

ESTONIA'S PRIORITIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION DURING THE SPANISH PRESIDENCY

The Spanish Presidency's main priorities are full and effective application of the Lisbon Treaty, to guarantee the economic recovery of Europe and approval of the new European strategy for sustainable growth for 2020, to reinforce the role of the European Union in the world, and promoting European citizens' rights and freedoms. Estonia intends to actively contribute to all of the abovementioned topics, but also to the discussions which continue from the previous presidencies. Estonia's focus during the Spanish Presidency will be on the following issues:

1. Estonia's main priority in 2010 is entry into Euro area. During the first half of the year, a positive evaluation is expected from the European Commission and the European Central Bank in regards to Estonia's readiness to adopt the Euro, also, the approval of a relevant recommendation by the ECOFIN and the European Council. Estonia continues work domestically to achieve technical readiness, as well as promote and explain Estonia's readiness to adopt the single currency internationally.
2. Estonia expects rapid progress in reaching an agreement regarding establishment of the Agency for operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice. Estonia has set up its candidature as the host country for the Agency. During the Spanish presidency Estonia will continue with preparations on national level and introduce and promote the country as possible host country of the Agency to other Member States.
3. Estonia considers that the „EU 2020“ strategy should focus on identical goals as the current Lisbon strategy, i.e. on growth and jobs, taking also into consideration the need to reduce the impact of economic activities on the environment. In order to ensure the effective delivery of the strategy, Estonia considers that the priorities of the new strategy should be duly taken into account in the elaboration of the next EU financial perspective. The "EU 2020" strategy should focus on the areas that have the greatest potential to improve EU's competitiveness. Main priority areas for Estonia are further development of the internal market, mobility and information society; R&D and innovation; education, creation of jobs, social cohesion; promotion of the eco-efficient economy.
4. Through introduction of the Baltic Sea Strategy, the countries of the micro-region have expressed their wish to increase the level of competitiveness of the whole region as well as the entire European Union. The Strategy has thus created additional means for tackling and overcoming the economic crisis. Estonia looks forward to a swift and smooth implementation of the strategy, also on the level of coordination of the outlined actions - Estonia is coordinating internal market issues.
5. Estonia's goal during Spanish Presidency is further development of the Eastern Partnership in accordance with goals specified in the Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit, and development of bilateral relations between the EU and the partner countries. Estonia considers a balanced development of the Southern and Eastern dimensions of the European Neighborhood Policy of utmost importance. Estonia will assist in signing Association and Free Trade Agreements between the EU and the partner countries. Estonia also supports activities that are aimed at fostering closer economic integration, promotion of visa-free travel issues and substantial cooperation in energy and transport issues.