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2015

Introduction

The EU is presently facing major challenges and perhaps its greatest challenge ever since the establishment of European cooperation. The paramount task will be to emerge safely from the current deep crisis in the EU, to ensure economic stability and to create the foundation for future growth and employment. At the same time, Europe must address new cross-border challenges relating to i.a. climate, energy, environment and security. Only in partnership can Europe meet these challenges.

Through close and trusting cooperation, the Danish Presidency will collaborate with the other Member States, the EU institutions, including the European Commission and the European Parliament, as well as the Trio partners of Poland and Cyprus in a focused way to create the momentum that Europe needs. The Presidency wishes to be an open and credible partner for all parties. The Presidency will actively support the permanent President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in their efforts to promote European interests and values.

The Danish Presidency will work for a strong European economy, revitalised growth in the EU and for a stronger EU that effectively addresses the problems that occupy Europe's citizens and enterprises on a daily basis. We will unite and strengthen the EU by delivering concrete results that demonstrate the value of European cooperation. In this regard, *four main focus areas* will lie at the heart of the Danish Presidency:

1. A responsible Europe

Sustainable growth as well as job creation require that Europe emerges safely from the crisis by pursuing a responsible policy, ensuring sustainable public finances and implementing the necessary structural reforms. At the European Council on 9 December 2011, a number of important decisions were taken with respect to enhancing fiscal policy discipline with the aim of securing economic stability in Europe. During the Danish Presidency, work will need to be done on implementing these decisions in order to enhance fiscal policy and economic coordination as part of the short-term and long-term efforts to tackle the debt crisis.

Similarly, a key goal of the Danish Presidency will be to ensure the consistent implementation of the first full European Semester and the measures adopted earlier to strengthen economic governance, also based on a strengthening of the Stability and Growth Pact and a new cooperation on addressing the economic imbalances and common requirements of national budget rules.

The negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework of the EU budget for the period 2014-2020 will be one of the largest single issues for the Presidency. The new EU budget must reflect the present economic situation and focus on the areas where the EU can make a difference. The goal will be to conclude the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework by the end of 2012. The Danish Presidency will strive to move negotiations forward and thereby prepare the ground for the final negotiations.

2. A dynamic Europe

The return of growth and higher employment to Europe must be secured in both the short and long term. The Single Market is a cornerstone of EU cooperation, which over the last two decades has tied Europe together and created increased growth and prosperity. More than ever we need a sustainable Single Market that creates jobs and stability as well as prosperity for Europeans and companies in the EU. Growth in Europe requires the further development of

the Single Market in a way that benefits both citizens and companies, and it also requires that we strengthen education, research, innovation, gender equality and the European labour market. The Single Market must be a dynamic single market that is digital, innovative and requires creative solutions. It should constitute a strong basis for leading high-tech companies and create more green jobs. Lastly, the EU must use its economic strength to open new international market opportunities and to promote free and fair trade, thereby enhancing the growth of European companies.

3. A green Europe

Europe should promote the transition to a green economy and enhance its focus on sustainability. This requires enhanced efforts to bring about this transition and tackle the rising problems of environmentally harmful production methods, over-utilisation of important natural resources and climate change. The EU must strive to achieve its climate and energy targets regarding increased energy efficiency by 2020 as well as expansion of renewable energy, enhanced energy efficiency and a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Action must be taken to formulate an effective and green transport policy, common green standards in the Single Market and the widespread adoption of sustainable consumption and production patterns. An agricultural sector that embraces environmentally, nature and climate-friendly farming

methods is also part of the solution. Similarly, action is to be taken to bring about a sustainable reform of the EU fisheries policy. The funds for research and development within the environmental and energy sector must be increased. Lastly, the Presidency will also work towards ensuring a strong European voice at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

4. A safe Europe

The safety of citizens and Europe's international influence in a globalised world is most effectively promoted and safeguarded through joint efforts and strong European cooperation. Europe's international influence within security, trade and development must be maintained. The Member States must

enhance cooperation regarding a well-managed asylum and migration policy as well as regarding effective action to fight and prevent both terrorism and cross-border crime. The Danish Presidency will support the wish of EU neighbouring countries for closer cooperation, including access to EU markets, and contribute to ensuring that the enlargement process continues as a responsible enlargement policy. The Presidency will actively support EU institutions and Member States in their efforts to strengthen the EU's global role. Lastly, the Danish Presidency will actively work towards ensuring that the European External Action Service (EEAS) becomes a strong and effective actor and towards securing better coherence between the EU's policy within the sectors affecting developing countries.

1. A responsible Europe

Europe is endeavouring to break free of the worst economic crisis in many years. We must work together in order to ensure economic stability in Europe and that growth and employment are put back on a sustainable path. At the same time, the EU Member States must consolidate public finances and implement the necessary reforms. The work on reforms and consolidation in Member States will take its starting point in the implementation of the decisions taken by the European Council on 9 December 2011, the European Semester and the "Europe 2020 strategy", with particular focus on responsible fiscal policy and reforms, thereby promoting the long-term growth potential of the EU.

A responsible European economy

A key task for the Danish Presidency will be to continue efforts to tackle the economic and financial crisis as well as the debt crisis. At the European Council on 9 December 2011, a number of important decisions were taken in respect to enhancing fiscal policy discipline with the aim of securing economic stability in Europe. The implementation of these decisions is expected to dominate the European agenda, especially during the first half of the Danish Presidency, where action will be needed to bring about a solution of enhanced fiscal policy and economic governance as part of the short-term and long-term efforts to tackle the debt crisis, including through the International Agreement on a

Reinforced Economic Union and the Commission's two draft regulations on enhanced economic governance of 23 November 2011.

The international economic and financial crisis as well as the debt crisis have had a deep impact on the EU Member States and must also be expected to characterise the framework for EU cooperation for a long time to come. The EU and the euro area countries have taken action to tackle the specific and serious crises through setting up multiannual loan programmes for Greece, Portugal and Ireland, as well as establishing new loan instruments and rescue funds among other things. In May 2010, the EU instrument, EFSM (European

Financial Stabilisation Mechanism), and the euro country facility, EFSF (European Financial Stability Facility), were created in order to provide financial support to euro area countries in serious financial difficulties. Both instruments will soon be replaced by the permanent loan mechanism for euro area countries, ESM (European Stability Mechanism). In autumn 2011, significant additional steps were taken towards strengthening the EFSF's crisis response capacity and towards ensuring the soundness of the European banking sector.

In parallel with implementing crisis response measures, the EU Member States have strengthened the common rules and framework regarding economic policy coordination. In this regard, the EU has adopted a major reform of economic governance, which includes strengthening the Stability and Growth Pact and a new form of cooperation on tackling the economic imbalances as well as common requirements of national budget rules and regulations. Through the European Semester, the EU has enhanced the framework of these reform elements in the coordination of national economic policies.

Besides the new rules and regulations, the euro area countries and the six non-euro area countries, including Denmark, have signed an agreement on a Competitiveness Pact (the Euro Plus Pact). Through freely chosen commitments regarding specific

reform measures, the Pact is designed to ensure that the participating countries at the highest political level place additional focus on the most important reforms. The reforms are essential for raising the level of employment, creating sustainable public finances and strengthening both competitiveness and financial stability.

The economic governance reform and the Competitiveness Pact are key instruments for facilitating enhanced coordination and continued efforts to tackle the crisis. The implementation of enhanced economic governance in the EU within the new rules and regulations aims to contribute to re-establishing a sound, responsible and sustainable economic policy in the particular countries and to preventing the EU Member States from experiencing a prolonged negative cycle of large deficit, rising debt and high interest rates. These measures together aim to pull Europe out of the crisis, to reduce the risk of a new crisis and to provide better instruments for tackling potentially new setbacks. This can be achieved by increasing the latitude and scope for pursuing an active fiscal policy and thus the potential for generating stronger growth and job creation in Europe.

Strengthened financial regulation and supervision

The financial crisis has emphasised the need for stronger regulation and supervision of the financial sector, and the Danish Presidency will

therefore place strong focus on this work. The Danish Presidency will work for consensus in the Council on the Commission's proposed revision of capital and liquidity requirements for credit institutions (CRD4), which translates the Basel III standards into EU legislation. The Presidency will also work for a common European framework for crisis management in the financial sector, such as early intervention and prevention in relation to ailing banks as well as consensus in the Council regarding a revised regulation on credit rating agencies. The Presidency will also prioritise the negotiations with the European Parliament on regulation of derivatives trading. Similarly, work will be carried forward on the rules regarding markets in financial investments, etc. (MiFID) and on the rules governing market abuse (MAR). In addition, the Presidency will in general assign particular priority to improving the protection of European consumers in relation to the financial sector.

The EU Multiannual Financial Framework

The world has changed dramatically since the EU Multiannual Financial Framework was negotiated into place for the present budget period 2007-2013. The future EU budget must reflect the need for consolidating the public finances of Member States and also creating a new framework for future growth and employment in Europe. The funds must be used more effectively and in a way that offers

greater benefit to citizens. The EU can and must generate economies of scale through the adoption of common solutions and a future-oriented budget.

The negotiations on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework for the new budget period from 2014 to 2020 will be assigned high priority during the Danish Presidency. The EU Member States aim to complete the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework by the end of 2012. The Danish Presidency will strive to inject momentum into the negotiations and thereby prepare the ground for the final negotiations. It is not realistic to complete the negotiations during the Danish Presidency, but the Danish Presidency will strive to bring the negotiations as far forward as possible, including the negotiations on reforming the common agricultural and fisheries policies, the structural policy as well as EU programmes within, for example, the sectors of research and development, energy, climate, environment, education as well as the external area. The negotiations on the individual sub-elements can only be completed as part of the overall agreement.

2. A dynamic Europe

If Europe is to maintain and further develop its level of welfare and its position among the world's most prosperous and dynamic regions, it requires that we create the best possible framework conditions for growth and job creation in the EU. The growth opportunities in the Single Market have not yet been fully utilised, even though significant progress has been achieved since its establishment in 1992. The goal of the Danish Presidency is to contribute constructively to further developing the Single Market through a number of new initiatives. We must ensure that Europe's trade conditions are used in the best possible way and that the EU remains an open region for trade and investments, as economic openness is also a precondition for increased growth and employment in Europe.

A revitalised single market

The Single Market is the largest economic driving force in the EU and holds a huge potential for generating new sustainable growth and creating jobs in Europe. Therefore, in parallel with a successful implementation of reforms and consolidation in the Member States, specific and targeted action must be taken to create new sources of growth and raise the employment level in Europe. As a follow-up on the Commission's publication of the Single Market Act in spring 2011, work will focus on a number of initiatives. The Danish Presidency will continue the work towards reforming the common European patent system, which is essential for European competitiveness and growth, as well

as place sharp focus on the following key areas:

- **A digital single market.** A well-functioning digital single market requires removal of legislative and administrative barriers, e.g. by improving the conditions for e-commerce in the EU, lowering roaming prices (SMS, voice and data services via the Internet) across borders and re-using public data for developing new digital services. The rights of consumers must be secured and barriers to trust and confidence in connection with e-commerce dismantled.
- **The social dimension of the Single Market.** The social dimensions of

an integrated European economy in the Single Market must be mutually strengthened. Similarly, trust in the Single Market and the free movement of services must be enhanced through respect for workers' rights. The Presidency will therefore work towards strengthening the enforcement of the directive regulating the posting of workers and to make it clear that the rights of workers and companies in relation to free movement have equal status.

