



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Work programme of the incoming Presidency
- Information from the Austrian delegation

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Austrian delegation on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 25 June 2018.

Work programme of the incoming Presidency

- Information from the Austrian delegation -

Following its Presidencies in 1998 and 2006, Austria will begin its third Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 1 July 2018.

Approximately 300 events will take place in Austria over the course of the Presidency, ranging from informal ministerial meetings and technical conferences to expert meetings and cultural events. We look forward to welcoming some 48000 delegates to Austria during the six months of our Presidency!

The motto of the Austrian Presidency is: 'A Europe that protects'. The focus areas of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union will be security and migration, securing prosperity and competitiveness through digitalisation, and stability in the neighbourhood.

Environment

Active climate protection is a priority for the Austrian Presidency. Austria is therefore committed to contributing to the achievement of the international climate objectives as well as to promoting healthy mobility and transport systems with low CO₂ emissions. Furthermore, the Austrian Presidency will continue to work on the circular economy, with a particular focus on environmentally innovative initiatives, in line with the Trio Presidency Programme. The emphasis will be on safeguarding a healthy environment, increasing the efficient use of resources, supporting sustainable and environmentally friendly growth and introducing new measures for a pollutant-free environment.

Climate agreement

The Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (2015) can be considered as an environmental breakthrough. As part of the implementation phase, the Austrian Presidency will present Council conclusions on COP24 (Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) during the Environment Council in October. These will include key EU policy statements on individual negotiation topics at COP24, while putting the focus on the technical implementation of the Paris Agreement.

CO₂ emissions from road transport

In the area of mobility, we will try to reach an agreement on CO₂ fleet targets and standards for passenger cars and vans for 2025 and 2030. In addition, we will make efforts to achieve as much progress as possible on the proposal on CO₂ targets for heavy-duty vehicles (HDV). These two proposals on CO₂ emissions are central to the Austrian Presidency: they are considered to be an important EU contribution to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of the climate objectives.

Single-use plastic

In the field of the circular economy, we will focus on the legislative proposal on single-use plastic as a follow up to the recent EU-wide plastic strategy. In the past, Austria has been very active in the reduction of plastics, especially microplastics. An important concern of the Austrian Presidency in this regard is maintaining this reinforced commitment to fight plastic pollution in inland waters and oceans at European level. Moreover, a European withdrawal from the use of microplastics in various products is another key element in the successful implementation of the circular economy.

Biodiversity

The Austrian Presidency will present Council conclusions at the Environment Council in October concerning the direction of the future global biodiversity policy after 2020. The conclusions will also contain the EU mandate for the negotiations at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP14) and the Meeting of the Parties of the two Protocols to the Convention.

Recast of the POPs Regulation

Regarding the rather technical dossier on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), which sets out measures against particularly harmful and durable chemicals, the Austrian Presidency aims to finalise the recast of the Regulation. The recast provides for adjustments to the Treaty of Lisbon and to the definitions of EU chemicals and waste legislation, as well as an adaptation of the monitoring system.

LIFE Programme

Ahead of the negotiations on the Regulation on the LIFE Programme to promote environmental, climate and sustainable energy projects for the period 2021-2027, Austria aims to make rapid and efficient progress.

Alignment of reporting obligations in the field of environment policy

The proposal forms part of the activities on better regulation in the field of environment policy. Consistent approaches on environmental reporting and monitoring were part of the Fitness Check evaluation. The proposal also contributes to priority objective 4, paragraph 65, of the 7th Environment Action Programme, which requires that the public has access to clear environmental information at national level. It will also help the public to gain an overview of what is happening in the environmental field in Europe as a whole and will help national public authorities to handle cross-border issues.

Important dates:

9 October: Environment Council – Luxembourg

29-30 October: Informal meeting of Environment Ministers – Graz, Austria

20 December: Environment Council – Brussels

Selected major high-level international events:

9-18 July: HLPF (SDGs)

30 August-8 September: Intersessional UNFCCC

17-21 September: IAEA General Conference

18-30 September: Opening of the UN GA

1-5 October: CITES Standing Committee

21-29 October: COP13 Ramsar Convention

22-24 October: UNFCCC Pre-COP

5-9 November: Montreal Protocol MOP30

14-15 November: HLS CBD COP14

17-29 November: CBD COP14 with MOP9 Biosafety Protocol and MOP3 Nagoya Protocol

19-23 November: COP2 Minamata Convention

3-14 December: UNFCCC COP24

