



LE GOUVERNEMENT  
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG



# Programme and priorities

## A Union created for citizens

Luxembourg will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the twelfth time in the second semester of 2015. The Luxembourg Presidency is the first to take place under the auspices of the Lisbon Treaty which has given new competences to the Union and established a new institutional balance.

## A Union for the citizens

The Luxembourg Presidency has outlined an open approach:

- Listen to the citizens,
- Supporting businesses,
- Cooperating with partners and institutions in order to act in the interests of Europe.

Updating the interinstitutional Agreement on Better Regulation, on the basis of the proposal submitted by the European Commission, will enable better interinstitutional cooperation which should ensure the quality of legislation that takes the interests and needs of citizens into account. The Luxembourg Presidency will therefore seek to advance negotiations on this agreement.

The programme of the Luxembourg Presidency is placed in the context of the implementation of the [Strategic Agenda for the Union in Times of Change](#) adopted by the European Council of 26 and 27 June 2014 and which outlines the key priorities for the European Union over the next five years. The programme takes also account of the [policy orientations of the President of the Commission](#), the [annual work programme of the Commission](#) and the [work of the 'Trio'](#) made up of Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg.

The priorities of the Luxembourg Presidency for the second semester of 2015 are based on seven pillars:

- Stimulating investment to boost growth and employment
- Deepening the European Union's social dimension
- Managing migration, combining freedom, justice and security
- Revitalising the single market by focusing on its digital dimension
- Placing European competitiveness in a global and transparent framework
- Promoting sustainable development
- Strengthening the European Union's presence on the global stage

## Stimulating investment to boost growth and employment

To that effect, the Presidency will work towards the implementation of the **European Fund for Strategic Investments** which seeks to raise up to €315 billion to finance strategic investment projects that will provide added value to the European Union.

It will promote the Capital Markets Union in order to enable **capital markets to play a bigger role in the financing of the economy**.

Other projects include the **banking structural reform** and negotiations on a **new legislative proposal regarding the resolution of market infrastructures**.

The Luxembourg Presidency will pursue efforts to implement a **real European industrial policy** which will especially focus on the space industry, a sector in which Europe already plays a leading role. The Luxembourg Presidency will hold a wide-ranging debate on the future outline of an **integrated and comprehensive EU strategy on space**.

The Luxembourg Presidency will promote **sustainable development initiatives based on research and innovation**, which seek to enhance competitiveness and increase the rate of employment, while promoting social cohesion and environmental welfare.

The Luxembourg Presidency will hold the **annual budget negotiations** at Council level and with the European Parliament, in order to **reach an agreement on the European Union's 2016 budget**, and to provide the Union with the means necessary to attain its objectives and carry through its policies.

## Deepening the European Union's social dimension

The economic and financial crisis led to an increase in unemployment, in particular youth unemployment, and further increased inequalities. In so far as such social consequences have weakened the Union's economic performance, and its socio-political stability, the Luxembourg Presidency seeks to promote a highly competitive social market economy, which aims at full employment and social progress, as well as of justice and social protection that are enshrined in the Treaties.

The Luxembourg Presidency will support the idea of the President of the European Commission for a Europe with a **'Triple A social rating'**. The Luxembourg Presidency will focus on **social investment** and, in particular, on **investment in human capital**.

The Luxembourg Presidency would also like to **improve social governance within the Union and, in particular, the Eurozone**.

Particular attention will be paid to **increasing the rate of female employment and to a balanced representation of women and men in political and economic decision-making** as factors of competitiveness.

In terms of public health, **patients** and **innovation** will be at the core of discussions. These priorities will be reflected in the efforts aiming to implement a **strong regulatory framework providing citizens with quick access to safe and high-quality products**. The Luxembourg Presidency will also initiate a process of reflection on improved access to **personalised medicine** for a greater number of citizens and on a better **dementia care**, which poses a serious challenge to EU healthcare systems.

A primary objective in the field of **education** will be to take better account of students' (linguistic) diversity. The Luxembourg Presidency will focus in particular on the provision of schooling and high-quality childcare during early childhood.

As for **youth**, it is necessary to strengthen the political participation of young people and to develop, for that purpose, necessary European synergies.

The assessment of **culture's** potential contribution to the European Union's external relations, and in particular in respect of development cooperation policies, will provide an opportunity to focus on third countries.

## **Managing migration, combining freedom, justice and security**

The tragic loss of life in the Mediterranean calls for **resolute and sustained action at European Union level**. The Luxembourg Presidency will prioritise the initiatives to be carried out within the territory of the European Union and in partnership with third countries to save lives and implement an effective immigration policy.

