

a) Intermodal Transport

The Presidency will continue the discussion within the Council and seek a general approach

regarding the Directive on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure, seeking to reduce dependency on oil, provide for a cleaner environment to residents and improve the competitiveness of the European economy.

In implementing sustainable development objectives under the Europe 2020 strategy, key issues will include a Regulation regarding the review of functions of the European GNSS Agency, seeking to ensure the security of European satellite navigation systems. The Presidency will seek to arrive at a general approach within the Council on this issue.

b) Land Transport

In the field of land transport, the fourth railway package will be important. It aims to enhance the efficiency and competitiveness of the railway sector and contribute to the establishment of a single EU transport area. The Presidency will continue the discussion on the technical section initiated during the Irish Presidency, and will seek to arrive at a general approach within the Council as regards the Railway Safety Directive.

Lithuania will seek agreement with the European Parliament regarding the Roadworthiness Package (vehicle safety). The package includes the following proposals: periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles, technical roadside inspection of the roadworthiness of commercial vehicles and registration documents for vehicles. Once the proposals are adopted, it would mark an important step towards uniform safety standards in the EU road transport system.

c) Air Transport

The Presidency will seek progress by the Council in discussing proposals on the rights of air transport passengers to adequate information, assistance during travel, and adequate compensation in the case of cancellation, delay or denied boarding.

Lithuania expects to initiate negotiations with the European Parliament regarding the proposal on occurrence reporting in civil aviation. The initiative aims to prevent aviation accidents by collecting and analysing information on civil aviation occurrences.

The Presidency will initiate discussions on the Single European Sky (SES) II+ package. Lithuania will draft a progress report summarising these discussions. The package will touch on the remaining pending issues on the development of the Single European Sky (SES), including the provision of air navigation services, and specification of an institutional system at the EU level when defining the areas of responsibility of different organisations.

The Presidency also expects the adoption of the Council decision regarding the deployment of SESAR joint undertakings.

d) Maritime Transport

The Presidency expects to initiate negotiations with the European Parliament regarding the marine equipment Directive that seeks to ensure the adequate operation of an internal market for marine equipment, and a high-level of safety at sea and the prevention of marine pollution.

Lithuania will also seek progress on guidelines on EU policy for seaports, which allow ports to manage increasing volumes of freight flows more effectively and promote smoother logistics.

The Presidency will seek a general approach and agreement with the European Parliament when adopting proposals on the funding Regulation of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).

G 2. Single Digital Market

The Presidency will seek progress in implementing the European Digital Agenda, aiming to provide a new impetus to the European economy and greater benefit to the public in improving confidence in the internet and its security, development of digital literacy skills and youth inclusion, providing the public with considerably faster internet access, adequate data protection, development of investment for research, expanding applications for information and communication technologies for dealing with the challenges faced by the public (e.g. climate change, population aging).

The Presidency will seek to ensure the intersectoral implementation of Digital Agenda objectives through the implementation of the priority actions under the second Single Market Act. In order to see the EU Single Digital Market established by 2015, Lithuania will highlight the necessity of speeding up scheduled EU measures in increasing the transparency of bank account fees, reducing the implementation costs of electronic communication infrastructure of the digital market, and improvement of the internal market of electronic communications. Lithuania will seek to speed up the drafting of proposals on the integrated European payment market, and the examination of the issue of electronic invoices in the field of public procurement at the Council.

The Presidency will seek to open negotiations with the European Parliament on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market. The proposal aims to facilitate electronic transactions and ensure the mutual recognition of electronic identification and authentication mechanisms between the Member States.

The Presidency will seek agreement with the European Parliament regarding Guidelines for the trans-European telecommunication net-

works (TEN-TELE). The proposal aims to establish development guidelines and priorities for infrastructure for broadband communication networks and digital services in the field of telecommunication.

Lithuania will seek progress with respect to the Directive that aims to identify key risks related to the assurance of internet security, solutions and further actions and fields where the role of the EU can be enhanced, as well as regarding the Regulation on reducing the cost of deploying broadband communications and the Directive on the accessibility of public sector bodies' websites, seeking to enhance accessibility of e-content to disabled people.

