

## ESTONIA'S PRIORITIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION DURING THE CZECH PRESIDENCY

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The Czech Presidency's main priority areas are Economy, Energy and European Union in the World. Estonia intends to actively participate in all of the above mentioned topics, but also in discussions which continue from previous presidencies. Estonia's focus during the Czech Presidency will be on the following issues:

1. Estonia's membership in the euro area as well as accelerated, simplified and clarified implementation of EU's structural funds are prerequisites for creation of favourable economic climate. **Estonia aims to fulfill conditions to adopt the single currency in 2010.** During the Czech presidency, Estonia expects to get a positive assessment on Estonia's renewed convergence program that reflects the government's policy in meeting the Maastricht convergence criteria and transition to the euro.
2. **Energy security** is of utmost importance to Europe and all other decisions should derive from this aspect. During the Czech Presidency energy security will be discussed within the framework of Strategic Energy Review, European Economic Recovery Plan and Baltic Interconnection Plan. We would like to see negotiations progress, and we hope to reach an agreement on the criteria on EU financing for energy infrastructure projects.
3. We look forward to the European Commission's communication on **the Baltic Sea strategy**, due in June 2009. Estonia supports the strategy that concentrates on development of the Internal Market both in the region and the EU, and promotes free movement of knowledge.
4. Estonia is looking forward to the development of common **IT-strategy** in the field of **Justice and Home affairs**. The strategy should take into account the importance of centralized governance and continuous development of the IT-systems and databases. It is also important that the new multi-annual programme for Justice and Home affairs includes concrete principles and targets for using new and modern IT-developments to strengthen the security of the Schengen area.
5. Estonia considers further development and strengthening of implementation measures of the European Neighbourhood Policy and especially **Eastern Partnership** of utmost importance to the EU. Eastern Partnership provides political framework to the cooperation with the partner countries and their closer integration to the EU. Eastern Partnership initiative can also be considered a balancing initiative to the Union for the Mediterranean.