
**ACTION PLAN FOR PREPARATIONS OF THE ESTONIAN
PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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INTRODUCTION

The objective of the action plan for preparations of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union is to determine the tasks and activities needed for the preparation specify their time frame and identify the responsible authorities. This action plan concentrates on the development of capabilities needed for systematic approach to the functioning of Presidency and contains preparation principles and specific deadlines. The action plan is a planning and guiding document for all parties involved and will be amended as necessary. The Government committee preparing the action plan is responsible for its implementation.

Several major political milestones which fall within the period of preparations of the Estonian Presidency, that should be taken into consideration during the planning. With European Parliament elections to be held in 2014, a new European Parliament and European Commission will assume office and the new work program of these two institutions will be drafted. Similarly, a new President of the European Council will assume office by the beginning of 2015, with a mandate for 2.5 years, thus the President may change before the trio Presidency that Estonia is part of takes over. Regular elections of the Riigikogu (Estonian parliament) will be held in March 2015. The government formed by this Parliament bears the main responsibility for the Presidency of Estonia and the development of its programme. All these events impact setting of the agenda of the Estonian Presidency.

1. GENERAL

1.1 Main tasks of the Presidency of the Council of the EU

All Member States preside the Council of the European Union (hereinafter *the Council*) based on an agreed schedule for six-month periods. The Estonian Presidency of the Council (hereinafter *the Presidency*) will take place during the first six months of 2018.

The main tasks of the Presidency are, through various levels of decision-making processes in the Council, to guide of the legislative process of the European Union (hereinafter the *EU*) and the development of institutional policy. The Presidency is the negotiator in ordinary legislative procedure with the European Parliament (hereinafter the *EP*) on behalf of the Council. Furthermore, the Presidency represents the Council within its competency in relations with other institutions of the EU, third countries and the public. Since the Lisbon Treaty entered into force, the European Council, where Estonia is represented by the Prime Minister, is the major strategic body guiding the Council on the selection of topics, political priorities, as well as negotiation speed.

The volume of legislation to be handled by the Presidency varies and depends on the initiatives of the European Commission (hereinafter the *EC*) as well as political priorities of

other institutions and Member States. The Presidency makes arrangements for guiding the negotiations, by preparing files for 500–700 drafts (incl. legal acts and political documents)¹, which are generally not divided equally between different policy areas. The ‘own’ political agenda of the Presidency is generally discussed during informal meetings of ministers, various conferences and seminars in the Member State holding the Presidency. By the end of the Presidency, approximately one third of negotiated drafts are formally adopted². With the increasing number of legal acts adopted in cooperation with the EU as co-legislator, more resources are required from the Presidency to reach agreement on these issues. The average time of a co-decision procedure from submission of draft to its adoption is 1-2 years. Therefore, when assessing the outcomes of the Presidency, progress to advance the negotiations on drafts during the Presidency is equally important as their official adoption.

In order to ensure consistency of substantive work of the Council, three consecutive presidencies draft an 18-month joint programme. Estonia belongs to a trio Presidency with the United Kingdom (2nd half of 2017) and Bulgaria (2nd half of 2018).

The task of the Presidency is to manage the work of the Council – to chair meetings, organise bilateral and/or multilateral meetings, offer and mediate compromises within the Council and with the EP, conclude agreements, and conduct preparatory work between these meetings to achieve agreements and consensus. Another task of the Presidency is to plan meetings of the Council, determine their frequency and to draft agenda, so that the current issues, essential tasks, priorities and interests of the Presidency are reflected.³ The Member State holding the Presidency is responsible for application of the rules of procedure of the Council and due organisation of discussions.

Management of the Council’s work takes place on three levels: 1) political – ministers, 2) permanent representatives preparing the work of the Council (including their deputies) and 3) experts – chairpersons of working parties. Ministers and permanent representatives are responsible for holding negotiations on the most complicated and politically sensitive issues and open questions. The Council has 10 compositions in which ministers meet, with approximately 30-50 meetings held over six months. Generally, each composition of the Council of Ministers also has one informal meeting in the presiding country, where more open and general political discussions are held.

¹ E.g. Poland prepared approximately 600 files, Cyprus 500 files and Lithuania 562 files for negotiations.

² The list of achievements of Denmark included 209 acts (those of the Council itself as well as co-decisions with the European Parliament).