- **Public procurement.** A simplification of the EU procurement rules is necessary to reduce costs for both companies and public authorities. Simple and more flexible rules regarding public procurement will contribute to ensuring that public authority procurement can be used to a greater extent as a growth driver in connection with, for example, green or innovative public tenders. A more simplified set of rules will make it easier for small and medium-sized enterprises to submit bids for public sector contracts across EU borders. To help the general economy, the public tendering procedures should be cost-effective.
- **Effective standardisation.** Effective competition in the Single Market requires common standards and an effective standardisation system. By using European standards, new technology can reach the market more swiftly. In particular, the recognition of privately developed

standards within information and communication technology will give the public market opportunities for more innovative public tenders.

- **Better framework conditions for companies and consumers.** The Presidency will work for modernisation of European accounting rules and better access for companies to venture capital. The rights of citizens and companies must be secured by placing focus on proper and correct implementation, utilisation and enforcement of Single Market legislation as well as strengthening of market monitoring. Enforcement of consumer rights must also be secured e.g. through alternative dispute resolution systems.
- **An internal market for energy.** Better integration of the energy market will promote competition, give lower electricity prices and make it easier and cheaper to integrate large quantities of renewable energy in the energy network. This will contribute to strengthening Europe's energy security and to meeting EU climate targets.

A competitive single market for knowledge

The ability to translate knowledge into business is an important factor for promoting growth, employment and competitiveness. The Danish Presidency will work to push forward the negotiations on the next generation of programmes within education,

research and innovation. The interconnection between the three areas must be enhanced. In this regard, the higher education institutions play a vital role as suppliers of research, education of highly qualified labour, and transfer of new knowledge to society. Similarly, a strengthening of the vocational education and training programmes must contribute to promoting the knowledge society. The Danish Presidency will also continue the work on raising the visibility of the broad potential that the cultural and creative sector possesses in terms of creating new solutions that contribute to promoting growth and innovation. This will take place e.g. by prioritising the work on the programme proposal, Creative Europe.

The Presidency will engage in active effort to ensure that the EU's forthcoming framework programme for research and innovation, "Horizon 2020", provides researchers, knowledge institutions and companies with easier access to funding. Maintaining and expanding excellent research environments in Europe is a precondition for effectively tackling a number of major societal challenges and an important element in the efforts to ensure long-term economic growth and sustainable job creation. Similarly, the new programme, Erasmus for All, is to contribute to making EU programmes within the education, youth and sport sector more user-friendly for students, educational institutions and companies. Entrepreneurship and innovation must also be promoted

by creating favourable conditions for developing ideas within research, development and education of benefit to small and medium-sized enterprises. In order to create growth, the entire talent pool must be harnessed, and the Danish Presidency will place focus on the proportion of women on the boards of private companies.

In addition, the Danish Presidency wishes to place focus on growth and innovation within the health sector. The Danish Presidency will work towards ensuring that patients receive better and more effective treatment. At the same time, favourable conditions for innovation must be created for both public and private actors within the field of health care and welfare technology. This is to be achieved e.g. through a revision of the directives on medical devices. Denmark will also place focus on the use of eHealth, in which innovative IT solutions, for example, can contribute to improving the use of resources as well as prevention, detection and treatment of chronic diseases.

Sustainable growth and development throughout the EU

Since 1986, the Cohesion Policy has aimed at narrowing the differences between the development levels of the various European regions. In the future, the Cohesion Policy must support the Europe 2020 priorities with the aim of strengthening employment and promoting intelligent, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The Danish

Presidency will make a concerted effort to ensure maximum possible progress in the negotiations regarding a reform of the Cohesion Policy, which is to contribute more greatly to ensuring a more competitive EU. At the same time, the Cohesion Policy should build further on the results already achieved, so as to facilitate even greater effect and stronger sustainable growth in Europe. This will take place e.g. through stronger results orientation with focus on initiatives that make the greatest difference and through targeted conditionality, which aims to ensure that the national frameworks are in place in order to reap the benefits of the efforts.

Similarly, productive synergy and coordination should be created between the Cohesion Policy and related European policies. Also an attempt should be made to simplify the administration of Cohesion Policy funds. The reform of the Cohesion Policy constitutes a key element of the negotiations regarding the Multiannual Financial Framework and can only be completed as part of an overall agreement.

Securing a future labour market, health, and a labour market in need of everyone

Although unemployment in Europe is high, it will be difficult to ensure an adequately large labour force in the long term. More Europeans are living longer and the proportion of pensioners is growing, many of whom also suffer from one or more chronic

diseases. Financing the welfare state of the future and providing both social and health care to older people is a challenge facing all EU Member States. The Danish Presidency will place focus on prevention, early detection and treatment of chronic diseases. As part of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012), discussions will take place during the Danish Presidency on how the health of older people can be improved in step with increasing life expectancy. The Presidency will also engage in efforts to promote the participation of older people in the labour market and in the voluntary sector and at the same time initiate discussions on how modern technological aids can make life easier for older people and for people with disabilities, so that their resources can be used for the benefit of society.

The diversity of the labour markets in Europe constitutes a significant strength. However, within the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy, we can also learn from each other and develop labour markets where companies can easily adapt to new conditions and where companies and public authorities invest in the development of both a good working environment and good qualifications among employees. In addition, gender equality increases the size of the labour force and is a precondition for more flexible labour markets. It is absolutely essential to reduce the excessively high level of unemployment among young people in

Europe. Therefore, the Presidency will e.g. devote attention to the increasing number of boys who drop out of the education system and the low number of women enrolled in education programmes within growth areas such as innovation, green technology and natural science.

Legal migration of qualified labour is necessary to ensure the labour markets of the future. The legislation should therefore promote flexible systems that facilitate easy access for the highly qualified employees and students that Europe needs. The Presidency will work to enhance knowledge sharing and coordination as part of a holistic approach to integration. The free movement of services and persons in the EU creates growth, and effort will be made to promote this movement i.a. through a more effective system for mutual recognition of vocational education and training qualifications. It is imperative that free movement as well as legal migration from both third countries and from within the EU Single Market take place in accordance with the fundamental terms and conditions of employment that apply in the host countries and that the rules regarding the free movement of persons in the Single Market are not abused.

Common trade policy with clout

In light of the global economic crisis, it is vital that the EU continues to use trade policy actively to create better framework conditions for the European

business community in regard to promoting exports and strengthening global production chains and investments. The Danish Presidency will work in particular to ensure that closer political dialogue with EU neighbours, strategic partners and other partner countries in developing countries is fostered by commercial relations and reciprocal market access. A strong effort is needed to ensure the continued liberalisation of trade with EU neighbours, in particular through negotiations regarding extensive free trade agreements. The Danish Presidency will continue the work to achieve solid progress in the WTO talks of the Doha Development Round as the top priority of trade policy. In this connection, further efforts will be made to support the WTO's role as a bulwark against protectionism.

At the same time, the EU will continue to prioritise bilateral trade and investment agreements with, for example, Canada, Columbia-Peru, India, Japan, Mercosur, Malaysia and Singapore. The EU must continue to widen trade relations with its strategic partners. EU trade with developing countries must be sustainable and contribute to fighting poverty. Therefore, sustainable development and poverty reduction are an integral part of the EU's trade policy strategy. This approach is to be maintained when the EU regulation on generalised tariff preferences with a number of developing countries is to be renegotiated.

3. A green Europe

The Danish Presidency will set a proactive agenda for promoting green and sustainable growth. This requires a comprehensive approach covering several sectors, such as energy, agriculture, transport, climate, environment and IT, and which is based on public-private sector dialogue and cooperation. The Presidency will continue work on a number of specific targets to be achieved by 2020 and the period thereafter with the aim of ensuring the implementation of specific initiatives and the necessary prioritisation of research, development and public-private cooperation. This requires an effort within the energy and transport sector in the form of technology development of energy systems with high energy-efficiency and increased focus on renewable energy and supply security. There will also be focus on long-term goals to ensure a resource-efficient and low-carbon Europe by 2050 with the use of measures in the short, medium and long term. Focus will also be on protecting the EU's environment and biodiversity. These issues will also be at the top of the agenda in connection with the reforms of the common agricultural and fisheries policies. Lastly, the Presidency will work for a strong European voice at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Green development and growth are interconnected

Green growth requires a strong European voice at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference in Brazil in June 2012 and in the international climate negotiations. Similarly, the EU must demonstrate leadership in the international climate negotiations regarding a global agreement framework. In close coherence with the widespread adoption of climate-friendly technology, the agreement must pave the way

for the transition of both industrialised and developing countries into CO₂-low emission societies.

A common strategy for green growth requires the adoption of resource-efficient production methods and that sustainable consumption patterns are assigned high priority in the EU. A targeted technological effort must develop and promote the adoption of environmentally friendly and resource-efficient alternatives. At the same time,

EU citizens must have the necessary tools to make sustainable consumption choices in their daily lives. The regulation of the EU's Single Market should therefore continue to lead the way in the formulation of environmental, energy and climate-related requirements for all types of products. Furthermore, a resource-efficient green growth strategy requires a joint effort to further optimise the utilisation of the huge quantities of resources that today are lost in the EU's increasing production of waste.

The Danish Presidency will strive to establish the framework for the 7th Environmental Action Programme, in which strategies for developing a resource-efficient economy will be the core component. The programme aims to enhance coherence between targets, means and funding. The Danish Presidency will also put protection of biodiversity on the agenda and promote the work in this field by implementing the EU biodiversity strategy up to 2020.

The necessary transition to a green growth economy must primarily be financed and driven forward by the private sector, which is why the EU should generally focus on promoting public-private partnerships for green growth as well as for systematically involving visionary companies in the development of green growth strategies.

Higher energy efficiency and future energy and climate policy

Member States have committed

themselves to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent and increasing the proportion of renewable energy resources in the energy composition to 20 per cent. Member States have also endorsed the goal of increasing energy efficiency by 20 per cent by 2020. Currently, the EU is well on track to meeting its commitments within the energy and climate field, but there is a need to do more if the goal of enhanced energy efficiency is to be reached. The Presidency will engage in a targeted effort to secure the adoption of initiatives for promoting energy efficiency, where the energy efficiency directive will be a key priority for the Presidency.

The Presidency will focus on what action is to be taken in the coming decades to follow up on the EU's long-term energy and climate roadmaps so as to enable the EU, as part of a comprehensive effort on the part of developed countries, to achieve its goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80-95 per cent by 2050. It is important to provide incentives to support a transition to a green economy – both up to and after 2020. This aims to secure investments in energy efficient technologies and the expansion of renewable energy among other things. The Presidency will i.a. work towards ensuring that the issue of potential milestones and potential targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the proportion of renewable energy and potentially also energy efficiency is addressed with the aim of sending a strong message to the market and increasing investment security.

An internal market for energy

The Presidency will work towards promoting a well-functioning internal market for energy through expansion of the European energy infrastructure. Better integration of the energy market will contribute to promoting competition, give consumers and companies lower electricity prices and make it easier and cheaper to integrate increasing quantities of renewable energy into the energy network. An integrated internal market for energy within the EU will reduce dependence on imported energy from third countries. This will strengthen Europe's energy security, ensure better utilisation of renewable energy and contribute to reaching the EU climate targets.