G 3. Energy

Taking into account the European Council Conclusions of February 2011 and May 2013, the Presidency will cooperate with the European Commission and the Member States in order to complete the EU internal energy market as scheduled in 2014. The Presidency will place priority on the implementation of the action plan drafted by the European Commission, and initiate the enhanced monitoring of obligations under the action plan. At the end of the Presidency, Lithuania will submit a report regarding the implementation of the internal energy market to the Council.

On 4-5 November 2013, Vilnius will host a high-level energy conference, focusing on the implementation of energy projects of common interest and the future for energy infrastructure. These projects are of key importance for establishing a modern EU energy infrastructure.

The Presidency will seek progress in strengthening the external dimension of the EU energy policy. Lithuania expects to review the 2011 Council conclusions on the subject, which will aim at agreement regarding further steps on strengthening the external dimension of en-

ergy policy and the security of energy supply. The Presidency will seek progress with the European Parliament in examining proposal on the Fuel Quality Directive and Renewable Energy Sources Directive (ILUC). The Directives promote the use of the least polluting biofuels in the transport sector, and assurance of the sustainable production of biofuels.

As the European Court of Justice has overturned the 2010 Council Regulation concerning the notification to the Commission of investment projects in energy infrastructure, Lithuania expects to seek agreement with the European Parliament regarding the new Regulation that has been submitted.

In view of the schedule of submission of the proposal for biomass sustainability criteria by the European Commission, Lithuania will seek substantial progress in examining this proposal. The proposal aims to assess the costs related to the collection and processing of biomass and establish criteria, whereby the use of biomass would be treated as contributing to the targets of the development of renewable energy resources.

In accordance with the Green Paper by the European Commission "A 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy Policies", and the outcome of public consultations regarding this initiative, Lithuania will where necessary arrange for an exchange of opinions within the Council regarding this initiative. The initiative aims to provide for long-term investment into infrastructure that will ensure the security of energy supply, stability, affordability of prices of energy resources, thereby retaining the competitiveness of the industry and promoting investment in the development of a low-carbon dioxide economy.

H. AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

The Agriculture and Fisheries Council examines issues in the agricultural section related to the establishment and implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy, setting off common rules for the internal market, forestry, plant protection, food safety and animal welfare. In the fisheries section, the Council deals with issues related to the establishment and implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy, seeks to ensure the use of fisheries resources and the adequate management thereof, increased competitiveness of the fisheries industry, and retain adequate production quality for consumers.

The Presidency will seek to encourage the sustainable, innovative and environmentally friendly development of the agriculture and food sector and fisheries within the European Union.

H 1. Agriculture

Once an inter-institutional political agreement has been reached regarding the package of proposals on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Presidency will initiate and seek the completion of the work related to the approval and entry into force of the aforementioned package. Particular attention will be paid to the adoption, in concert with the European Parliament, of a proposal that provides for the necessary transitional CAP provisions in 2014, which have a bearing on certain aspects of CAP reform, mostly related to the system of direct payments and transitional provisions in rural development. The provisions of the proposal will ensure the smooth transit from the current CAP Regulations to new rules under the reformed CAP.

Given the increasing liberalisation of international trade and ever stronger competition in the global markets of trade in agricultural products, and taking into account the need to provide better information to consumers in the internal market and third countries regarding EU agricultural and food products demonstrating considerable added value, quality and health, efforts will be

taken to establish a targeted and ambitious strategy to promote the future sales of these products. Once the European Commission has submitted a proposal on information and promotion for agricultural products, the Lithuanian Presidency will initiate discussion of the proposal, focusing on a more flexible response to the specific needs of different markets and the simplification of programme administration.

Furthermore, once the European Commission has submitted a report concerning the implementation of Single Market organisation measures in the fruit and vegetable sector and the respective legislative proposal, Lithuania will initiate negotiations and seek substantial progress on this issue. This proposal will include better administration and implementation of measures in the fruit and vegetable sector, as related to the organisation of producers, their operating funds and programmes.

H 2. Fisheries

In May 2013 the European Parliament and the Council reached political agreement regarding the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) that will be implemented from 2014. In the course of implementation of a new CFP, efforts will be made to ensure that the activities of fisheries and aquaculture in the long term ensure environmental, economic and social sustainability, and contribute to the availability of food to consumers.

The Presidency will mainly focus on reaching an agreement with the European Parliament on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund that will be used in 2014 to 2020 to fund the implementation of the new CFP and the sustainable development of fisheries and the aquaculture sector.

