



Latvian Presidency
of the Council of the
European Union

EU2015.LV

THE ROTATING PRESIDENCY FROM BRUSSELS' PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction - I

- **About me...**
- **What is Mertens?**
- **Do you know who are currently Bulgarian representatives in COREPER I and the Mertens group?**



Introduction - II

- **About you...**
- **Who in this group has a Brussels experience?**
- **Who has been travelling to Brussels for Working Party meetings?**
- **What do you expect from this presentation/seminar?**
- **What kind of Presidency do you want to have?**



The aim of the presentation

Goal: To provide analysis of both objective and subjective factors affecting the Presidency!

What you could learn from the Latvian Presidency?

- similarities to be exploited
- differences to be considered

What you could learn from my Brussels experience?

- to better identify your role for the preparations and during the Presidency
- lessons-learned from different inter-institutional relations

General outline of the presentation

- **Zooming in: from EU institutions to organisation and coordination of the Permanent Representation**
- **Relations to the Capital: division of labour and lessons-learned**
- **The Presidency put in the context: how to define and deliver priorities**
- **Managing inter-institutional relations and relationships with other 27 Member States: case study of «Digital Europe» priority and beyond**



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EU Institutions

**European
Commission**

**The Council of
the EU**

**European
Council**

Guidance

Decision

**European
Parliament**

**European Court
of Justice**

European Court
of Auditors

Advice

Economic and
Social Committee

Committee of the
Regions



Council of the European Union (Council of Ministers)

Presidency of the Council
(changes every 6 months)

Decisions increasingly been made using qualified-majority voting

Central decision-making body
Legislator

made up of ministers from member states in alternating professional capacity

Committee of Permanent Representatives
(prepares the Council's work)

Secretary General
(supports the work of the Council)



What is the Presidency?

- **Manager** of the Council business
 - chairs the Council meetings and its preparatory bodies
 - formal control over agenda and procedures
- **Honest-broker** in negotiations within the Council
 - procedural advantage
 - informational advantage
 - human resources advantage, including support from the Council Secretariat
- **Some but limited influence over setting political priorities!**
- **Representative** of the Council with other EU institutions and **negotiator** on behalf of the Council (in particular, **codecision**)
- **External representative** of the Member States of the Union (*can be mandated in specific cases*)



Rules of procedure (RoP) of the Council of the EU - I

- **The Presidency is held by groups of three EU countries** for a period of 18 months. Each member of the group holds the Presidency of 9 Council configurations for 6 months. The Foreign Affairs Council has a permanent chairperson: the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.
- The Trio Presidency is the driving force in carrying out the Council's work and must present a draft programme of Council activities. This programme must then be approved by the General Affairs Council.
- **Outcome: TRIO Programme:**
 - ..prepared with the President of the Foreign Affairs Council with regard to that configuration's activities during that period..
 - ..prepared in close cooperation with the Commission and the President of the European Council, and after appropriate consultations
 - ..presented in a single document no later than one month before the relevant period.. (June 1, 2017)



Rules of procedure (RoP) of the Council of the EU - II

NB! At the latest one year before the beginning of the Presidency, the President of the European Council shall make known the dates which he or she envisages for the meetings of the European Council during that six-month period (*RoP of the European Council, Art. 1. – at the beginning of July 2017*)

- Seven months before the beginning of the Presidency, for each Council configuration, and after appropriate consultations, the Presidency shall make known the dates which it envisages for meetings that the Council will have to hold in order to complete its legislative work or take operational decisions. Those dates shall be set out in a single document applying to all Council configurations envisaged (RoP, Art. 1(2))
 - appropriate consultations in practice: the General-Secretariat of the Council, the cabinet of High Representative, the cabinet of President of the European Council and informally with the Commission (advice: Secretariat-General of the Commission);
 - Outcome: **6-month calendar** (December 1, 2017);



Rules of procedure (RoP) of the Council of the EU - III

- The Presidency which is to hold office in the relevant period shall establish, for each Council configuration, and after appropriate consultations, draft agendas for Council meetings scheduled for the next six-month period, showing the legislative work and operational decisions envisaged. .At the latest one week before the beginning of the Presidency.. (RoP, Art. 2(7))
 - appropriate consultations in practice: the General-Secretariat of the Council, the cabinet of High Representative and informally with the Commission (advice: Secretariat-General of the Commission);
 - Outcome: **draft provisional Council agendas** (June 25, 2018)