Sustainable future agricultural and fisheries policies

The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy constitutes a core element of the negotiations regarding the Multiannual Financial Framework. In line with the Europe 2020 strategy, future agricultural policy must contribute more greatly to enhancing EU competitiveness in the global markets through continued market orientation. Strengthening research, development and innovation in the EU budget (Horizon 2020) as well as greater focus on knowledge transfer are also to support the agricultural and food sector. An environmentally friendly agricultural sector is also part of the solution to many of the new challenges such as climate change adaptation, reduction of greenhouse

gas emissions and sustainable development. It requires enhanced focus on public goods such as water management, biodiversity management, food safety, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, climate change management response, greater environmental considerations and delivery of green energy.

Also the future fisheries policy must take into account the protection of marine ecosystems and consumer interests. In order for the fisheries sector in the future to be economically viable, fishery resources must be utilised in a sustainable manner. Therefore, the Danish Presidency will work towards reducing unwanted catches and eliminate discards i.a. through increased use of selective fishing methods. The Presidency will also work towards strengthening sustainability in the fisheries policy's external dimension. Simplification of rules and greater coherence with the environmental and climate policies will also be in focus, with the aim of ensuring that these are more mutually supportive.

A well-connected transport system and reduced air pollution

The transport sector is a cornerstone of the European economy in facilitating growth and employment. Efforts are necessary to create a more flexible infrastructure in Europe under framework conditions that are sustainable for the environment and climate. As mobility increases, the existence of

a well-developed infrastructure and an efficient interplay between modes of transport becomes a necessity for individual citizens, the transport industries and modern society at large. Effective infrastructure will furthermore improve the access of companies to markets.

In the future, Europe will be faced with major challenges of peak hour traffic congestion in both passenger and freight transport, which will cause delays and prolonged delivery times to the inconvenience of individual citizens. It will also affect productivity and the Single Market in general. Preventing and counteracting the congestion challenges is thus necessary in relation to all modes of transport. The Danish Presidency will work on strengthening the Single Market by making use of the advantages of, for example, intelligent transport systems, better public transport, more efficient and safer air transport, better connections between road networks and ports, intermodality and increased use of Eco-combines.

In addition, air pollution from cars, ships, trains and aircraft remains a global problem. An ambitious continuation of common efforts against

air pollution must go hand in hand with EU policies that aim to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. Energy efficient vehicles such as hybrid and electric cars can contribute greatly to this goal. Targets for reducing air pollution must therefore be incorporated into the long-term EU strategies for environment and health in a manner that is resource-efficient.

Better regulation of chemicals

Innovation and development of new products are necessary for growth in the future, but this also entails health risks, in particular in connection with developing chemicals and technologies whose impact on health are as yet unknown. Therefore, the EU environmental policy should be continually tightened so as to provide maximum protection to humans, animals and nature against harmful drugs and chemicals. In the future, there will be a particular need to focus attention on regulating combinations of chemicals that affect human health. The EU must be able to act quickly and translate new knowledge into specific prevention and common policies as soon as harmful effects on human health can be documented.

4. A safe Europe

In a globalised world, European cooperation is vital for ensuring the safety, welfare and interests of EU citizens. This applies to everything from food safety and fighting cross-border health threats, protection against cross-border crime and targeted reinforcement of the EU disaster response capacity to safeguarding and pursuing Europe's interests on the global stage. The Danish Presidency will work to ensure strong common action in all these areas in order to ensure Europe's international clout. Strong European cooperation is also necessary in order to maintain the security and safety of EU citizens, as a rising proportion of serious and organised crime is cross-border in nature. At the same time, the efforts to ensure well-managed migration to the EU require strong cooperation. Furthermore, we must enhance efforts to promote the health, consumer rights and food safety of EU citizens.

Cooperation to enhance the security of citizens

Europe must be a secure and safe place for its citizens. Cross-border crime and external security threats cannot be effectively prevented by individual Member States on their own. Therefore, it is necessary for the EU to have common goals and take joint action. The Danish Presidency will work towards maintaining and strengthening cooperation between the law enforcement authorities of Member States regarding investigations of cross-border crime. In this connection, the Presidency will place emphasis on establishing a framework

for a flexible and efficient system for investigation in matters concerning several Member States.

Terrorism remains one of the most serious threats to Europe, and it is vital that the common efforts in this area are maintained and widened. In this connection, the Danish Presidency will attach importance to ensuring that law enforcement authorities are afforded effective tools for conducting investigations and that the authorities have access to and share the information that is necessary to ensure a coherent effort to fight terrorism. The Presidency also wishes to enhance

focus on cooperation on the *prevention* of terrorism. In this connection, it is important that knowledge about the causes of terrorism is built up and shared, so that action, for example, can be taken at an early stage to counter radicalisation tendencies.

Security and legal certainty must go hand in hand. The Danish Presidency will therefore continue the work on strengthening the procedural rights of suspected and accused persons in criminal proceedings. There is also a need for increased focus to ensure that victims of crimes receive the support they need, and the Danish Presidency will therefore work towards achieving concrete results that can help victims return to a normal life.

A well-managed migration policy in the EU

Migration can be in the interests of both migrants as well as countries of origin, transit and recipient countries, but this requires a well-managed policy in the area. This acknowledgement is further reinforced by the current situation in North Africa, which contains both challenges and opportunities, and which will be an area that the Presidency will prioritise.

One element of a well-managed migration policy will be to finalise the Common European Asylum System by the end of 2012. Therefore, the Danish Presidency will seek to take

the negotiations on the legislative acts in the asylum package as far forward as possible. The Presidency will support the European Asylum Support Office and the border agency, Frontex, and also support cooperation between these agencies. The Danish Presidency will thus also work towards ensuring that all asylum seekers have reasonable living conditions whilst their asylum case is being processed.

In addition, the Presidency will continue the work on a targeted and multi-pronged effort to prevent and combat illegal migration, including by continuing efforts to strengthen and improve the efficiency of the Schengen system. In this way, the Danish Presidency will contribute to secure border control at the EU's external borders in order to maintain the free movement of persons across internal borders as a cornerstone of EU cooperation. In addition, visa policy and an effective return policy will be core elements of a well-managed asylum and migration policy, with respect shown for human dignity.

The Presidency will work towards promoting decent working conditions for third country nationals in the EU and towards promoting smooth and non-bureaucratic access for migrants that acquire highly skilled jobs in the EU, and who fulfil the conditions for residence. Lastly, a better foundation is to be laid for adopting a holistic approach to promoting

integration, i.a. through sharing information and implementing common solutions in the EU.

Food safety and the fight against cross-border health threats

Access to safe and healthy food products is an important part of general consumer protection. It is vital that the common rules for food safety are adhered to from farm to fork. In this connection, the Danish Presidency will i.a. work towards securing a modernised system of meat inspection and improved animal welfare.

The Presidency will also launch work on initiatives aimed at ensuring better EU coordination of emergency preparedness and response to serious cross-border health threats, with the point of departure taken in the Commission proposal for a "Health Security Package". Diseases and antimicrobial resistance do not respect national borders, and increasing incidences of resistance as a result of the growing use of antibiotics in both people and animals is a problem in the EU. During the Danish Presidency, work will be done to promote a rational use of antibiotics and better surveillance of the consumption of antibiotics, with the aim of helping to reduce the problem of antimicrobial resistance.

Reinforcing the Union's disaster response capacity

Natural disasters and man-made disasters such as forest fires, floods and terrorist attacks increasingly

affect the safety of citizens and require additional enhancement of the Union's efforts within the field of disaster risk reduction and response – both inside and outside EU borders. The Danish Presidency will engage in targeted efforts to reinforce and improve the EU's civil protection instruments.

Continued enlargement of the EU and strengthened relations to neighbouring regions

Relations with the EU's neighbours will be actively supported during the Danish Presidency. In the enlargement negotiations, the Danish Presidency will contribute to implementing a responsible enlargement policy based on the Copenhagen criteria, the principle of own merits and the EU's absorption capacity as a basis for the negotiations with candidate countries. Furthermore, the Presidency will also focus on the implementation of the revised Neighbourhood Strategy. Work will be carried out to promote greater flexibility, increased merit orientation and better coherence in the EU's efforts in southern and eastern neighbourhood regions. In the light of developments in the southern neighbouring countries, the Danish Presidency will prioritise discussions on additional trade liberalisation and migration aspects within the framework of the revised EU Global Approach to Migration among other things.

Strong common EU action

With the goal of contributing to a coherent EU that also externally is

based on the fundamental and universal values, the Danish Presidency will actively support the work of the EU's permanent President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to strengthen the EU's external relations. This applies in particular to relations with EU neighbours, the EU's strategic partners and the partner countries in developing countries. Focus will be placed on increased results orientation, transparency and coherence in the EU's policies aimed at benefiting the world's poor. The Danish Presidency will also work towards promoting linkage between the EU's humanitarian efforts and longer-term development programmes.

The EU must speak with one voice in international negotiations. The Presidency will work on ensuring strong common EU external action and strengthen the EU's influence

by means of a coordinated European effort in international fora such as the United Nations, G20 and OSCE. The Danish Presidency will place emphasis on strengthening EU coordination prior to meetings. Also in relation to new emerging economies such as China, India and Brazil, it is important that the EU is able to act effectively in a coordinated and more coherent manner.

At the same time, the EU's climate targets, development of green technologies, sustainable societal development and expansion of renewable energy sources will be a dynamo for a transition to a more global sustainable economy. The Danish Presidency will work towards ensuring that environmental and development considerations are assigned a central role in the EU's positions in the period leading up to the United Nation Conference on Sustainable Development, which is due to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012.

Council configurations

General Affairs

The General Affairs Council undertakes a number of cross-cutting and coordinating tasks. These comprise i.a. preparations for the meetings of the European Council as well as the consideration of horizontal matters such as the Multiannual Financial Framework, the EU's enlargement as well as issues concerning EU institutions. A strong and competent General Affairs Council is therefore crucial for ensuring a dynamic EU with coordinated policies and well-functioning and collaborating institutions. Within the General Affairs Council, the Presidency will prioritise the work on:

- Ensuring effective preparation of the meetings of the European Council.
- Securing progress in the negotiations regarding the Multiannual Financial Framework.
- Securing progress in the negotiations regarding the EU's enlargement.

Preparation of the meetings of the European Council

The General Affairs Council prepares and ensures follow-up on the meetings of the European Council, whose responsibility is to lay down the **general political direction and the priorities** for European cooperation. In recent years, the European Council has played a particularly key role in the handling of the economic crisis and the sovereign debt crisis. At the beginning of the Danish Presidency, the General Affairs Council will also need to prepare the work of the European Council regarding the International Agreement on a Reinforced Economic Union. In close cooperation with the permanent President of the European Council, the Danish Presidency will ensure effective preparation of the meetings of the European Council, which allow the European Council to demonstrate an ability to act and take the necessary decisions for bringing the EU forward.

The Multiannual Financial Framework

The EU Multiannual Financial Framework provides the basis for the EU's annual budgets and provides certainty regarding the EU's financial situation for several years. The negotiations are also of general importance for the fundamental direction and prioritisation of the cooperation. The present Multiannual Financial Framework expires in 2013, and the complex negotiations regarding the new Multiannual Financial Framework will therefore be one of the main tasks of the Danish Presidency. The Council will thus need to undertake an important task as a forum for discussion on this issue of broad, cross-cutting importance for negotiations and frameworks for a large number of other sector areas. As decided by the EU Heads of State or Government at the European Council on 9 December 2011, the objective is to complete the negotiations regarding the Multiannual Financial Framework by the end of 2012. The Danish Presidency will strive to inject momentum into the negotiations, with the aim of preparing the ground for the final negotiations.