Lithuania is aware of the importance and sensitivity of the matter, and will take every step required to reach an inter-institutional solution regarding the multiannual plans of fish stocks management that represent the basis for the new CFP.

The Presidency will give adequate attention to the establishment of annual total quantities available for fisheries and the distribution of fisheries quotas. The Presidency will also seek political agreement which is balanced in terms of economic, social and environmental concerns as regards fisheries opportunities in 2014 in the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and other seas.

The Presidency will be involved in coordinating the EU position and representation at negotiations concerning entry into protocols to agreements on fisheries partnership with third countries, as well as annual meetings with the regional organisations of fisheries management and coastal states.

H 3. Veterinary, Food safety and Phytosanitary

The Presidency will seek simpler, clearer and more modern EU legal Regulation in the fields of animal and plant health, feedstuffs and food. Lithuania will place particular focus on the proposal on a Regulation laying down provisions for the management of expenditure relating to the food chain, animal health and animal welfare, and relating to plant health and plant reproductive material. Lithuania will seek to ensure the effective discussion of the issue, and greater

progress in order to reach agreement by the 2014 election of the European Parliament. Lithuania will also seek substantial progress in continuing work on the package of food chain legislation, including Regulations on official control, on animal health, on protective measures against plant pests, and on the production and marketing of plant reproductive material.

Once the European Commission has submitted proposals, the Presidency will also be prepared to start negotiations and seek substantial progress with respect to the review of the Directive on Veterinary Medicines and Medicated Feedingstuffs Directive, hygiene package, and zootechnical legislation.

H 4. Forests

The Presidency will give adequate attention to the coordinated implementation of sustainable forest management principles in the Member States. When the communication on the EU Forestry Strategy is released, the Presidency will propose to adopt Council conclusions. This EU level instrument will be based on the principle of subsidiarity and respect for national competencies.

Given the growing importance of forests and sustainable forest management in dealing with climate change, biodiversity, air and water quality, in the framework of the Forest Europe process the decision to begin negotiations on legally binding agreement on Forests in Europe was reached during the Oslo Ministerial Conference in 2011. Lithuania will seek the adequate representation of the EU and its Member States in the resumed fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference to be held in Madrid, when the outcome of the negotiations is expected to be endorsed.

I. ENVIRONMENT

The Environment Council deals with the quality requirements of environmental protection in order to ensure harmonised, balanced and sustainable economic activities, responsible use of soil resources, and to preserve an environment favourable to human health. The Council further discusses issues of international cooperation when dealing with regional and global environmental issues, particularly with respect to climate change and global warming.

Common obligations to combat climate change, the commitment to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources and taking responsibility for possible negative consequences to future generations, will remain key tasks in the agenda of the Environment Council in the second semester of 2013. Therefore the EU and its Member States are encouraged to switch to a low carbon economy, seek alternative energy sources that meet sustainability criteria, ensure more efficient waste management, and deal with issues related to human activities and their effect on ecosystems.

The Presidency will mainly focus on the improvement of the legislative Regulation of the environment based on the principles of sustainable development and its enhanced implementation to ensure the right of an individual to live in an environment favourable to his/her health and well-being.

I 1. Effective Environmental Protection

The Presidency will encourage the inclusion of environmental protection requirements into other EU policies, and will contribute to the more consistent and enhanced implementation of environment protection requirements.

Lithuania will seek final agreement with the European Parliament on the Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE Regulation) providing for the funding of environmental projects until 2020. The

aforementioned programme will be an instrument encouraging the faster implementation of environmental protection and climate change management objectives, and the integration of these into sector based policies.

The Presidency is ready to seek an agreement on the review of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, seeking well-founded decisions contributing to the implementation of requirements, quality assessment, speeding up of procedures and imposing no additional administrative burdens.

The Presidency will seek the agreement at the Council and with the European Parliament regarding Regulation on the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, providing for EU activities in the field of fair and equitable use of genetic resources.

Once the European Commission has submitted proposals regarding the prevention of entry and spread of invasive species, regarding the stricter control of shipment of waste, as well as the thematic strategy on Ambient Air and review of related legislation, Lithuania expects to initiate discussions within the Council. The proposals would aim to reduce the negative impact of invasive species on EU biodiversity, ensure the sustainable use of resources and environmentally friendly waste management, assessment of more ambitious objectives on limiting pollutants in the atmosphere, as well as additional measures of pollution reduction.