NB! 6-month Programme is not covered by the RoP (presented at the very beginning of the Presidency, in practice first days of July);



Rules of procedure (RoP) of the Council of the EU - IV

- The Council is supported by the committee of the Permanent representatives of each Member State of the EU (COREPER) and by over 150 specialised groups and committees who form the preparatory bodies of the Council.
- COREPER prepares the work of the Council and carries out the tasks assigned to it by the Council. COREPER II is made up of Permanent representatives of the EU countries (or their deputies in the case of COREPER I) and is chaired by the EU country that holds the rotating presidency of the Council.
- COREPER must examine in advance all the items on the agenda for a Council meeting; it must endeavour to reach an agreement at its level, which is then submitted to the Council for adoption.



Rules of procedure (RoP) of the Council of the EU - V

- Article 20 of the RoP «The Presidency and the smooth conduct of discussions»: The Presidency shall be responsible for the application of these Rules of Procedure and for ensuring that discussions are conducted smoothly. To ensure that discussions are conducted properly it may also, unless the Council decides otherwise, take any appropriate measure necessary to achieve the best possible use of the time available during meetings.



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What is the most pragmatic way to ensure that Rules of procedure of the Council are applied in a way which allows fully exploit Presidency's role?

For Latvia the answer was «simple»: The Brussels-based Presidency where the central operational role is given to COREPER, since it provides horizontal overview, sets agendas for the Council meetings and streamlines preparations for the Council meetings!

Organisation and coordination of the Permanent Representation – I

- **Dimitar TZANTCHEV**, Permanent Representative (COREPER II Ambassador)
 - **Boyan HADJIEV**, Antici Counsellor (COREPER II coordination)
 - **Hristiana GROZDANOVA**, Horizontal coordination, support for candidatures of seconded national experts
- **Petia VASSILEVA**, Deputy Permanent Representative (COREPER I Ambassador)
 - **Ivanka TASHEVA**, Mertens Counsellor (COREPER I coordination)
- **Roumen KAMENOV**, Representative to the Political and Security Committee (PSC Ambassador)
 - **Veselin DYANKOV**, Nicolaidis Counsellor (PSC Coordination)

Organisation and coordination of the Permanent Representation – II

- Horizontal units/structures: Legal and institutional affairs; Press and information; European Parliament; Administrative matters and protocol, accounts office
- COREPER II: Trade policy; Financial, economic and monetary policies; Justice and home affairs
- COREPER I: Competitiveness (internal market, industry); Agriculture and fisheries; Energy; Transport; Telecommunications; Employment, social policy, health and consumer affairs; Environment; Education, research, youth and culture
- PSC: Common foreign and security policy, development



Relations to the Capital

Political decision to have Brussels-based Presidency



Clear division of labour between Brussels and capital



Send the «best» experts to Brussels



Through preparations establish mutual trust

Some lessons-learned from the Latvian Presidency: relations to the Capital

- Acknowledge that the Presidency is a collective mission which is not possible without individual cooperation/ devotion/ contribution
- Ensure pragmatic division of labour – do not turn it into division of power
 - Discuss and agree on coordination system before-during-after the Presidency
 - Divide specific tasks (Trio programme; 6-month calendar; 6-month programme; Provisional Council agendas)
- Empower and reinforce your Permanent representation but do not shift full political responsibility from and «brain-drain» the Capital
 - Through proper financing, comprehensive Human resources policy and training
 - Regular dialogue (videoconferences, travels back and forth)

Relations to the Capital: Latvian case

- Pragmatic division of labour:
 - Political responsibility for the Capital – ensures domestic and symbolic role of the Presidency (including through numerous informal events)
 - Permanent Representation responsible for operationality of the Presidency in Brussels (organisation and conduct of formal agenda and full support for the Government in conducting formal Council meetings)
 - Shared responsibility over deliverables of the Presidency
- Coordination system before-during-after the Presidency:
 - The Brussels has a «final say» over operational documents (6-month calendar; 6-month programme; Provisional Council agendas)
 - «Micro-managment» avoided through open and transparent cooperation: defined scope of operational documents which are consulted with capital; which are sent for information to the capital;
- Extensive and comprehensive training throughout preparations for the Presidency