The EU must be resolute in its efforts to **consolidate and promote the fundamental values** on which it was founded. Respecting the **rule of law** is part of this heritage. The Luxembourg Presidency will make every effort to establish a dialogue with a view to defending and safeguarding the rule of law within the EU Member States.

It will **promote the process of accession** of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This will however require a **period of reflection and analysis**, following the opinion of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The **reform of the Court of Justice of the European Union**, i.e. increasing the number of judges of the General Court of the European Union, will be a priority for the Luxembourg Presidency.

It is necessary to finalise **the EU data protection reform** for the proper functioning of the single market. The Luxembourg Presidency will seek to make progress in negotiations on the **new regulatory framework** in this area, aiming to conclude the matter before the end of the year.

The Luxembourg Presidency will work to ensure that the European Union adopts a **coherent global approach** to the fight against terrorism. This approach will include the implementation of a European Passenger Name Record (**PNR**).

The implementation of the **renewed European Union Internal Security Strategy** for 2015–2020 is a major priority for the Luxembourg Presidency. It is necessary to define a **common response to threats to the security of citizens of the European Union**, such as foreign fighters, environmental crimes, cyber-crime and economic crime.

The **creation of a European Public Prosecutor's Office** responsible for investigating and prosecuting cases of fraud in European Union spending is the flagship project in the European area of justice. The Luxembourg Presidency will endeavor to advance negotiations at Council level in order to establish the European Public Prosecutor's Office in 2016.

## **Revitalising the single market by focusing on its digital dimension**

The Luxembourg Presidency believes that **Europe must play a role in the global digital revolution**. The Luxembourg Presidency will give priority to digital technology in a transversal manner, placing it at the heart of its single market policy.

In this respect, examining the European Commission's forthcoming **Single Market Strategy for goods and services** will be a priority for the Luxembourg Presidency.

In the field of **intellectual property**, the Luxembourg Presidency will seek to follow up on reflections on modernising copyright. This can be achieved by adapting to the digital era, which will enable creative industries to develop, while respecting the interests of rights holders as well as those of consumers.

The Luxembourg Presidency will ensure that the **'Think Small First'** principle is applied systematically so that all European Union policies encourage the development of SMEs. The **revision of the 'Small Business Act'** will be treated as a priority.

Within the context of the **European energy policy**, the Luxembourg Presidency will take into account the ambitious objective the EU has set itself, namely to be a low-carbon economy by 2050. The **Energy Union** as proposed by the Commission promotes the emergence of a horizontal energy strategy based on an ambitious action plan and targets the implementation of a new form of governance.

The essential question of the **future design of the internal energy market for electricity**, its implementation and the future role played by end-consumers will also be tabled at the Council. The Luxembourg Presidency will undertake all the legislative work required in the field of **gas supply**, which is both economically and strategically important, as well as in **labelling appliances**, which is key to the EU's ambitions in terms of reducing energy consumption.

The Luxembourg Presidency will strive to achieve the aims of the **European transport policy**. The Luxembourg Presidency will continue work on the **Fourth Railway Package** both within the Council and with the European Parliament. In addition, the Presidency will launch a **wide-ranging debate on the European transport policy**.

## Placing European competitiveness in a global and transparent framework

The Luxembourg Presidency will rely on **the report on the completion of the Economic Monetary Union (EMU)** to carry through its policies on competitiveness. The report aims to **integrate the EMU's four pillars** (budget, economic, banking and politics) in order to promote a **return to growth and boost employment within a framework of solidarity and budgetary discipline** and also to promote a **more social Europe**.

Luxembourg intends to place the **fight against fraud and tax evasion in a global context** and ensure fair competition. Transparency and the creation of a **'level playing field'** at global level are the pre-conditions for the effectiveness of this fight.

The expected progress within the context of the **OECD's work on BEPS** (Base Erosion and Profit Shifting) will add impetus to the EU's approach in the second semester of 2015.

Whilst ensuring respect for the single market's body of law concerning, in particular, free movement of capital and freedom of establishment, the Luxembourg Presidency aims to successfully conclude negotiations on the proposal on **transparency and exchange of information regarding tax rulings**. The Presidency also hopes to make progress with work **on the directive on the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB)**.

The Luxembourg Presidency will discuss the reinforcement of the mandate of the **Code of Conduct for Business Taxation** in the Council, taking into account the current status of the file.