³ Exceptions are Foreign Affairs Council and European Council, where the Presidency does not chair the meetings, but is still participating in drafting the agenda.

Table 1. Councils during the Presidency periods of 2012-II–2013-II

<i>Compositions (and fields) of the council</i>	<i>Meeting frequency and format (in Presidency period)</i>						<i>Estonian responsible (co-responsible) ministry</i>
	<i>Lithuania (2013 II)</i>		<i>Ireland (2013 I)</i>		<i>Cyprus (2012 II)</i>		
	<i>Official</i>	<i>Informal</i>	<i>Official</i>	<i>Informal</i>	<i>Informal</i>	<i>Informal</i>	
General Affairs Council (incl. enlargement, institutional issues, etc.)	5	1	5	1	5	1	MFA
Foreign Affairs Council	4	2	7	1	5	2	MFA (MD)
Economic and Financial Affairs Council	5	1	5	1	6	1	MoF
Justice and Home Affairs Council	2	1	2	1	2	1	MoJ, MoI
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council	2	2	2	2	2	2	MSA
Competitiveness Council (incl. internal market, industry and research)	2	1	2	1	2	1	MEAC (MER)
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council	3	2	3	1	3	1	MEAC
Agriculture and Fisheries Council	4	1	6	1	5	1	MoA (ME)
Environment Council	2	1	2	1	2	1	MoE
Education, Youth and Culture Council	1	0	2	0	1	1	MER, MC
<i>Total</i>	30	12	36	10	33	12	
	42		46		45		

Source: EU Secretariat of the Government Office

On the level of officials, the formats of Coreper⁴ II and Coreper I are chaired by the permanent representative and his deputy, and ~ 200 working parties or committees by experts⁵. 1600–2000 official meetings shall be chaired in various formats of the Council over six months. In addition, meetings of various informal formats and bilateral and multilateral negotiations are held. For example, the Presidency shall hold on average 130 official trilogue⁶ meetings with the EP, where the Presidency is represented by the relevant minister, the permanent representative or his deputy. To this, preparatory technical meetings of trilogues are added, where the Presidency is represented by the chairpersons of working parties of the Council. The estimated number of these meetings is 2–3 times higher than official trilogues (260–390, on average 325). Thus, up to 450 meetings of various levels may take place with the EP within six months.

⁴ The Permanent Representatives Committee Coreper is responsible for preparing the work of the Council and fulfilment of tasks set by the Council. Coreper is chaired, depending on the agenda, by the permanent representative of the Member State holding the Presidency (Coreper II) or his deputy (Coreper I).

⁵ The number varies, some operate on *ad hoc* basis and do not convene regularly.

⁶ Participants: European Parliament, European Commission and the Council.

Holding the Presidency also means organisational obligations to the national parliament (*Riigikogu*): meetings with the chairpersons of national parliaments, chairpersons and members of EU Affairs Committees, chairpersons of Foreign Affairs Committees and/or National Defence Committees.

1.2 Preparations for the Presidency

On 24 May 2012 the Estonian Government formed a committee for preparing the Presidency (hereinafter: *Presidency coordination committee*). The committee is chaired by the Secretary of State and the first meeting of the committee was held on 20 June 2012.

The early phase of preparations will last until the end of 2014, with the following objectives:

- To gather comprehensive information about the Presidency's role from EU institutions and countries that have recently held the Presidency or will hold it in the near future;
- To analyse and organise collected information, in order to consolidate essential best practices;
- To examine all obligations related to holding the Presidency (as currently known) and to monitor changes taking place, in order to amend the system of the Estonian Presidency;
- To compare the obligations face by Estonia with our current administrative capabilities and possibilities as well as to propose measures for the development of required capabilities;
- To elaborate a time schedule for preparations, taking into account all obligations rising from the role of the Presidency;
- To make decisions concerning the principles of running the Presidency;
- To involve and inform all related national stakeholders and related actors, allowing them to take the Presidency into account in their respective planning;
- To plan activities and budget, taking into account of the principles of preparation and running the Presidency; ensuring readiness to react in a professional and flexible manner to any changes or challenges that may arise before and during Estonian Presidency.