The final agreement in the European Council will be prepared in the General Affairs Council. The negotiations regarding the financing of the EU's expenditures will need to take place simultaneously with the negotiations regarding the new Multiannual Financial Framework.

As part of the negotiations, the Council will need to address i.a. the size and

flexibility of the total budget, expenditure policy prioritisations as well as the distribution of funds among Member States and the financing of the EU's budget, including the issue of EU income systems and rebate/adjustment mechanisms.

Similarly, in parallel with the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework, the Council will engage in negotiations regarding the EU's future Cohesion Policy, which forms part of the overall complex of negotiations. The European Cohesion Policy aims at promoting harmonious development in the EU as a whole. Through the Cohesion Policy, the EU endeavours to narrow the differences between the development levels of the various regions. In connection with the negotiations regarding the future Cohesion Policy, the Council will need to address issues such as the institutional framework of the Cohesion Policy, planning and management principles as well as monitoring and evaluation of the Cohesion Policy.

The new structural fund regulations will not be adopted until agreement has been reached on the Multiannual Financial Framework. For the first time, the regulations will need to be adopted in accordance with the standard decision-making procedure, which will strengthen the role of the European Parliament compared to earlier.

Enlargement

The perspective regarding accession to the EU cooperation remains a strong

incentive for candidate countries to implement difficult and wide-ranging reforms. The candidate countries and other countries that have a European perspective approach are thus moving closer to European standards for societal structure and economy. Historically, the enlargement is one of the EU's most successful policies. The large-scale enlargement agreement reached in December 2002 was negotiated into place during the Danish Presidency in 2002. In 2012, the continued credibility of the enlargement policy will remain a Danish priority.

The Danish Presidency will continue the EU's enlargement policy based on the principle of the countries' own merits as a basis for progress in the negotiations. Against the background of this approach, the Danish Presidency will work towards taking further forward the enlargement negotiations with Iceland. The Danish Presidency will also support a continuation of the enlargement negotiations with Turkey and the development of relations between Turkey and the EU. On the basis of the recommendations set out in the progress reports from 2011 and the discussions of the European Council in December 2011, the EU under the Danish Presidency will need to discuss and, potentially, decide on further steps to be taken with respect to the approximation of Serbia and Montenegro. Lastly, the Presidency will monitor the consolidation of Croatia and the continuation of the country's reform efforts after

the accession treaty was signed with Croatia on 9 December 2011.

Inter-institutional relations

The Danish Presidency will work to promote constructive cooperation between the EU's institutions as well as well-functioning EU institutions, including for example a well-functioning Court system that is important to both European companies and citizens.

During the Danish Presidency, the Council will need to consider the High Representative's first progress report on the functioning of the European External Action Service. The Danish Presidency will seek to contribute to the continued consolidation of the European External Action Service with the aim of strengthening the global role of the EU based on the greatest possible effectiveness.

Safety and security

In spring 2011, in light of the disaster in Japan, the European Council endorsed a process to carry out EU-wide comprehensive risk and safety assessments of nuclear power plants ("stress tests") in order to check whether they were equipped to withstand natural disaster events and any acts of terrorism. In extension of this, the Council will need to complete its investigations during the Danish Presidency. In this work, it is essential that the follow-up is based on the highest possible safety and security standards.

External Affairs

The Danish Presidency will actively support the activity of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the continuing establishment process of the European External Action Service (EEAS), as particular focus will be placed on ensuring the greatest possible effectiveness. Through the High Representative and the EEAS, including EU delegations in third countries, a stronger basis has been secured for pursuing a more integrated approach to promoting European interests, values and priorities. The Danish Presidency will work towards strengthening the cross-sectoral strategic coherence between the EU's external policies by ensuring that:

- Coherence between the EU's various policies is enhanced through mutual interplay between the actors within the external policies.
- EU development policy is renewed with maintained focus on poverty eradication.
- The EU uses its trade policy relations as an active instrument in the work on increasing European growth and employment.

Greater coherence in EU external policies

The Danish Presidency will seek to support efforts by EU institutions and the permanent offices in ensuring greater coordination between European and national efforts as well as greater synergy and cooperation between existing institutions and structures. The goal is to contribute to promoting a coherent EU which also in its external relations bases itself on the fundamental and universal values.

The European External Action Service contributes to increasing the EU's foreign policy dynamism and is an important tool for the European countries in a globalised world. During the Danish Presidency, the Council will review the High Representative's first progress report on the functioning of the EEAS. During the Danish Presidency, the

Council will need to initiate discussions on the content of the legal basis for **the financing of the external actions** in the period 2014-2020 under the new EU Multiannual Financial Framework. Each finance instrument will i.a. need to take account of the establishment of the EEAS and the High Representative's responsibility for ensuring general political coordination of the external policies. In step with a new and more coherent effort, the EU should also be enabled to act more effectively and flexibly in relation to crisis situations, disasters and fragile states.

During the Danish Presidency, in close cooperation with the High Representative and the Commission, the Council will work on improving resilience to natural disasters, food security and increased coherence between humanitarian aid and development in prolonged crises. It is important that the **EU's humanitarian efforts** are effective and coherent and that **the European disaster response capacity** acts swiftly and in a well-coordinated manner. The Presidency will support the legislative process regarding a new humanitarian volunteer corps and the efforts to promote greater synergy between humanitarian efforts and civil protection, including a reinforced EU disaster response capacity based on flexible use of Member States' operational resources. The Presidency supports the role of the United Nations as an overall coordinator of emergency aid delivered in response to natural disasters and crises.

The European **Neighbourhood Policy** is an important tool for ensuring good relations with and securing development in EU neighbouring countries. The Neighbourhood Policy must contribute to enabling the EU to remain an attractive partner for the neighbouring countries, i.a. by ensuring increased trade, strengthened cooperation within the energy field and extensive institution building. The Presidency will also place emphasis on cooperation being based on conditionality and merits ("*more for more*"). The Danish Presidency will maintain focus on this aspect and on the continued implementation of the revised Neighbourhood Strategy. The Danish Presidency will make a particular effort to promote the liberalisation of trade with European neighbours to the east and the south.

A strengthening of the relations with the **strategic partners** will benefit both the EU and its partners. In particular, the Danish Presidency will work towards ensuring the necessary coordination internally in the circle of EU Member States and with the relevant European institutions. The Presidency will in particular seek to support the potential for strengthening European growth and employment. At the same time, the values on which the EU is based constitute the point of departure for the efforts to become an effective global actor, also in the relations to the strategic partners.

The EU must lead the way in the efforts to fight **terrorism and violent extremism** in order to protect the lives and freedom of citizens. The Danish Presidency will work towards ensuring that the EU achieves the best possible coherence between measures internally in the EU and externally, and that effective action to fight terrorism goes hand in hand with respect for fundamental rights.

Renewal of EU development policy

During the Danish Presidency, the Council will need to renew EU development policy in a way that enables it to respond more effectively to global challenges such as climate change, migration, gender equality, security and the consequences of the financial crisis. The Presidency will ensure that the EU meets its development assistance commitments and will work towards ensuring that EU development cooperation becomes more effective, targeted, results-oriented and based on mutual responsibility. The opportunities of European citizens to exercise and enforce their rights must be given greater attention. Budget support is an important part of EU development assistance, and it should be considered how the use of this type of aid modality can be strengthened. It is important that there is close coordination with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission in order to ensure maximum possible coherence between the EU's external policies and instruments benefiting development in the world's poorest countries.

The environmental and development policy agenda will have a prominent role at the **United Nations Conference on sustainable development (Rio+20)**. The Danish Presidency will work towards ensuring that the EU participates actively and constructively in the process and thus contributes to securing ambitious, development-oriented results. The goal is to strengthen the political will to secure sustainable development.

EU trade policy as a contribution to growth and employment

The EU trade policy is a crucial tool for stimulating European growth and employment in the wake of the economic crisis. It is essential that the EU maintains and enhances its position as a key global economy. At the same time, it is necessary that the EU attempts to promote liberalisation of environmentally sound and climate friendly products across trade policy matters. Within the trade policy sphere, the Danish Presidency will therefore prioritise the following:

- **Increased market access** to the BRIC countries and the new emerging economies, including negotiations regarding a free trade agreement with Brazil and the other Mercosur countries, Russia's admission to the WTO, a free trade agreement with India and possibly the initiation of negotiations regarding an investment agreement with China.

- Trade and development. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on trade and development. The Presidency must i.a. negotiate the **GSP regulation** regarding special tariff preferences for developing countries.
- Consensus in the Council regarding the initiation of negotiations between the EU and Japan regarding a **free trade agreement** which will be of mutual interest both commercially and strategically.
- Next, a strengthening of the multilateral trading system, including the **WTO negotiations** regarding the Doha Development Round, is to be prioritised. The Presidency will contribute to supporting the WTO system's credibility as a bulwark against protectionism and a tool for integrating developing countries in global trade.
- Lastly, the Danish Presidency will make a particular effort to promote **trade liberalisation with EU neighbouring countries**, in particular through negotiations regarding deep and broad free trade agreements.
- In addition, a major task for the Danish Presidency will be to handle a number of other legislative matters and trade matters, such as EU accession to and implementation of the free trade agreements with Colombia-Peru and Central America. The Presidency will attach importance to the inclusion of the European Parliament in the negotiations within the trade policy sphere in light of the Lisbon Treaty as well as to the issue of third countries' access to EU markets for public procurement in connection with the revision of the European public procurement directives.

Economic and Financial Affairs

The ECOFIN Council is responsible for the coordination of the Member States' economic policies and consequently also for their joint efforts at handling the economic and financial crisis as well as the debt crisis. As a result of agreements made in the autumn and at the end of 2011, the Member States have taken a decisive step in the specific crisis handling. In future, economic cooperation should focus on the implementation of these agreements as well as on the recently implemented reform of economic governance. This will enable Europe to prevent new crises, minimise the risk of new escalation of the debt crisis, strengthen the potential for growth and job creation as well as carry through the transition to a greener and more sustainable economy.

The work on translating the reform of economic governance into practice and the work on the International Agreement on a Reinforced Economic Union and the Commission's two draft regulations on enhanced economic

governance of 23 November 2011 will be at the centre of the policy agenda during the Danish Presidency. The reform is to ensure better compliance and enforcement of common fiscal ground rules and a stronger national fiscal policy framework. The Presidency will also work towards effective implementation of the new cooperation on macroeconomic imbalances. The objective is to curb an unsustainable economic trend at an early stage, thereby preventing it from developing into larger and longer setbacks. The reform goal of a healthier economic policy together with a renewed focus on structural reforms is a precondition for strengthening the growth potential of the European economies.

In the ECOFIN Council, the Presidency will prioritise:

- The handling of the economic crisis, including effective implementation of enhanced economic governance as well as the implementation of the

decisions of the European Council meeting of 9 December 2011.

- Swift and effective implementation of the financial regulation reforms.
- A strengthening of tax cooperation, including energy taxation and effective taxation of savings in other countries through exchange of information.
- Representation of the Member States at G20 meetings.

Enhanced economic governance – consolidation and reform agenda

The EU has adopted a historic **economic governance reform**. The reform comprises i.a. a strengthened Stability and Growth Pact and a strengthening of national budgetary frameworks as well as new cooperation on addressing macroeconomic imbalances. During the Danish Presidency, the full round of the European Semester will take place for the first time after the implementation of the reform (“six pack”).

