



Background note session II

Priorities of the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU

Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC
29–30 January 2023, Stockholm

The Swedish Parliament, former Second Chamber

Priorities of the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU

When Sweden takes over [the Presidency](#) of the EU on 1 January 2023, Europe faces several challenges. Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has been going on for over 300 days and Ukraine is fighting for the lives and security of its population. Russia's actions pose a threat to Europe's security and have serious consequences for Europe's economies and energy supply. The unity of the EU is its strength. The Swedish Presidency will give priority to continuing economic and military support to Ukraine.

On 15 December 2022, the Government presented its [four priorities for the Swedish Presidency](#): Security, competitiveness, a green and energy transition and democratic values and the rule of law. This is Sweden's third Presidency, last in a trio after France and the Czech Republic.

Security – unity

The EU reacted and acted quickly in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the unity of the Union showed strength. The EU must remain a strong force and the Swedish Presidency will continue to work to support Ukraine and to support their path towards the EU. More measures will be needed for reconstruction and reforms to facilitate Ukraine's integration into the EU.

A solid European security and defence policy, in close cooperation with the EU's partners, is important for strengthening security. Further measures are needed to counter Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The implementation of the strategic compass and other measures are important for the EU's long-term security. During the Presidency, work on addressing cyber threats will continue.

The EU also needs to continue working to combat cross-border organised crime in order to build secure societies for its citizens.

Competitiveness

A competitive EU is crucial for growth, employment and prosperity in the Union. It is important to continue to promote measures that help create a healthy and open economy based on free competition and private investment. In order to maintain its competitiveness, the EU needs to be a leader when it comes to digital trade and technology. The sustainability dimension and bringing about an early transition can provide a competitive advantage. Competitive companies help create sustainable growth that will accelerate green and digital transition. The Presidency will work for the realisation of long-term and predictable rules, which will help bring about effective competition and reduce the regulatory burden to enable the EU to be a leader in digital innovation. The Swedish Presidency will prioritise work on the two related negotiations on the new Eco-design and Construction Products regulations, both of which aim to ensure an efficient and well-functioning internal market contributing to a circular economy with reduced impact on the environment and climate.

The Swedish Presidency will draw attention to the 30-year anniversary of the single market and work to ensure that European competitiveness will be at the top of the political agenda.

A green and energy transition

The global climate challenge requires local and global action. Europe has begun work on the green transition and the Swedish Presidency will continue to work to respond to the climate challenge. Implementing the [Fit for 55 Package](#) and accelerating energy transition is part of this. Europe is to be

at the forefront by meeting ambitious climate objectives that promote growth and competitiveness. To meet these objectives, a cross-sectoral strategy is needed.

The Swedish Presidency will continue its work to address high energy prices and at the same time deal with long-term reforms of the energy market. Priority will be given to reform of the design of the European electricity market. The Presidency will continue to work on the proposals in the gas market package.

An important task for the Presidency will also be to follow up the outcome of the UN Conference on Biological diversity (COP15) and to ensure rapid implementation of the global framework on biodiversity.

The green transition toward a sustainable future requires investment in innovative industries and the development of a circular economy. This requires the right regulatory framework and policy. The Presidency will work to ensure that the EU is at the forefront in this area.

Democratic values and the rule of law

The rule of law is the foundation of the democratic system in all member states and is necessary to ensure the protection of fundamental rights. The European Union is based on democratic values and the maintenance of the rule of law and fundamental rights is therefore an essential element of the Swedish Presidency. The Presidency will continue the Council's country-specific constitutional dialogue.

The EU is based on common values and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. The Presidency will actively continue the Council's work to uphold respect for fundamental rights and to follow up the UN Charter within the Union. The Presidency will work to ensure that the EU accedes to the European Convention as soon as possible.