The action plan will be implemented in 2015–2018. The central budget will be drafted for 2015–2018 based on this action plan. When preparing events (including official and informal meetings hosted in the presiding country) and other related activities, preferred solutions will

be the ones which allow lowering the costs, increasing the developed or created capabilities and benefiting from systems already in use.

The central budget of the personnel policy includes cost of personnel development (testing of language skills, training, and practice), salaries of Presidency staff, monetary compensations, travel, recruitment and application costs of occupational health and safety measures. EU structural resources will be used to increase EU-related administrative capabilities. The central budget of the Presidency will also include costs related to creation of additional posts in Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU (PREU) and adaptation of PREU infrastructure, events organised by ministries in PREU or in the Secretariat of the Council. The cultural programme of the Presidency will be financed from the Presidency's and the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia (further *Estonia 100*) budgets.

Planning of the budget and development of distribution principles is the task of the coordination unit of the Presidency in the Government Office, payments will be partially decentralised.

1.3 Principles of holding the Presidency

Estonia aims to be a good pilot, whose goal is to guide and direct operation of the Council and legislative process of the EU as efficiently as possible, developing consensus and acting as an honest broker.

During the Presidency, Estonia plans to fulfil itself all major tasks related to the role of the Presidency and intends to be a professional and efficient Presidency with an open and transparent working style. The goals set for the Presidency must be sufficiently ambitious, while achievable and targeted to specific solutions.

The action plan is based on the objective that the administrative capability, which will have essentially increased during the preparation for and holding of the Presidency, could be applied later in the interests of Estonia. Therefore, the Presidency is an investment in the growth of knowledge, skills and capabilities of the Estonian civil service, increasing our capabilities to operate as Member State.

For coordination the Presidency, a model will be used where strategic planning of the Presidency and general management will take place within the framework of current existing national EU coordination system. Daily operational work, including conducting negotiations and finding compromises, will take place in PREU in Brussels.

Generally, no new coordination mechanisms or structures will be created for the Presidency, but maximum use will be made of the existing EU coordination system's work-process and practice as well as professional know-how of ministries. During the preparation period and holding of the Presidency, there is however a need to temporarily increase the staff and capabilities of the EU coordination system, including the EU Secretariat of the Government Office, ministries, PREU and, when necessary, other foreign missions of Estonia.

The Central coordination unit for preparing and running the Presidency is the Government Office, tasked with:

- General coordination, drafting of the action plan and budget, coordination and supervision;
- Development of programme and political priorities in cooperation with ministries;
- Coordination of recruitment and development of personnel;
- Organisation of informal Councils meetings and other high-level events;
- Coordination of cooperation between PREU, ministries and other government departments;
- Communication with EU institutions;
- Development and organisation of communication policy and visual identity;
- Preparation of the concept of logistics, coordination of its execution/implementation (role of the contracting authority) and supervision;
- Coordination of the cultural programme.

Tasks of the ministries are:

- Drafting and implementation of action plan of the Presidency in their policy area;
- Development of policies and their implementation;
- Partially, recruitment and development of personnel;
- Organising expert meetings in their policy area;
- Implementation of a communication plan in their policy area.

Furthermore, several ministries are involved in horizontal tasks related to the Presidency within their competency. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for security, The Ministry of Finance supports the Government Office in the development and implementation of the personnel policy of the Presidency and the procurement system. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the operation of PREU, contributes to the development and implementation of the cultural programme, consults other stakeholders in order to ensure required protocol level is followed, and coordinates protocol of high-level events. In addition to the Estonia 100 team of the Government Office, The Ministry of Culture has a major role in the development and implementation of the cultural programme.

1.4 Shaping policy goals and programme of the Presidency

Values

The presidency programme is a comprehensive plan which links European values and policies emphasized during the Presidency with current topics covered during the Presidency, goals set for policy areas and main measures for achieving them. For the presiding country, the Presidency is also a unique opportunity to profile itself more broadly at the international level and to guide and influence the European agenda.

The Presidency programme will be a single narrative which encompasses the entire policy programme and communication thereof. Based on shared values and the narrative specifies the main expectations of the presiding country, plans for the Presidency and approach to topics to be covered within the framework of shared values of the EU. The Presidency narrative is also supported by visual identity, souvenirs and the cultural programme.