It will be a high priority to ensure that the implementation of the reform contributes in practice to better compliance with common ground rules and thus with healthier public finances that are a decisive basis for stable economic development, growth and employment and for the development of a green economy. In connection with the implementation of the reform, the Danish Presidency attaches

importance to the implementation of existing consolidation plans and recommendations, both to **strengthen credibility** regarding the economic governance reform and to minimise the risk of the current debt crisis escalating further. The Danish Presidency will, furthermore, attach importance to the work on the Competitiveness Pact (Euro Plus Pact), which the euro area countries and six non-euro area countries joined in order to place further focus on the most important reforms for increased employment, sustainable public finances, enhanced competitiveness and financial stability.

The Council will need to prepare the economic summit of the European Council on 1-2 March 2012. At the summit, the European Council will present general economic recommendations regarding macroeconomic policy, fiscal policy and structural policy, i.a. based on the Commission’s Annual Growth Survey. The recommendations are to serve as input to the preparation of the countries’ stability and convergence programmes as well as national reform programmes, including any commitments under the Competitiveness Pact. The assessment of the programmes and the work on the countries’ compliance with recommendations, the further consolidation work towards achieving the medium-term budgetary targets as well as budget and reform plans to ensure long-term fiscal policy sustainability are high priorities for the Danish Presidency. Against the background

of the programmes, the Council will adopt statements and country-specific guidelines at its meeting in June 2012 with a view to approval at the summit of the European Council on 28-29 June 2012. It is essential that the assessments of the countries' national programmes result in integrated, coherent recommendations that identify the relevant reform areas for the individual countries and sustain the consolidation agenda. The Danish Presidency will contribute to promoting the agenda regarding structural reforms supporting growth, employment and fiscal policy sustainability in the EU, i.a. on the basis of the EU's **Europe 2020 strategy**.

The Danish Presidency will give weight to follow-up on the implementation of the **country-specific recommendations under the excessive deficit procedure**. 2011 was the first year in which all countries having received recommendations and notices were to consolidate and implement structural budgetary improvements. During the Danish Presidency, the Commission and the Council will for the first time, on the basis of actual figures for public finances in 2011, be able to see whether the EU Member States' consolidation is on track. Specifically, the Council will be able to take decision on a potential abolition of the deficit procedure or on new steps in the procedure for the individual countries.

Furthermore, the Council will for the first time need to consider the new

procedure for excessive macroeconomic imbalances. The Commission is expected to present its assessment of whether there are countries with excessive macroeconomic imbalances. The assessment will be made on the basis of a calculation of a scoreboard of indicators showing potential imbalances as well as a potential subsequent detailed examination of this. Ultimately, the Council will need to assess potential imbalances and, if necessary, adopt recommendations specifying what the countries in question should do to correct the imbalances.

The Danish Presidency will work towards ensuring effective and thorough preparation in the Council of **G20 meetings for finance ministers and central bank governors**, which during the crisis have developed into a key international forum for economic and financial discussions. It is important that the EU stands united in the G20 and that the common EU representation pursues the Member States' overall interests.

Strengthened financial regulation

The financial crisis has demonstrated a need for strengthened regulation and supervision of the financial sector. The Danish Presidency will therefore give high priority to this work. The Presidency will work for consensus in the Council on the Commission proposal for a revision of capital and liquidity requirements for credit institutions (CRD4), translating the **Basel**

III standards into EU legislation. The Danish Presidency will strive for consensus in the Council on revision of the regulation on credit rating agencies. The Danish Presidency will, moreover, promote other financial matters, including rules regarding markets in financial instruments, etc. (MiFID) and the rules governing market abuse (MAR). The Presidency will also prioritise negotiations with the European Parliament on regulation of derivatives trading (EMIR). Furthermore, the Danish Presidency will, in general, work towards improving the protection of **European consumers in relation to the financial sector**. The Presidency is also expected to work for progress regarding the Commission's forthcoming proposal on crisis management in the financial sector.

Taxation

In the **area of taxation**, the Danish Presidency will work towards ensuring considerable progress in relation to the adoption of technical amendments to the directive on taxation of savings income in the form of interest payments and similar amendments to agreements with relevant third countries. The overall aim and objective is to ensure effective taxation of savings placed in other countries in and outside the EU through exchange of information. Furthermore, the Presidency will promote the Council's consideration of the Commission proposal for a common corporate tax base, which is to reduce the costs for enterprises operating in the Single Market. It is,

in addition, a special priority for the Danish Presidency to ensure considerable progress in relation to the work on the Commission proposal for a revision of the energy taxation directive, which is to reflect the EU's goals in the area of climate and energy. The Danish Presidency will also work for a revision of the interest and royalties directive.

The EU's budget

Depending on i.a. progress in the technical work on the Multiannual Financial Framework, the matter may be placed on ECOFIN's agenda during the Danish Presidency with a view to ensuring that also the EU's economic affairs and finance ministers discuss relevant aspects in the light of the important fiscal impact of the matter on the Member States.

Competitiveness

The Competitiveness Council covers the areas of 'internal market', 'industry' and 'research'. The aim and objective of this Council is to ensure an integrated approach to promoting competitiveness and growth in the EU. In this connection, the Presidency wishes to prioritise:

- The work on ensuring progress in the specific flagships of the Europe 2020 strategy and on securing the attainment of the associated targets. The flagship initiatives are to establish the basis for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe.
- The Single Market Act, which will contribute to unleashing the economic and growth-related potential of the Single Market.
- The work on creating a genuine digital single market.
- The work on creating the best possible framework for research and innovation - "Horizon 2020".

Internal market

The relaunch of the Single Market is an important element of the Europe 2020 strategy. A stronger, enlarged and modernised Single Market is a precondition for enhancing European competitiveness. It is a priority for the Danish Presidency to promote the 12 key initiatives presented in the **Single Market Act** in order to ensure that the framework conditions for the Single Market are structured in the best possible manner and are fully utilised.

The Presidency will carry forward the effort to introduce a unitary patent system and the establishment of a **European unified patent court system**. The objective is to strengthen the basis for innovation and contribute to boosting European companies' competitiveness at global level.

A digital single market with more cross-border trade will boost productivity and achieve more competitive solutions for the benefit of companies, consumers and public authorities. It

is therefore a priority for the Danish Presidency that the EU moves swiftly towards a genuine digital single market. The Council will need to work towards dismantling barriers and improving e-commerce in the EU, for example through better access for consumers to **alternative dispute resolution systems**, also **online**.

Modernising and enhancing the efficiency of EU rules for public procurement is an important step towards enhancing competition in the EU. In the negotiations, the Presidency will prioritise simplification and increased flexibility in the public procurement directives, including regard for small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as the issue of how EU public procurement rules can contribute better to reaching the Europe 2020 strategy target of creating intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth and innovation in the EU.

Moreover, the **standardisation system** is an important tool for the EU's regulation of goods and services. The Presidency will work towards ensuring that standardisation contributes more greatly to promoting innovation, growth and trade in the Single Market. The target is to create a new regulation and financing basis with focus on transparency, consensus and quality.

The Danish Presidency will strengthen the Single Market and the general framework conditions for companies, which includes strengthening

transparency in the area of company law through the interconnection of business registers. In this context, the Council will need to work on modernisation and revision of **European accounting legislation** and on supporting the Europe 2020 strategy's goal of responsible growth, including corporate social responsibility.

Innovation and growth can only be achieved if there is sufficient access to **venture capital** in the Single Market. During the Danish Presidency, focus will therefore be on the Commission proposal regarding companies' access to venture capital so that especially the growth of innovative small and medium-sized enterprises in Europe can be supported.

Furthermore, the Presidency will support the alignment of nine existing **product directives** to the EU's goods package of 2008. The target is a more consistent and coherent product legislation to improve businesses' compliance and public authorities' enforcement of the legislation.

In connection with a modernisation of the European **trademark rules**, the Presidency will commence the Council's work towards improving and strengthening the European trademark system. The Presidency will carry forward the Council's work for more effective enforcement of IP rights through consideration of the Commission proposal for i.a. a revision of the regulation concerning customs

enforcement of intellectual property rights and the draft regulation on the **authorisation of OHIM** to take charge of special tasks in connection with the protection of intellectual property.

Furthermore, the Presidency will follow up on the Commission proposal for an orphan works directive.

The Danish Presidency will work for **better enforcement of Single Market rules**, including a strengthening of tools for better implementation, **effective and swift problem solving** as well as administrative cooperation. This is to be achieved, for example, by strengthening the **Internal Market Information System** i.a. with a view to making the system for **recognition of professional qualifications** more effective.

Industry

During the Danish Presidency, the Council as part of the European Semester is to discuss the Commission's Annual Growth Survey with a view to presenting political input to the spring summit in 2012.

Furthermore, as an element in the negotiations on the EU's new Multiannual Financial Framework, the Council will focus on the Commission's programme for **SMEs and Industrial Competitiveness, COSME**. The Presidency finds it important to ensure access to financing for SMEs. The programme is related to the forthcoming framework programme for research and innovation. It is important that

there is coherence between research and innovation and the opportunity of businesses to commercialise products that are to support the EU's transition to a sustainable economy.

Research

As the most important matter in the area of research, the Council will need to negotiate the proposal on **Horizon 2020** – the forthcoming framework programme for research and innovation. The negotiations on this are to be seen in close conjunction with the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework. The objective of the framework programme is to promote European research and technological development, with growth as the ultimate objective. The Danish Presidency will work to increase the momentum in the negotiations to ensure as much progress as possible towards reaching a joint decision of the Council and the European Parliament. The Presidency will work for placing greater focus on the correlation between research, innovation and education. *Excellence* is to remain the sustaining principle and it is to be strengthened through several initiatives, including a strong European Research Council (ERC) as well as European world-class research infrastructures. Similarly, the Presidency will make an effort to ensure that the framework programme is characterised by more simplification and flexibility, which is a precondition for ensuring a more active involvement of industry.

Furthermore, the Council will need to negotiate an amendment to the regulation on the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology** (EIT) as well as a proposal for **Strategic Innovation Agenda** (SIA) with a view to ensuring the forward-looking activities of the EIT. The Council will also make an effort to achieve progress in the preliminary negotiations on the

Euratom Programme (the research framework programme for nuclear research). In the area of space, the Commission communication on the European Programme for the establishment of a European capacity for Earth Observation, **GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security)**, will be considered.

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy

The Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council configuration comprises key policies in the effort to future-proof Europe. The Presidency will promote effective, innovative and environmentally sustainable transport of persons and goods in Europe with a view to achieving a high level of mobility as well as economic growth. Access to a **digital single market** for EU citizens and businesses must be ensured. This will stimulate innovation, mobility and competitiveness in the EU. EU efforts in the area of energy are decisive for ensuring energy supply security in the EU and for attaining the EU aim of tackling climate change. The Presidency will therefore give priority to the work on:

- Good framework conditions for an effective European transport sector which is to ensure a high level of mobility and thereby create a key precondition for growth in Europe.
- Internationally competitive conditions for European shipping and European mariners.
- A digital single market and lower prices as well as more competition regarding roaming services.
- Energy efficiency and a well-functioning internal market for energy.