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Priorities of the Latvian Presidency



Competitive Europe



Digital Europe



Engaged Europe



Priorities put in Context - I

IT-LV-LU Trio Programme

Overcome the economic
and financial crisis

Deliver more jobs and
seize digital
opportunities

Safeguard fundamental
rights and play a role in
a fast changing world

EU's Strategic Agenda

A Union of jobs,
growth and
competitiveness

Towards an Energy
Union with a forward-
looking climate policy

A Union that
empowers and
protects all citizens

The Union
as a strong
global actor

A Union of
freedom, security
and justice

Competitive
Europe

Digital Europe

Engaged
Europe

Jobs, growth
and investment

Internal market with a
strengthened industrial base

Economic and
Monetary Union

Energy Union with a
climate change policy

A connected digital
single market

Transatlantic Trade and
Investment Partnership

Europe as a stronger
global actor

Towards a new
policy on migration

An area of Justice and Fundamental
Rights based on mutual trust

A Union of
democratic change

Guidelines for the Commission

Priorities put in Context - II

- The inherited agenda – forecasting and planning (*i.e. average cycle for co-decision file is 1,5 year*)
- Specific guidance from the European Council (*so-called taskings through European Council conclusions*)
- Political priorities and calendar of the European Parliament
- The Commissions roll out of the Work Programme

Context for Bulgarian Presidency - I

- **Trio presidency** (UK – Estonia – Bulgaria) - *UK referendum in 2017!*
- **Presidency in the second half of 2018** (July – December) - *more limited time for meetings!*
- **European Parliament elections in summer of 2019** - *more keen to reach results but the ones they can sell!*
- **Outgoing Commission, High Representative and possibly President of the European Council** - *expectations for concrete results to solidify “heritage”!*



Context for Bulgarian Presidency - II

- **Different national elections** in EU Member States / important countries for the EU - *can change behaviour of certain Member States and/or international context!*
 - In 2017 French presidential elections and German parliamentary elections
 - In 2018 Presidential elections in Czech Republic, Cyprus, Finland, Georgia, Russia; Elections for the United States Senate
- **Multiannual and annual programming in relation to the Commission's Work Programme!**

Juncker's Commission: 2014-19



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**JEAN-CLAUDE
JUNCKER**

PRESIDENT



**FRANS
TIMMERMANS**

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

*Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations,
Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights*