Policies and topics

As a first time Presidency holder, it is important for Estonia to succeed as the Presidency: to fulfil its duty to be an honest broker and spend most of the energy on advancing common targets while presiding over one EU institution. The time during which the Presidency is taking place, i.e. in the first half of a year and in the beginning of the final phase of the political work program of institutions (2019 is the year of regular elections of the EP) will set certain limits and create opportunities for the selection of main topics. The Presidency will also be inevitably influenced by high level events, especially possible meetings of the European Council and other summits. The Council of Ministers classically has a major role in preparation or implementation of relevant decisions of these summits. The prior selected main topics of these summits will have an essential impact on the selection of policies discussed during the Presidency.

When grouping the policies important for Estonia, the major issues after our accession have been information society, internal market and competitiveness, environment, connection, employment and neighbourhood policy⁷.

⁷ In various periods, the main policies have been the following: Treaty Reform; neighbourhood, enlargement (and Western Balkan); EU-USA relations; competitiveness through various policies and expansion of internal market, incl. constantly the EU patent and service market; competitiveness and EU budget; simplification of EU budget / Cohesion Funds; European research space; energy / supply reliability and opening of markets, energy security and use of local sources; energy-climate package and international climate negotiations; EU-Russian strategic partnership; tax cooperation / harmonising income tax base, VAT package and tax fraud; participation in security and defence policy cooperation and EU security strategy; competitiveness of agriculture and direct aid; accession to Schengen and euro zone; reliability of the euro zone and the financial stability; security cooperation / access to legal systems and digital authentication; internal security: implementation of IT solutions and IT agency, frame programme of internal security, facilitation of need-based migration; Baltic Sea strategy; digital common market.

Basic principles for selections of priority topics for Estonian Presidency

- **Our possibilities:** when selecting the main topics for the Presidency, we must consider what is relevant and important for Europe at that moment. Our selection of topics must take into account and also shape, where possible, the work programmes of other institutions (European Council, European Commission, European Parliament) and also the trio-partners.
- **Our interests and needs:** when selecting the main policies or topics for the Presidency, we can emphasise policy areas or topics that are most suitable from the viewpoint of regional and national interests. Upon selection we must also take into account the feasibility, relevance and efficiency of handling these topics.
- **Our strengths:** own strengths should also be taken into account when selecting the main topics for the Presidency, alongside our possibilities and interests. Holding the Presidency will enable us to share our experiences and advance policy areas or topics at European level.

Possible main policy areas or topics will ideally meet all criteria, i.e., their handling is possible and relevant, it is in our interests, there are possible outcomes in the form of specific instruments as well as providing added value to the policy area at European level. Specific selection of further preferences and a more specific programme will be made by the government taking office in 2015.

Current policies

The work of institutions is consistent and mainly related to negotiations of drafts which, after the Lisbon Treaty, takes place mostly under ordinary legislative procedure also known as the co-decision procedure with the EP. Therefore, a major part of the work related to the Presidency is linked to a “legacy” containing drafts and other documents, received by the Presidency from its predecessor, the negotiations of which it will continue with the EP on behalf of the Council. The government taking office in 2015 will also decide on the position responsible for chairing negotiations with the EP.

To keep account of the active files and prepare for negotiations, the Presidency will implement the system of fact sheets (*fiche*), following the example of other presidencies. A fact sheet is a periodically updated working document which describes and specifies the main expectations for the development and results of a specific EU policy file. Fact sheets will be approved by the government before taking over of Presidency and they will be entered into the Draft Legislation Information System used for submission and coordination of Estonian positions and archiving of documents and reports related to the EU.

Management model

Preparations of the programme of the Presidency will be managed by the government taking office in 2015, who will draft Estonia’s new EU policy 2015–2019 (further *EUPOL*), approve working programme of the Presidency as well as fact sheets, and will be responsible for

running the Presidency. The new EUPOL and basic task for its drafting should also provide main guidelines for drafting the Presidency programme, topics and policies to be covered and the preparation programme of the Presidency.

The EU Affairs Coordination Committee formed with the regulation of the government, whose members are deputy secretary generals or policy managers of the Presidency, will be responsible for the substantive content of the policies of the Presidency.

2. PERSONNEL

Personnel strategy is a major part of preparations of the Presidency⁸.