Transport

Effective interaction between the various modes of transport is crucial, especially between sea routes, ports and terminals and land-based modes of transport. **The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)** is of key importance to Europe's future infrastructure. The Council's work on the revision of the guidelines for the TEN-T and the related proposal on financing transport infrastructure are therefore a priority for the Danish Presidency. In connection with the TEN-T and as part of the discussions on the EU budget, the Presidency will, moreover, make a special effort to promote transport infrastructure projects of a transnational nature under the **Connecting Europe Facility**.

Furthermore, the Council will need to discuss the proposal on a **Single European Railway Area**, and by consolidating the directives of the first railway package as well as by simplifying legal provisions, it will contribute to a modernisation of the railway sector in Europe.

The development of a satellite system for navigation and positioning services (**the Galileo project**) will contribute to better management and control of all modes of transport. The Danish Presidency will carry forward the work on Galileo with special emphasis on competent and cost-efficient project management.

The aviation sector plays a major role for European mobility, and the **airports package** will include proposals that revise current EU airport policies. The Presidency will prioritise efforts on proposed regulations regarding groundhandling, slot allocation at airports and noise-related operating restrictions at Community airports. The Presidency will work to complete a number of air transport agreements between the EU and third countries. Furthermore, the Presidency will focus on smart and cost-efficient solutions in the area of safety. The Presidency will also focus on aviation security and on the importance of basing flight time regulations for pilots and cabin crew on scientific evidence.

Modular vehicle combinations (Eco-combies) will strengthen the efficiency

of freight transport on roads and contribute to a better environment while relieving road networks, as two Eco-combies can replace three conventional lorries. Therefore, the Danish Presidency wishes to promote the possibility for cross-border transport with Eco-combies in the EU.

Sea carriage

The Presidency attaches importance to promoting the negotiations on the Commission proposal regarding a **revision of EU guidelines concerning training for mariners** in order to ensure European mariners' competencies and competitiveness, thereby at the same time ensuring the competitiveness of the European shipping sector. It is important that the new rules are implemented in the EU to ensure a uniform high professional level of competencies and an environment where mariners can compete on equal terms.

The Presidency will also work towards achieving high standards with respect to safe seas by revising the regulation on the **European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)** and by prioritising the international competitiveness of European shipping.

IT and telecommunications

The digital single market is an important element of the flagship initiative Digital Agenda for Europe. Therefore, the Presidency will generally prioritise areas that support the development of the digital single market. The Presidency will in particular focus on a

revision of the existing **roaming regulation**. The roaming regulation ensures lower prices for international roaming calls for EU citizens and businesses and promotes growth and innovation through increased cross-border mobility. Roaming prices should approach national prices for SMS, voice and data services without removing the incentive for innovation and growth in the EU telecom industry.

The Presidency will, furthermore, contribute to reaching the European targets for the roll-out of broadband access in all parts of Europe. Consequently, as part of the discussions on the EU budget for 2014-2020 during the Danish Presidency, support for broadband and digital services under the **Connecting Europe Facility** will be an important theme in the Council.

The prioritisation of the digital single market is to be sustained by specific negotiations in the Council on the revision of the **PSI directive** on the re-use of public sector information for the purpose of enhancing the possibilities of digital content innovation.

Furthermore, **mutual use and recognition of electronic signatures across borders** is an important precondition for the development of a digital single market. Therefore, the Presidency will work towards revising the **current electronic signatures directive**.

Energy

The draft **energy efficiency directive** will be assigned very high priority by the Danish Presidency. The proposal establishes a framework for energy savings in the entire energy chain from energy production to final energy consumption. The Presidency will make a targeted effort to achieve specific results that contribute to attaining the target of a 20 per cent improvement in energy efficiency by 2020, and which will ensure a greater effort to promote energy efficiency after 2020.

The development of an effective and intelligent transmission network is a precondition for the integration of huge quantities of renewable energy in the EU's energy supply, which is one of the priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy. The Presidency will therefore prioritise the proposal on the **energy infrastructure in the EU**.

Also after the year 2020, there will be a need for a well-functioning energy market contributing to reaching EU climate targets. The Presidency will therefore follow up on the **Energy Roadmap 2050**, which is to contribute to realising the long-term 2050 vision of the transition to a low-carbon society, contribute to ensuring stable energy supply and to supporting European jobs. The Presidency will make an effort to ensure that the Council, against the background of Energy Roadmap 2050 and, if applicable, a communication on a renewable energy strategy, adopts conclusions

that set out the direction for how the EU can realise the long-term visions and decide on possible milestones, for example for the expansion of renewable energy. Energy Roadmap 2050 is to be seen in close correlation with the **Low-Carbon Economy Roadmap 2050**, and it is altogether crucial that the follow-up work on the two roadmaps supports each other.

Energy relations with third countries are of key importance to the EU target in the energy area and will be on the agenda of the Council on an ongoing basis. In connection with a further development of the EU external energy policy, the Presidency will contribute

to the adoption of the proposal on information exchange as well as a new Energy Star agreement with the USA on energy labelling to promote the roll-out of energy-efficient office equipment. Furthermore, the Presidency will ensure EU coordination in relation to decisions in international energy fora.

Lastly, the Council will discuss the proposal on **offshore safety regarding energy recovery activities** and present an energy sector contribution to the European Semester concerning progress in relation to the Europe 2020 targets for energy efficiency and renewable energy with a view to the spring summit in March 2012.

Justice and Home Affairs

Ensuring the safety and security of the citizens of the EU requires concerted action on the part of the Member States – no Member State can achieve on its own what the Member States can achieve together. Clear targets must be set up for EU cooperation on justice and home affairs; targets which can be translated into specific results so that we create and maintain an EU collaboration that works in practice. In the light of this, the Presidency will i.a. place focus on ensuring that proposals for new legislation and initiatives meet specific needs and that they add real value to existing rules.

The implementation of the five-year work programme in the area of justice and home affairs - the **Stockholm Programme (2010-2014)** – will be the pivotal point of the Danish Presidency in the area. The programme is to be implemented in accordance with the current challenges facing Europe. In this connection, it will be necessary i.a. to demonstrate economic responsibility and ensure that the value added of

new proposals matches the economic impact of the proposals.

The Presidency will i.a. give priority to the work on:

- A Common European Asylum System, which is i.a. to ensure a more uniform processing of asylum cases in the EU.
- A strengthened and more effective Schengen system.
- Enhanced cooperation between the Member States' law enforcement authorities on the prevention of and fight against terrorism and cross-border crime.
- The Victim's Package which is to contribute to ensuring that victims receive the support they need.

Asylum and migration

A well-managed asylum and migration policy is in the interests of migrants as well as countries of origin,

transit and destination. The Presidency will therefore work towards ensuring that the implementation of the Stockholm Programme contributes to economic growth, social inclusion and increased safety, as well as provides protection for those in need of asylum. At the same time, genuine and practical solidarity must be demonstrated with the Member States that face huge challenges in managing the inflow of asylum seekers and illegal migrants.

Naturally, legislation must be implemented in complete compliance with international legal and humanitarian obligations. This requires i.a. that asylum seekers have reasonable living conditions while their cases are being processed. Therefore, the Presidency will strive to achieve specific results with a view to completing the **Common European Asylum System** by the end of 2012.

The Presidency will continue work on a targeted and multi-pronged effort against **illegal migration** with respect for human dignity. One element of this is an effective return policy. In the work on the proposals for amending the Schengen Borders Code and the Schengen Evaluation Mechanism, the Presidency will endeavour to strengthen and improve the efficiency of the **Schengen system** and thereby secure control at the external borders of the EU in order to maintain the right of free movement across internal borders.

A well-managed migration policy is also very important in relation to follow-up on the situation in **North Africa**, which presents both challenges and opportunities, and which will therefore be prioritised in order to promote the dialogue on migration, mobility and security with the Southern Mediterranean countries.

The Presidency will work to **promote decent working conditions for third country nationals** in the EU. Similarly, immigrants who obtain highly skilled jobs in the EU, and who meet the conditions for residence should be ensured smooth and non-bureaucratic access.

In the area of integration, the Presidency will support already ongoing cooperation, exchange of experience and the development of methods between Member States on **inclusive integration policies**. The Presidency will focus on how integration policies can contribute specifically to promoting democratic values, enhancing equal opportunities, fostering social cohesion, discouraging parallel societies and **preventing extremism**.

There will also be focus on the **external dimension** of the many policy areas affected by the migration and asylum policy within the framework of the revised Global Approach to Migration and Mobility. Efforts must be made to strengthen cooperation with third countries sharing strategic interests with the Union, third countries from

where illegal migrants and asylum seekers arrive as well as third countries and countries that are used as first asylum or transit country.

The Presidency will in general support practical cooperation, so that Member States benefit from each other's lessons learned and in a spirit of solidarity render assistance to each other to respond to current challenges.

Police and justice cooperation

It must at all times be an objective to enhance the safety and security of the population. In recent years, there has been much focus in the EU on combating cross-border crime and terrorism. It is crucial that the effort should be maintained and developed further.

Therefore, the Danish Presidency will i.a. continue the targeted and intensive work regarding the proposal on a **European Investigation Order in criminal matters**, which will prove of great importance to Member States' ability to fight cross-border crime. The Danish Presidency will work for a flexible, effective and practical application of the new system.

Terrorism remains one of the most serious threats to Europe, and it is decisive that common actions in the area are maintained and, if necessary, enhanced. A common European system for **exchange of passenger information** is an important aspect of this. In an increasingly globalised world where the mobility of criminals

is continuously on the increase, there is a need for law enforcement authorities to be able to use passenger information in the work on preventing and investigating terrorism and other serious criminal activity. Therefore, there is a need for a European Passenger Name Record (PNR) system, which – with regard for data protection and privacy – will constitute an element of the general work of law enforcement authorities with respect to the prevention of and fight against terrorism and other serious crime.

The Danish Presidency will place increased focus on the need for cooperation to **prevent terrorism**. In this connection, the Danish Presidency will i.a. enhance cooperation on the development of mechanisms that may help arrive at an understanding of the causes of terrorism, including the causes of radicalisation of young people.

Safety and legal certainty must go hand in hand. The Danish Presidency will therefore work towards ensuring progress in the Council's roadmap with a view to strengthening the **procedural rights of suspected or accused persons** in criminal proceedings. Similarly, the Presidency will keep focus on ensuring that crime victims receive the support they need.

Lastly, the Danish Presidency will work towards ensuring that European citizens are able to fully exercise and enforce their rights. A key element

of this is the current revision of the **Brussels I Regulation**, which will contribute to removing the remaining obstacles to the free movement of judicial decisions.

Civil protection

Natural or man-made disasters such as forest fires, floods and terrorist attacks impact increasingly on the security and safety of the citizens and require further development of the Union's effort in terms of **preventing and dealing with disasters**. The Danish Presidency will work for a targeted strengthening of this area.

Through the European disaster response capacity the EU is, in a spirit of solidarity, to render assistance to disaster-stricken countries both inside and outside Europe. The Danish Presidency will therefore i.a. work towards strengthening a systematic collection of lessons learned in connection with disaster response.

The Danish Presidency will ensure further progress in the work on the **protection of European critical infrastructure** and follow up on the recommendations set out in the **EU action plan on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) security**.

Agriculture and Fisheries

The Agriculture and Fisheries Council configuration is responsible for the Council's work regarding food, agriculture and fisheries covering the entire chain from farm to fork. Within the Agriculture and Fisheries Council configuration, the Presidency will give priority to the work on:

- The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).
- The reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).
- Improved food safety and animal health.