The **Action Plan for fairer corporate taxation**, as proposed by the Commission on the 17th of June 2015, will serve as a starting point for the Luxembourg Presidency in its work on taxation.

In terms of multilateral negotiations, the main objectives are to **prepare the tenth ministerial meeting of the WTO in Nairobi** and **conclude the plurilateral Environment Goods Agreement**.

On the bilateral front, the Luxembourg Presidency will work to conclude political negotiations with **Vietnam** and **Japan** and to sign the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with Canada (**CETA**).

The Luxembourg Presidency will advance discussions on the **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)** which will intensify during the second semester of 2015 when issues of substance will be addressed. The Luxembourg Presidency will pay particular attention to discussions on the **Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanisms** and other more sensitive issues. The Luxembourg Presidency will promote maximum transparency in this regard.

## Promoting sustainable development

The Luxembourg Presidency will make every effort **to accelerate the transition towards a green economy with low greenhouse gas emissions**. The Presidency will also encourage the emergence of **an innovative, circular and competitive economy** which is energy-efficient and respectful of biodiversity and natural resources, minimises waste and encourages cost-effective recycling, in particular by handling ongoing legislative matters, such as those relating to air quality and reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

One of the cornerstones of the **Strategy on climate change** will be the **Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)**. The Luxembourg Presidency will begin working on the proposal to reform the ETS after an agreement has been reached on the market stability reserve (MSR) mechanism.

The **EU Biodiversity Strategy** will undergo a mid-term review during the second semester of 2015. The Luxembourg Presidency will examine the results in detail and propose the adoption of conclusions by the Council in that regard.

The Luxembourg Presidency will continue working on the **revision of the Europe 2020 strategy** by **'greening' the European Semester** to integrate better environmental viability into the wider cycle of economic governance.

This requirement for sustainability will also be at the heart of the Presidency's actions concerning the various international negotiations that will dominate the global agenda on sustainable development: the **Special Summit on Sustainable Development** in New York in September or the **21st Conference of Parties at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21)** in Paris in December.

During the **Paris Conference on climate change**, international negotiations should lead to the adoption of a **new, ambitious and binding treaty with universal participation**, to ensure that global warming is kept below two degrees Celsius. **The Luxembourg Presidency will steer the discussions with a view to adopting an ambitious negotiating mandate** and combine its efforts with those of the European Commission to ensure that the European Union can make its voice heard.

**Sustainability** must also be the **fundamental principle for the future development of European agriculture**. The Luxembourg Presidency will also focus on **simplifying rules and procedures**. A new regulatory framework on **organic farming adapted** to new challenges, thereby enabling harmonious development in this sector, the impact of the **Russian embargo on certain EU agricultural products** and the **expiry of milk quotas** are some of the priorities.

The principle of sustainability will also guide the actions of the Luxembourg Presidency in the policy area of **fisheries**.

The principle of simplification must be applied to the implementation of the **new rules** to be adopted **in the field of phytosanitary protection**, in respect of which the Luxembourg Presidency will take steps to reach a first-reading agreement with the European Parliament.

The Presidency hopes to be able to contribute to the democratic debate by beginning work on the **revision of the authorisation procedure for genetically modified organisms** in foodstuffs and animal feed.

Consumer interests will be further protected by work to **improve consumer information**, in particular in relation to the labelling of fats.

## **Strengthening the European Union's presence on the global stage**

The main priorities will be a **new foreign policy strategy** which takes account of the changes that have taken place in the global international environment since 2003, mandates relating to the **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)** that the European Council of June 2015 will confer on different EU institutions, **developing existing relations with the European Union's closest partners, without jeopardising the fundamental principles of European integration** which lie at the heart of the single market: the uniform application of the European Union acquis and the free movement of persons.

With regard to enlargement, the Luxembourg Presidency will work towards the consensual adoption of annual '**enlargement**' conclusions in December.

The Presidency will host the **12<sup>th</sup> Asia–Europe Meeting (ASEM), the ministerial meeting for dialogue**, in Luxembourg in November 2015.

The European Union's credibility throughout the world is bolstered by **decisive action taken in the field of development cooperation and humanitarian aid**. 2015 has been named **European Year for Development**. Numerous activities have been organised to inform and raise awareness among European citizens. The Luxembourg Presidency will host the closing ceremony of the European Year for Development in December 2015. The Luxembourg Presidency will make **policy coherence for development a priority in the field of development**. In terms of humanitarian aid, the Luxembourg Presidency will facilitate debate as part of the World Humanitarian Summit with a view to establishing a common European position reaffirming humanitarian principles.