Personnel-related preparations start early because relevant processes need time – designing of the recruitment process; actual recruitment and development of the Presidency team; budget planning; filling strategic positions; preparation, adoption and enactment of possible amendments of legal acts, etc.

The task of the personnel strategy is to contribute to the achievement of overall strategic Presidency objectives – to be a successful and efficient negotiator and broker – by the development of human resources in a way that enables the latter to provide maximum support to the achievement of substantial Presidency goals. Based on this, the personnel strategy describes personnel needs and its current situation; determines the principles of recruitment, the development of personnel and motivation, support and compensation measures; determines initial and general time schedule of activities and development plan of the Presidency personnel, and reflects also budgetary elements.

The implementation of the Presidency personnel strategy starts from civil service top executives who have a leading role in shaping the attitudes with regard to the EU Presidency as a whole. Experiences of former presidencies show that a successful Presidency requires personnel for whom participation in EU Presidency is a positive challenge and who are interested in contributing to the success of a major “project”. The task of the managers is to make the Presidency an attractive and challenging undertaking enabling competence building for their staff. Attention should also be paid to the employees dealing with non-presidency tasks, since their workload will increase as well.

The Secretary of State and secretary generals are responsible for the overall implementation of the personnel strategy. Taking into account of the horizontal character of the EU Presidency and personnel strategy, its implementation is coordinated by the Presidency coordination council. Other implementing parties of the strategy besides the coordination unit of the Presidency of the Government Office include all ministries within their area of government. **The main responsibility of mapping, recruiting and retaining a sufficient amount of competent and talented employees lies on head of personnel and training.**

⁸ See personnel strategy of the Presidency.

The personnel strategy covers the development trends and needs of public service specifically in the context of the EU Presidency, but in a longer perspective it is also related to the general development programmes of the public service personnel of Estonia and supports their implementation. Therefore, cooperation between the Presidency coordination unit of the Government Office, the Public Administration and Public Service Department of the Ministry of Finance and Top Civil Service Excellence Centre of the Government Office is essential.

As there are still four years remaining until the beginning of the Presidency and several circumstances may significantly change during this period, the personnel strategy will be revised in 2015 and adapted or amended, if necessary. As of 2015, the substantial goals, issues, tasks and needs of the Presidency will be more specific and clear.

2.1 Horizontal principles of the personnel strategy of the Presidency

Taking into account the broad scope of the EU Presidency, limited resources of the state, the goal to be a successful broker and an objective to benefit from the Presidency not only in 2018, but also in a longer perspective, the personnel strategy is based on several horizontal principles.

- **EU Presidency is socially significant – its preparation, substantial results and general success require common cross-sector cooperation on all levels.**
- **Available structures and people are used and developed for the Presidency to the maximum extent.** This covers optimum composition of the entire Presidency team, preference of civil servants in recruitment of Presidency personnel and their term-based transfer between institutions as well as later use of the Presidency experience for the development of integral and efficient governance.
- **Personnel strategy will be drafted and implemented in interdepartmental cooperation. Horizontal recruitment process and structure will be used to fulfil the leading roles of the Presidency and to ensure uniform quality of these people.** Participation of ministries in the preparations has a great significance – from one side, it increases responsibility, but from the other side it offers opportunity for a timely and active participation in the design of the Presidency and ensures higher motivation and ownership with common goals and results.
- **Availability of well prepared and motivated Presidency personnel and their successful operation requires centralised drafting of personnel development programmes and creation of motivation, support and compensation measures based on the intensity of work as well as on the level of responsibility. For this purpose, necessary activities will be planned and efficient and sufficient support structures will be created.**

2.2 Personnel needed for the performance of Presidency tasks and their competency

Preparation, organisation and conduct of the Presidency requires people with different qualification, knowledge and skills. The personnel needed for the Presidency can be divided into two major groups:

1. Policy personnel preparing the content of the Presidency and conducting it;
2. Auxiliary and technical personnel coordinating organisational side of the Presidency and its preparation, and supporting the Presidency and all of its events with practical and technical solutions.