The future agricultural policy

During the Danish Presidency, the Council will carry forward its work on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. The Danish Presidency's first priority will be to ensure the necessary momentum in the negotiations that are to be seen in close connection with the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework for the period

after 2013, which means that they can only be concluded as part of the final agreement on the future Multiannual Financial Framework.

A strong and effective single market in the area of agriculture and food is decisive in order to ensure a level playing field for agricultural production. A common objective for the reform work is that in future the Common Agricultural Policy must place stronger focus on the response to new challenges and the delivery of public goods, for example in relation to the environment, nature and climate. The Common Agricultural Policy has the potential to constitute part of the solution to the many challenges and to contribute to exploring new earnings and sustainable development – including for example how to develop efficient water and biodiversity management, food safety, the handling of climate change and environmental considerations, the supply of green energy, organic farming, and the promotion of animal welfare. The Europe 2020

strategy constitutes an opportunity to think ahead about how to ensure global competitiveness in the entire agricultural and food sector. The goal of the Europe 2020 strategy will therefore be part of the negotiations on the future Common Agricultural Policy, especially with increased focus on nature, the environment, climate change objectives as well as the general green restructuring of the sector. An upgrading of the EU budget with regard to research, development and innovation (Horizon 2020) is also to support the agricultural and food sector and contribute to supporting the achievement of the Europe 2020 strategy goals.

Also **simplification** will be an action area in connection with the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy in order to draw up simpler and more streamlined rules with a minimum of administrative burdens.

The future fisheries policy

During the Danish Presidency, the Council will need to carry forward its work on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. In line with other sector policies using resources of the sea, the fisheries policy is to be part of a common overall framework for fisheries management. The fisheries policy is to be based on an ecosystem approach and to integrate environmental targets related to the area of the fisheries policy. A reformed Common Fisheries policy is to be capable of responding to new challenges and demands from the surroundings,

including consumers. A precondition for fisheries activities being economically viable in future is **sustainable use of fishery resources**. Consequently, a ban on fish discards will be a priority together with the development of more selective fishing methods and tools. In this connection, a catch quota management system with fully documented catches must be part of the reform.

Furthermore, the reform should i.a.:

- Ensure simplification of the Common Fisheries Policy.
- Address the question of balance between fleet size (capacity) and fishing opportunities.
- Take into account regional aspects in a cost-effective context.
- Adjust the common organisation of the market to the global development.
- Ensure that a new financial instrument in the area of fisheries supports the goals of a reformed Common Fisheries Policy, in terms of contributing to fulfilling and maintaining good environmental and conservation status and promoting innovation in the fisheries sector.
- Develop a coherent approach to aquaculture policy.

There is a need to include decisions on the Common Fisheries Policy's

external dimension in the reform. Future fisheries partnership agreements are to strengthen scientific assessments of the stocks concerned and promote improved control. Moreover, human rights and democracy clauses must be included in partnership agreements and the work of regional fisheries management organisations should be strengthened.

Lastly, a number of regulations will need to be adjusted during the Danish Presidency in order to take into account the consequences of the Lisbon Treaty.

Improved food safety

The EU has a leading position regarding food safety, but there is a need for continued development and modernisation of the legislation. EU consumers must be confident that the foods on the market are healthy, safe, of high quality and produced with respect for animal welfare. Any opportunity to improve food safety levels in the EU through the harmonisation of standards will be of high importance during the Danish Presidency. This will be achieved both with a view to protecting consumers in the EU and strengthening EU exports as well as in relation to the safety of imported foods. In continuation of this, the Council will need to carry forward discussions of the Commission proposal for a revision of the rules governing **foods for particular nutritional uses and the expected proposal on Novel Foods**.

In relation to the issue of food quality, the Presidency will work closely together with the institutions for the purpose of closing the **Quality Package**, which contains proposals regarding the regulation of quality systems and commercial standards for agricultural products.

On the basis of the Commission's **report on the organic farming regulation**, the Presidency will set the stage for discussions on how the present rules on organic farming work. In this connection, the Presidency will invite Member States to discuss what they think a new legislative proposal should contain - as a precondition for a well-functioning organic market and high consumer confidence in these foods. This is to be seen in relation to the Commission's planned revision of the rules.

Both in Europe and in the rest of the world, the use of antimicrobials in both human and veterinary medicine is on the increase. The result is a corresponding **increase in antimicrobial resistance**, which means that it is getting more difficult to treat bacterial infections. The Danish Presidency will therefore work towards placing the handling of antimicrobial resistance on the agenda.

During the Danish Presidency, focus will furthermore be placed on the development of modernised meat inspection and associated legislation.

The area of animal welfare will also be prioritised during the Danish Presidency as the Council is expected to consider the Commission communication on a new animal welfare strategy as well as the Commission report on the regulation on the protection of animals during transport.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs

In the years ahead, most European countries will face the challenge that an increasing number of people are expected to leave the labour market at the same time as life expectancy increases. This will lead to growing pressure on pensions and health and care sectors, and the implications are that a smaller economically active group will need to support an increasing number of older people outside the labour market. At the same time, Europe is experiencing an economic crisis which has resulted in high unemployment, especially among the young. Against this background, it is necessary to think along new lines, and this will affect EU cooperation in the area of social policy and employment. The EU plays also an important role with regard to the fight against cross-border threats to health, the exchange of best practice on research and treatment of diseases, as well as questions relating to the free movement of goods, health services and staff in the health sector. The Danish Presidency will therefore give priority to the work on:

- Health that creates increased growth and welfare in Europe.
- An employment policy that addresses current challenges, especially youth unemployment, as well as more long-term challenges regarding the strengthening of labour supply.
- A social policy that creates equal opportunities for all.

Employment and social policy

The Danish Presidency will invite Member States to discussions on how to respond to the demographic challenges, including how the labour supply may be strengthened by more young people and women entering the labour market, changed family patterns, better reconciliation of work and family life, lifelong learning, breaking the intergenerational inheritance of disadvantage, as well as a greater employment rate for persons who are not in possession of full capacity for work. Focus will also be placed

on delaying the exit from the labour market. In this respect, it is crucial that current and future reforms of the countries' pension systems go hand in hand with a strengthening of positive incentives for people to work longer, especially by way of a better working environment.

2012 is also the **European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations**. In the course of 2012, a number of initiatives will be taken to promote the contribution of the elderly to society, i.a. through active participation in the labour market. Emphasis will be placed on bringing older people's knowledge and expertise into play, for example through flexible working conditions, competence development and health promotion – for the benefit of the elderly themselves and for the benefit of society in general.

Considering that 2011 is the European Year of Volunteering, the Council will need to continue the discussion of how volunteers may help the elderly and how older people may participate in volunteer activities to a greater extent. In this connection, modern welfare technology holds great potential. During the Danish Presidency, the Council will therefore also need to discuss how modern welfare technology can reduce the physical work in the care sector and, in particular, how older people can remain fit and healthy in order to stay active for longer.

Similarly, the Danish Presidency intends to contribute actively to the implementation of the EU strategy for people with **disabilities**. The Council will need to discuss how the resources of this large population group can be put to more active use, including by increased use of modern aids.

As part of the Europe 2020 strategy, the Council is to discuss Member States' **employment policies**. The prospect of continued economic crisis and low growth rates means that the Presidency will place focus on how the current challenges of high **youth unemployment** and **long-term unemployment** in Europe are to be tackled.

Follow-up on the Commission's flagship: New Skills for New Jobs will also be part of the discussions with a view to placing focus on policies targeted at upgrading the qualifications of the workforce and increasing mobility in the labour market.

However, the crisis must not be allowed to overshadow the need for long-term reforms. The white paper on pensions will constitute the point of departure for a discussion in the Council of some of the special challenges that arise as a result of a changed demographic composition with more older people and fewer persons of working age.

An important element with a view to retaining employees on the labour market is **a good working environment**

and the prevention of occupational risks. During the Danish Presidency, a conference will provide input to the follow-up on the EU 2007-2012 strategy on occupational health and safety, and the Council will carry forward the work on revising the directive on electro-magnetic fields in the workplace, as well as await the Commission proposal on a new directive regarding work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

The social dimension of the Single Market must be enhanced in order to ensure citizens' confidence in the Single Market, including the rules on the free movement of services and persons. When this is fulfilled, the EU Single Market will create growth and a stronger supply of labour. It is therefore important that the fundamental working conditions in the host countries are complied with and that the host countries' labour market models are respected. Against this background, the Council during the Danish Presidency will need to work on the proposal concerning enhanced enforcement of the posted workers directive and a draft regulation to clarify that after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force workers' rights and companies' right to free movement are of equal importance.

The Progress programme is an EU programme, the objective of which has been to support the development and exchange of knowledge, analyses and statistics between Member States.

The programme has set the stage for a number of relevant and exciting projects and initiatives in the social area in a very broad sense. On the basis of the successes of the programme and the Europe 2020 strategy, the Danish Presidency will promote the Council's work by adopting a follow-up on it.

The United Nations Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) sets out the overall guidelines for global gender equality efforts. The Council will continue its follow-up work on the BPfA, and the Danish Presidency will work actively towards achieving further progress, especially concerning indicators for Women and the environment.

Global competition requires that we mobilise all talents. One element of this agenda is to ensure that the individual's choice of education and training is based on individual interests and skills. Therefore, the Danish Presidency will place focus on **gender-segregated educational choices.**

Health policy

Under an overall innovation agenda **Smart Health – Better Lives**, the Danish Presidency will work towards enhancing innovation and the use of health and welfare technology. Focus will be placed on how European patients can get better and more effective treatment, how to promote better use of resources and better working conditions, and how to create favourable innovation conditions for Europe's comprehensive public and private

health and welfare technology sectors. A good framework for innovation will help European patients and citizens, improve the use of resources in the health and care sector, as well as contribute to creating growth in the EU.

The Danish Presidency will work for legislation that is well balanced and will increase patient safety and establish good conditions for product development. The Council will need to discuss a revision of the medical device directives. In this connection, the Danish Presidency will work towards ensuring that the future medical device regulation takes into account development opportunities and at the same time gives consideration to patient safety.

Similarly, the Danish Presidency will work on the proposal regarding information to the general public on medicinal products subject to medical prescription (patient information), the objective of which is to provide more equal and uniform access to this information for patients in the Member States.

Diseases and antimicrobial resistance do not respect national borders, and the rising level of resistance due to increased use of antibiotics in both humans and animals is a problem in the entire EU. The Danish Presidency will work towards promoting a **more rational use of antibiotics** and towards strengthening and improving surveillance of the use of

antibiotics in the EU, including the possibility of pan-European surveillance of the use of and resistance to antibiotics. Moreover, the Danish Presidency will follow up on the Commission communication on antimicrobial resistance.

It will be a major future challenge in the area of health that more Europeans are getting older and that they live longer with one or more **chronic diseases**. Chronic diseases such as diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders, and heart and lung diseases are putting an increasing strain on healthcare systems throughout Europe. The Danish Presidency will therefore place focus on chronic diseases with diabetes as a model disease.

Environment

The global community faces a number of serious current environmental and resource-policy challenges. Both regarding the environment and the climate area, there is a need for cross-border actions with a view to ensuring a sustainable future. In continuation of this, the Danish Presidency of the Environment Council will give priority to the work on:

- An environmental and resource-efficient economy.
- The interaction between health and the environment.
- Ambitious climate action.

An environmental and resource-efficient economy

During the Danish Presidency, the Council and the European Parliament will need to work hard in order to draw up the framework for a **7th Environmental Action Programme**.