**FEDERICA
MOGHERINI**

VICE-PRESIDENT
HIGH REPRESENTATIVE

of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy



**KRISTALINA
GEORGIEVA**

VICE-PRESIDENT
*Budget
and Human Resources*



**ANDRUS
ANSIP**

VICE-PRESIDENT
Digital Single Market



**MAROŠ
ŠEFCOVIČ**

VICE-PRESIDENT
Energy Union



**VALDIS
DOMBROVSKIS**

VICE-PRESIDENT
Euro and Social Dialogue



**JYRKI
KATAINEN**

VICE-PRESIDENT
*Jobs, Growth, Investment
and Competitiveness*



**GÜNTHER
OETTINGER**

Digital Economy and Society



**JOHANNES
HAHN**

*European Neighbourhood
Policy and Enlargement
Negotiations*



**CECILIA
MALMSTRÖM**

Trade



**NEVEN
MIMICA**

*International Cooperation
and Development*



**MIGUEL ARIAS
CAÑETE**

Climate Action and Energy



**KARMENU
VELLA**

*Environment, Maritime
Affairs and Fisheries*



**VYTENIS
ANDRIUKAITIS**

Health and Food Safety



**DIMITRIS
AVRAMOPOULOS**

*Migration, Home Affairs
and Citizenship*



**MARIANNE
THYSSEN**

*Employment, Social Affairs,
Skills and Labour Mobility*



**PIERRE
MOSCOVICI**

*Economic and Financial Affairs
Taxation and Customs*



**CHRISTOS
STYLIANIDES**

*Humanitarian Aid
and Crisis Management*



**PHIL
HOGAN**

*Agriculture
and Rural Development*



**JONATHAN
HILL**

*Financial Stability,
Financial Services
and Capital Markets Union*



**VIOLETA
BULC**

Transport



**ELŻBIETA
BIENKOWSKA**

*Internal Market, Industry,
Entrepreneurship and SMEs*



**VĚRA
JOUROVÁ**

*Justice, Consumers
and Gender Equality*



**TIBOR
NAVRACSIKS**

*Education, Culture, Youth
and Sport*



**CORINA
CREȚU**

Regional Policy



**MARGRETHE
VESTAGER**

Competition



**CARLOS
MOEDAS**

*Research, Science
and Innovation*



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	EPP	S&D	ECR	ALDE	GUE/NGL	Greens/EFA	EFDD	NI	Total
DE	34	27	8	4	8	13		2	96
FR	20	13		7	4	6	1	23	74
IT	17	31			3		17	5	73
UK		20	20	1	1	6	24	1	73
ES	17	14		8	11	4			54
PL	23	5	19					4	51
RO	15	16		1					32
NL	5	3	2	7	3	2		4	26
BE	4	4	4	6		2		1	21
CZ	7	4	2	4	3		1		21
EL	5	4	1		6			5	21
HU	12	4				2		3	21
PT	7	8		2	4				21
SE	4	6		3	1	4	2		20
AT	5	5		1		3		4	18
BG	7	4	2	4					17
DK	1	3	4	3	1	1			13
SK	6	4	2	1					13
FI	3	2	2	4	1	1			13
IE	4	1	1	1	4				11
HR	5	2	1	2		1			11
LT	2	2	1	3		1	2		11
LV	4	1	1			1	1		8
SI	5	1		1		1			8
EE	1	1		3		1			6
CY	2	2			2				6
LU	3	1		1		1			6
MT	3	3							6
	221	191	70	67	52	50	48	52	751
	EPP	S&D	ECR	ALDE	GUE/NGL	Greens/EFA	EFDD	NI	Total
	29.43%	25.43%	9.32%	8.92%	6.92%	6.66%	6.40%	6.92%	100%

Case study: «Digital Europe» priority - I

- **Why digital?**
 - 1) **Popular support to focus on Information Society, eGovernment and e-education and skills**
 - 2) **Demand/interest from EU institutions and Member States:**
 - **European Council «Strategic Agenda» and «tasking» to return to Digital Single Market related issues in June 2015**
 - **European Commission: political guidelines and Work Programme to launch Digital Single Market Strategy**
 - **European Parliament: «Mapping the Cost of Non-Europe (2014 - 19)»**
 - **Dozens of non-papers, letters from Member States**
 - 3) **Substantial legislative agenda: Telecommunications Single market (TSM) proposal; Network and Information Security Directive; Data protection package, etc.**

Case study: «Digital Europe» priority - II

- Political process: **Presidency's non-paper in relation to digital issues** (emphasis on activities before March European Council);
- Output: **European Semester synthesis report** (one of the main outcomes of the political process the Presidency organised before March European Council, where particular attention was paid to digital issues)
- Political process: **Presidency's non-paper in relation to the Digital Single Market (DSM) Strategy** (emphasis on activities with a view to June European Council);
- Output: **Presidency's summary letter to the President of the European Council on various discussions and contributions concerning DSM Strategy with a view to June European Council**

Managing relations with other Member States and EU institutions

- **Define a consistent style/image for the Presidency – how the role of the Presidency will be implemented within the Council and outside?**
- **Do your homework: analysis of interests, coalitions, agendas – where they converge and where they collide? How to use these dynamics to further the Presidency's goals?**
- **Use procedures to manage delegations, their expectations or defend the Presidency's planning.**

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Coming back to the aim of the presentation

Goal: To provide analysis of both objective and subjective factors affecting Presidency!

What did you learn from the Latvian Presidency?

- similarities to be exploited
- differences to be considered

What did you learn from my Brussels experience?

- to better identify your role for the preparations and during the Presidency
- lessons-learned from different inter-institutional relations



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Thank you for your attention!