I 2. Climate Change

Climate change remains a key EU policy. The Presidency will mostly focus on retaining EU leadership and the coordination of EU activities in international negotiations on climate change regarding global legally binding post-2020 agreement. Lithuania will seek to approve within the Council a common EU position for negotiations on the future of climate change policy at the 19th Conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change scheduled for November 2013. The Conference will also include discussions regarding the latest agreement on climate change to enter into effect in 2020, as well as other issues related to the improvement and strengthening of the international regime of climate change, promoting adaptation, application of flexible market mechanisms, developing environmentally-friendly technologies, and funding for actions of developing countries. The Presidency will also cooperate with the Member States and the European Commission on issues related to the ratification of the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol.

Where necessary, the Presidency will continue discussions within the Council on EU climate change and energy policy until 2030, which seeks to provide for long-term investment in infrastructure that would ensure the security of energy supply, sustainability, affordability of energy prices, maintain industrial competitiveness, and promote investment into the development of a low carbon economy. Based on the outcome of stakeholder consultations and the impact assessment carried out by the European Commission, discussions on determination of targets for greenhouse gas emissions

reduction, promotion of use of renewable energy resources, and energy efficiency improvement will continue.

Climate change has an effect on numerous important sectors, including industry, energy, transport and agriculture. The legislative proposals presented at the Council will concern the mainstreaming of climate change objectives by reducing greenhouse gas emissions in these sectors.

The Presidency will seek agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation of reducing emissions of fluorinated greenhouse gas (F-gas), which have a negative impact on climate. The Regulation includes measures that will contribute to the implementation of EU climate objectives, and encourage the industry to phase down the use of F-gas in equipment by replacing F-gas with alternatives that are both energy effective and safe.

The Presidency will suggest to the Council to discuss the proposals by the European Commission on the monitoring of maritime transport emissions. The proposals aim at the inclusion of these emissions into obligations on reduction of greenhouse gases.

The Council will further seek progress when discussing proposal on the Fuel Quality Directive and Renewable Energy Sources Directive (ILUC). The Directives promote the use of the least polluting biofuels in the transport sector, and the assurance of the sustainable production of biofuels.

I 3. International Cooperation

The Presidency will coordinate the preparation of the EU position for signing the international agreement at the Diplomatic Conference on Mercury. It will establish efforts by the international community to protect

human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.

Lithuania will seek within the Council adequate preparation for the EU involvement in the 25th meeting of Parties to the Montreal Protocol that will discuss global steps to protect the ozone layer and reduce the production and use of ozone depleting substances. The Presidency will coordinate the preparation of the EU participation in the High Level Political Forum, established when implementing the outcomes of the United

Nations Rio + 20 conference on sustainable development which took place in 2012. This Forum will strive for political leadership and monitor the implementation of sustainable development.

The Presidency will coordinate representation of the EU at the 11th Conference of Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification, at the 2nd session of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention.

J. EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE AND SPORT

The Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council discusses issues of the quality of education and vocational education and training, youth activity and public health; it also submits proposals for the improved interaction of national education systems when providing for an environment favourable to economic growth, human health and cultural development. The Council discusses, and together with the European Parliament approves programmes that seek to share and improve European cultural and historical heritage, use cultural and audio-visual measures to increase the creativity and literacy of citizens, promote the mobility of students, teachers and lecturers, to improve the cooperation of education systems with business, and to ensure the earlier involvement of youth in the labour market.

J 1. Education and Training

The Presidency will focus on the importance of the quality and efficiency of education and training when implementing the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) and seeking to accomplish the objectives included in the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Presidency will seek to complete the procedures leading to a formal adoption of the new Erasmus + Programme (2014-2020) that will replace previously existing initiatives in the field of education, training, and youth and will integrate sports initiatives. The proposal will provide for the more effective management and funding of the programme, seeking the implementation of the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and ET 2020 strategic framework and the Youth Strategy.

In the field of general education and vocational education and training, Lithuania plans to draft and submit to the Council for adoption conclusions that will highlight leadership initiatives in education, factors for the selection of leaders of education institutions, prevention of early drop-out from the education system, as well as the development of entrepreneurship at school. In the field of vocational training, the Presidency will also discuss issues related to initial vocational education and

training in order to ensure the supply of necessary skills to the labour market, and to increase the attractiveness and openness of continuing vocational education and training.