The Presidency will work for a focused environmental action programme

which as its overall benchmark is to formulate and combine the decisive operational strategies with a view to transforming the EU into a resource-efficient green economy. This is to be achieved within an economically sustainable framework providing an important contribution to the realisation of the **green growth society** in the Europe 2020 strategy and serving as a model for international action to ensure the global natural base. The green economy theme has a prominent place on the agenda of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference.

Green growth depends on **environmental and resource-efficient forms of production and sustainable consumption patterns**. The Danish Presidency will prioritise work towards achieving a resource-efficient Europe, and will, in continuation of the EU Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP), work for enhanced continuation of environmental technologies efforts in the EU.

In future, focus is to be placed on environmental technologies that contribute to limiting the use of natural resources, protect biodiversity, and reduce pollution that is harmful to human health. This should go hand in hand with measures to provide EU citizens with the necessary tools to make sustainable choices in their consumption, i.a. by means of environmentally related product requirements. Furthermore, a resource-efficient green growth strategy will require the implementation of policies targeted at further optimising the use of the very large resource quantities that are lost today in the increasing production of waste. In relation to this, the Council will need to complete the revision of the legislation on **waste from electrical and electronic products** and launch **work on a regulation on the dismantling of ships**.

The Presidency will promote work on the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020, including ensure coherence between the targets, means and funding as a follow-up on the agreements under the United Nations Biodiversity Convention in Nagoya, as well as that the EU's sector policies contribute optimally to the efforts to protect natural areas and water resources. In addition to the work on the biodiversity strategy, the Danish Presidency will prioritise work on the EU's ratification and implementation of the **Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing** (the ABS protocol). The Presidency will, in addition, carry forward the

work on revising legislation regarding **dangerous substances in the aquatic environment** in relation to the **water framework directive** as well as strive to complete the negotiations on a revision of the directive on the deliberate release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) into the environment.

Internationally, the Danish Presidency will prioritise work on preparing the Eleventh Conference of the Parties (COP11) under the **Biodiversity Convention** in the autumn of 2012 as well as perform the task of the Presidency at the conference of the parties under the **Ramsar Convention** and in connection with a number of other events in the area of conventions related to sea and nature.

Health and environment

New scientific insight into the combination effects of chemicals should as soon as possible be translated into specific preventive common policies. The Presidency will therefore prioritise that the effectiveness of **EU chemicals policies** be taken up regularly for consideration and improvement. In the work on the forthcoming revision of the EU chemicals legislation (*REACH*), other new themes in the area of chemicals, including combination effects and nanomaterials, should be thoroughly assessed and measures considered.

There is a need for ambitious continuation of the common action against **air pollution**, including particulate pollution deriving from the transport area,

so that air pollution actions may go hand in hand with reduction targets for greenhouse gas emissions.

Specifically, the Presidency will negotiate the revision of the directive on the **sulphur content of marine fuels**. During the Danish Presidency, the Council will need to complete the work on the amendment of the rules on **trade in dangerous chemicals** (the PIC regulation). In addition, the Presidency will carry forward the work on the directives regarding the **prevention of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances** (*Seveso II*). Strategies for environment and health should constitute an independent pillar in a **7th Environmental Action Programme**.

Internationally, the Danish Presidency will create maximum momentum in the negotiations on the establishment of a **global mercury regulation**. Similarly, the **revision of the Gothenburg Protocol setting emission ceilings for a number of air-polluting substances** will be prioritised.

Ambitious climate action

The Council will follow up on the results of the **international climate negotiations** and prepare for the further international climate negotiations both in the UNFCCC and other fora. In this connection, follow-up will especially need to be carried out on the specific results emerging from COP17, including in particular in relation to the process on the adoption of

a long-term commitment period for all countries with binding reduction targets, a strengthening of the global level of ambition regarding reduction efforts in the short term, climate financing as well as a strengthening of EU cooperation with allies among developing countries. The Council will also need to formulate its position on climate and energy-related themes at the **Rio+20 United Nations Conference**. Sustainable use of energy resources, including energy efficiency measures and the promotion of renewable energy will be important elements in the EU input for a green economy.

The Danish Presidency will endeavour to ensure a strengthened and ambitious climate policy internally in the EU and will, in this connection, initiate discussions i.a. on potential milestones regarding climate action for the period after 2020, for example for 2030 and 2040, in order to contribute to the target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80-95 per cent by 2050 – not least for the purpose of strengthening EU competitiveness in the global market for green growth. Therefore, the Presidency will prioritise the **Low-Carbon Economy Roadmap 2050**. Work on the climate roadmap and the long-term 2050 vision on the transition to a low-carbon society must necessarily be seen in close connection with the EU 2050 visions for the energy sector, EU targets for energy efficiency measures, and EU 2050 visions for the transport sector.

In the short term, the Council will, furthermore, need to ensure progress in the negotiations on a regulation on a **monitoring mechanism**, which is i.a. to ensure that the EU meets new United Nations requirements as of the inventory year 2013.

Furthermore, the Council is to make as much progress as possible in the negotiations on the expected Commission proposal regarding rules for including **LULUCF activities** (accounting emission and removals from Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry in the overall greenhouse gas inventory) in the EU's reduction target.

The Danish Presidency will prioritise initiatives regarding **sustainability criteria for biofuels**. Specifically,

during the Danish Presidency, the Council will need to handle potential proposals for legislation addressing the indirect land use change impact of biofuels (ILUC).

Furthermore, the Council will need to handle the Commission proposal on mainstreaming climate change in large parts of the EU budget for the period 2014-2020, including continue negotiations on the LIFE+ regulation towards the creation of a new framework containing sub-programmes for both environmental and climate efforts.

Lastly, the Council will provide an environmental and climate sector contribution to the **European Semester** regarding progress in relation to the Europe 2020 targets.

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport

The Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council brings together government ministers for education, youth, culture, the audio-visual area as well as sport. The primary task of the Council is to supplement and support Member States' efforts to develop, for example, a high educational level and educational mobility, a common cultural heritage, development in the audio-visual area as well as sport. Cooperation focuses on finding common solutions to common problems, typically through exchange of experience and knowledge. Within this Council configuration, the Presidency will i.a. give priority to the work on:

- The Commission proposal for the new generation of support programmes in the areas of education, youth, culture, media and sport.
- A strengthening of vocational education and training among young people and adults with the focus on establishing closer links to the labour market.

- Follow-up on the Council's Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014, including promotion of the role of culture in the EU's external relations.

Education

With the adoption of the strategy framework for European cooperation in the area of education up to 2020 and the Europe 2020 strategy as well as an updated and renewed Copenhagen Process, a good foundation has been laid for further cooperation in the education field. The Presidency will carry this forward and in this connection focus on promoting young people's prospects through enhanced opportunities for learning mobility. Work will also be carried out on achieving better links between education and employment possibilities, for example by focusing on flexibility.

During the Danish Presidency, the Council faces an important agenda by way of negotiations on a **new EU programme for education, training and youth**. The negotiations will take

place in the light of the negotiations on the new EU Multiannual Financial Framework for the period after 2013 and will at the same time need to be adjusted to the Europe 2020 strategy. The EU educational programme focuses on the mobility of students, pupils and teachers, on cooperation between educational institutions regarding joint trans-European projects, education programmes and partnerships as well as on increased cooperation between educational institutions and companies.

During the Danish Presidency, the Council is to adopt the first progress report under the strategic framework for European cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020). At the same time, priorities are to be adopted for the coming period 2012-2014. In this connection, focus will be on ensuring coherence between the **strategic framework for Education and Training** and the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Danish will prioritise the link between **education and training and employment**. The Presidency will work on the development of a benchmark for employability. Similarly, the Presidency will work towards the adoption of a recommendation on the recognition of informal and non-formal learning. The adoption of both is meant to support the link between education and the labour market and to enhance lifelong learning and flexibility in education and training. The plan is also for the Danish Presidency to contribute to the **Copenhagen Process**, which aims at

promoting mutual trust and the basis for mobility regarding educational programmes and the labour market by enhancing the quality and transparency of vocational training in Europe.

The flagship initiative *An Agenda for new skills and jobs* sets the stage for a special focus on the theme of **education and training for entrepreneurship**. The Danish Presidency will also carry this theme forward by supporting European and national efforts to promote creativity and entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training.

Youth

In the area of youth, the Council during the Danish Presidency will i.a. deal with the question of active participation in society of young people. In particular, the promotion of creativity, innovation performance and talent among young people as part of their active citizenship and transition to employment will be a high priority. This will be of key importance, especially in the light of the importance of improving young people's employment opportunities at the present time with high youth unemployment rates in Europe. During the Danish Presidency, the Council is to negotiate a new **programme for education, training and youth**. This will take place in the light of the negotiations on the EU's new Multiannual Financial Framework and the Europe 2020 strategy.

Culture

The cultural sector in Europe shares

a number of common conditions, opportunities and challenges. The Presidency wishes to continue cooperation on the strategic targets of the European cultural agenda, including the targets of promoting cultural diversity and culture as a catalyst for creativity. In continuation of this, the Presidency will work towards making the role and potential of culture more visible – also within other policy areas.

The Council's Work Plan for Culture for 2011-2014 will constitute the framework for part of the Council's work during the Danish Presidency. The Presidency will in particular place focus on culture in external relations. In continuation of this, it is one of the Presidency's targets to promote the ratification of and follow-up on the UNESCO Convention on cultural diversity.

The EU Culture Programme plays a particularly important role in cultural cooperation, including for the promotion of cross-border cultural projects with a European dimension. The Programme supports cooperation on and knowledge of Europe's cultural diversity and is as such of direct relevance to European citizens. During the Danish Presidency, the Council will need to consider the Commission proposal on a future cultural programme after 2013 within the framework of the proposal for a **Creative Europe** programme, which will be a priority for the Presidency.

Similarly, the Council will need to deal with the programme **Europe for Citizens**, which aims at promoting active European citizenship. The Danish Presidency will work towards renewing the programme in continuation of the Commission proposal for this.

Audio-visual issues

As part of the work towards promoting the production of European audio-visual content, the Council will need to consider the next generation of two support programmes in the audio-visual field. The existing MEDIA programme focuses i.a. on cultural and linguistic diversity, on the competitiveness of the European audio-visual sector, and on the dissemination of European audio-visual products, whereas the MEDIA Mundus programme supports cooperation between the European audio-visual industry and audio-visual producers from third countries. The Danish Presidency will actively endeavour to provide momentum in the consideration of the Commission proposal for a **future MEDIA programme after 2013**, within the framework of the proposal for a **Creative Europe** programme. Which will be a priority for the Presidency.

Moreover, the Council will need to deal with ongoing work regarding the digital agenda, including digitisation and on-line access to **cultural and creative material and digital preservation**.

Sport

In the area of sport, the Council will need to work towards promoting sport in Europe and developing the European dimension in sport. The Presidency will i.a. focus on the **sport chapter** of the Commission proposal regarding the establishment of the programme Erasmus for All and on promoting fairness and openness in **sporting competitions** through cooperation between organisations and authorities as well as on protecting the physical and moral integrity of

sportsmen and sportswomen, especially the youngest sportsmen and sportswomen.

Furthermore, initiatives will be emphasised that implement the Council's work plan of May 2011 on the development of the European dimension in sport. In this connection, the Presidency will in particular prioritise the **fight against doping, fraud and match-fixing** as well as the promotion of participation and volunteering in sport.