



**KINGDOM OF BELGIUM**

Federal Public Service

**Foreign Affairs,  
Foreign Trade and  
Development Cooperation**

# Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

General presentation  
July 05, 2010



# Outline

1. The Council Presidency
2. Preparation of the Presidency
3. Belgian priorities
4. Conclusion



# 1. The Council Presidency

Article 16.9 of the TEU:

*“The Presidency of Council configurations, other than that of Foreign Affairs, shall be held by Member State representatives in the Council on the basis of equal rotation”*



- 12 times
- Tradition of **honest broker** in the European interest



# 1. The Council Presidency

1.1. Main characteristics

1.2. Logistical challenges

1.3. A new and difficult context



## 1.1. Main Characteristics

- Represents and is responsible for the functioning of the Council
- Influences the direction of EU policy

### Main Tasks:

- ✓ Programming
- ✓ Organizing and chairing meetings of all Council bodies
- ✓ Guardian of the respect of the rules of Procedure
- ✓ Formulating compromises
- ✓ Negotiating agreements with the European Parliament



## 1.2. Logistical challenges

- 27 Council sessions
- 16 Informal Council sessions
- More than 500 meetings and conferences in different EU areas
  - ASEM 8 : 4-5 Oct. 2010 (Most important political summit with third countries (48 Heads of State / Government))
  - European Development Days: December 5-7 2010
- Budget 74 million € + 16 million € for security



# 1.3. A new and difficult context

## NEW:

- 27 Member States (versus 15 in 2001)
- Lisbon Treaty: new procedures, new functions
- New Commission, New European Parliament

## DIFFICULT:

- Legislative backlog
- Economic and financial crisis





## 2. Preparation of the Presidency

2.1. Ways to prepare

2.2. Formation of the Contents



## 2. Preparation of the Presidency

### 2.1. Ways to prepare

- 1) *Political* role of a presidency  
6 months programme – 10 chapters-  
deliverables –
  - Approval by Council of Ministers
  - 2 July – 6 July – 26 July
- 2) *Technical* role of a presidency - 450 fiches
- 3) *Operational* role of a presidency - Indicative  
agenda's –



## 2. Preparation of the Presidency

### 2.2. Formation of the Content

#### 1) Together with Spain and Hungary

- Realization of an 18 months presidency program approved by the GAC on December 7<sup>th</sup> 2009

#### 2) Consultations on 6 month programme (Nov 2008 – May 2010)

- Fed. government + Regions + Communities
- civil society: Interactive website, meetings between Ministers and civil society
- EU Power Pillars

#### 3) Legacy programme



## 3. Belgian Priorities

3.1. Five clusters of major importance

3.2. A transversal theme: implementation of the  
Lisbon treaty



# 3. Belgian Priorities

## 3.1. Five clusters of major importance

- 3.1.1. Combating the economic & financial crisis
- 3.1.2. Reinforcing the social dimension of the EU
- 3.1.3. Implementing the Stockholm Program Action Plan in matters of Justice & Home Affairs
- 3.1.4. Environment and Climate
- 3.1.5. Enlargement (external)



# 3.1.1. Combating the economic & financial crisis

- i. Short term measures
- ii. Medium term measures
- iii. Long term structural measures



### 3.1.1. Combating the economic & financial crisis

#### i. Short term measures against the crisis

- follow-up Greece
- ?



### 3.1.1. Combating the economic & financial crisis

#### ii. Mid-term measures

- Financial sector reform
- Follow-up of the task force on strengthening budgetary discipline





### 3.1.1. Combating the economic & financial crisis

#### iii. Long term structural measures : Europe 2020

- growth and jobs aimed at a knowledge economy
- five objectives
  - 75% of labour participation 20-64 y
  - 3% GDP to R&D
  - 20-20-20 norm environment
  - education -drop out prevention to less than 10%
  - social inclusion/poverty reduction (20<sup>6</sup>)



## 3.1.2. Reinforcing the social dimension of the EU

- 2010 = European year for the struggle against poverty
- further development of the social agenda of the Commission (2008)
- social dimension inside Europe 2020



### 3.1.3. Implementing the Stockholm Action Plan (April 2010) on Justice & Home Affairs

- more and better cooperation:
  - police and customs
  - in the field of civil and penal law
  - international terrorism and organized crime
  - migration and asylum
  - recognition of judicial decisions



## 3.1.4. Environment and Climate

- december 2010 (Cancun)
- Carbon leakage
- Coherence with other fields:
  - Green transportation
  - Energy
  - Fiscal policies



## 3.1.5. Enlargement



## 3.2. A 'transversal' theme: implementation of the Lisbon Treaty

Belgium will have to implement the Treaty of Lisbon and make it work

- ✓ EEAS: follow-up of creation and transition.
- ✓ New rules concerning the budget.
- ✓ Implementation of some treaty innovations:
  - European Citizens' initiative
  - European Convention on Human Rights
- ✓ Help new institutions to work.



## 4. Conclusion

- ✓ Belgium will conduct a pragmatic Presidency with the strong will to keep the EU going in times of crisis and institutional changes.
- ✓ Caring for the smooth relation with EU-institutions, with special attention for the European Parliament.