In order to highlight the necessity and the objective of enhancing the quality and competitiveness of European higher education, and in response to the initiative by the European Commission regarding the internationalisation of higher education, Lithuania will continue the discussion on the need to modernise higher education. The Presidency plans to propose adopting the Council conclusions regarding the internationalisation of the EU higher education sector, whereby it will call to discussions on how the European higher education sector could respond to globalisation issues and seek the implementation of the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. Discussions will include ways of promoting partnerships in the field of higher education, including those with the EU's neighbourhood countries, thereby enhancing research and teaching capacities, and promoting a more active role of universities knowledge transfer, thus increasing the visibility of the EU higher education at the international level. The Presidency will highlight the importance of strengthening international cooperation with the EU's neighbourhood countries, and there-

fore plans to invite partners from the Eastern Partnership countries to attend discussions on the internationalisation of higher education hosted in Lithuania.

The Presidency will initiate political discussion within the Council concerning Open Educational Resources and digital learning. In an era of rapid changes in the field of information and communication technologies, these resources represent another popular tool to promote virtual academic mobility and knowledge exchange, ensuring intercultural communication in education, whilst simultaneously seeking sustainable social development and economic growth. On this basis, the Presidency will call for discussions within the Council regarding the importance, added value and the challenges posed by Open Education Resources and digital learning.

J 2. Youth

Given that the involvement of youth that is unemployed, out of studies, with no activities, and not party to any organisation in active public or social life represents growing challenge for most countries, Lithuania has selected the improved social inclusion of young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) as its youth policy priority. Council conclusions are expected on this issue.

To strengthen cooperation with youth in the Eastern Partnership countries, Lithuania will host the first meeting of the Eastern Partnership Youth Forum in cooperation with the Agency of International Youth Cooperation in Kaunas on 22-25 October 2013. Key topics of the meeting will include the recognition of youth work and informal learning and their importance for social inclusion, especially at the local level and the presentation of the status of ongoing European and Eastern Partner-

ship processes and the possible development thereof.

J 3. Cultural and Audio-visual Affairs

The Presidency will take actions with a view to completing procedures on the adoption of the Creative Europe programme, supporting cultural and creative sectors, and the Europe for Citizens programme, promoting European citizenship and the remembrance of common European history, both programmes for the period 2014-2020, in order to ensure implementation of the programmes as of 1 January 2014.

The Presidency will seek agreement with the European Parliament in order to adopt the decision establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 and to ensure the smooth continuity of the most beautiful and visible EU cultural initiatives.

The Presidency will seek to reach a general approach in the Council regarding the recast of the Directive on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State seeking to facilitate procedures in this field. The proposed amendments in the Directive will be applied to cultural objects classified as national treasures which were unlawfully removed after the year 1993 and currently located on the territory of another EU Member State.

In the area of widening access to culture in the digital environment, Lithuania will further encourage the development of Europeana, the public European digital library, seeking continuous cooperation of Member States and Europeana, and the dissemination of digitised cultural heritage online. Once the European Commission has submitted a proposal, the Presidency will lead the discussions concern-

ing the European film in the digital age with a view to adopting recommendations on this issue in the Council.

The Presidency intends to initiate policy debate within the Council regarding the transformation of the audio-visual media landscape affected by the latest technological developments. The Presidency will further highlight the development of Connected TV and on-going changes in the audio-visual services and media market, characterised by a steady increase in the convergence of media services and the way in which these services are consumed and delivered, i.e. the progressive merger of traditional broadcast services and the internet. Lithuania will underline the necessity to ensure media freedom and pluralism in the new digital environment.

The Presidency will focus on strengthening the role of culture and emphasizing its impact for social and economic development as well as culture's contribution to job creation and

growth, interaction of cultural policy with other policy fields, and the need for an evidence-based change in cultural policy.

J 4. Sport

The Presidency will seek agreement on the Council recommendation on Health Enhancing Physical Activity (HEPA). This recommendation would aim to encourage the monitoring of implementation of inter-sectoral physical activity programmes.

When strengthening the role of sport as a sector in the EU, Lithuania intends to propose the adoption of Council conclusions regarding sport as an impetus for economic growth and employment.

The Presidency also plans to hold political discussions in the Council on good governance, which would prove beneficial to enhancing the managerial abilities of sports federations as well as ethics in sport.

FOR NOTES

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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