Based on the amount of EU policies and working parties, experiences of former presidencies and the structure of the EU coordination system in Estonia, **the estimated size of Presidency personnel⁹ is 1300 persons, including 1000 policy and 300 auxiliary persons. Many of them are currently working as civil servants, but it will be necessary to recruit some additional staff or outsource services.**

Proceeding from the substantial roles of the Presidency, examples of former presidencies and experiences gained in the EU, an **Excellent Presidency competency model¹⁰ has been developed, which describes necessary skills, knowledge and personal qualities in terms of the roles of Presidency.**

2.3 Recruitment of Presidency personnel

As the responsibility for the Presidency is laid on the state as a whole, not on a single ministry or person, **the selection of candidates for chairpersons and deputy chairpersons of working parties will be carried out in cooperation between ministries and the Presidency coordination unit. Ministers will select chairpersons and deputy chairpersons in their area of government, who will then be formally appointed by the Government of the Republic¹¹. Policy managers who fulfil Presidency tasks *ex officio* (usually deputy secretary generals), will be appointed by the Government of the Republic** in order to ensure common approach and coverage of all EU areas and to build national and international awareness of the performers of Presidency leading roles and their responsibilities.

Auxiliary and technical personnel for centrally organised meetings and events will be provided by the Presidency coordination unit of the Government Office through recruitment, inter-agency fixed-term transfer or outsourced service. **Some ministries will recruit or**

⁹ See Appendix 1 – Division of Presidency personnel by roles of Presidency.

¹⁰ See Appendix 2 – Excellent Presidency Competency model.

¹¹ See Appendix 3 – Structures related to personnel strategy and distribution of work.

appoint Presidency personnel with horizontal function, based on their special responsibilities during the Presidency in the areas of protocol, internal security or cultural programme.

2.4 Personnel development

The objective of personnel development in the context of EU Presidency is good preparation of the people for successful performance of the Presidency and raising of qualification for work in public service in a longer perspective. Various development activities provide the main leverage for preparation of personnel for the Presidency.

Personnel development programmes will be drafted for self-education of the personnel related to the Presidency and development and improvement of skills, which will cover development and training activities of the personnel related to the Presidency, practices, study visits and strategic personnel transfers.

Personnel development is planned centrally and financed to a great extent from the Presidency budget.

More detailed development and training programmes will be drafted in 2014, in parallel to the planning of EU structural resources for 2014–2020. The state will organise trainings for the Presidency personnel for three years (2015–2017).

The main foreign language of the Presidency is English – it is necessary for chairing working party meetings, negotiating with participants, making written text proposals, etc. Proceeding from this, in the first half of 2015 the potential working party chairpersons and also other employees related to the Presidency, if necessary, will pass internationally approved language tests in order to determine their English skills. Depending on the test results, some employees will be sent to language courses. English language training will be partially financed and organised on central level.

French language training will be available for the officials who operate in work formations without translation, where French is used as working language, and as a motivation measure for the officials whose English skill is sufficient for the Presidency.

2.5 Support, motivation and compensation measures

In order to ensure availability and successful operation of well prepared and motivated Presidency personnel, support and compensation measures of Presidency personnel will be created, complying with the intensity of work and responsibility. These are:

- Development, acknowledgement and observance of common values and attitudes
- Development and training activities and traineeships for 2015—2017
- Financial compensations
- Recovery measures

- Recognition
- Career planning of employees

3. ORGANISATION OF MEETINGS AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

Besides fulfilment of the role of the Presidency of the Council in Brussels, a major task of Presidency is also organisation of events in Estonia. From one side, these are obligatory or traditional meetings related to the role of the Presidency, while from the other side, organisation of such events will provide to the Presidency an opportunity to introduce its country, culture and basic values. **Events organised in the home country of the Presidency are:**

- summits¹²;
- informal meetings of ministers;
- informal meetings of working parties;
- seminars, conferences;
- visits of representatives of the governments of the Member States and EU institutions.

The number of events to be organised and financed by Estonia as the Presidency (150–200 events, based on the experience of other presidencies) and number of guests (20 000–30 000 guests in six months, based on the experience of other presidencies) requires thorough planning and efficient organisation. For organisation of events related to Presidency and support to other government authorities, a **central coordination unit will be established at the EU Secretariat of the Government Office**. Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be responsible for organisation and logistics of the events of PREU and embassies.

The list of events to be organised in Estonia will be drafted in the first half of 2016 and specified later, taking account of the evolvement of work programme of the Council and political calendar of the EU.

3.1 Needs for meetings, requirements and possibilities

¹² Most EU summits do not take place in the presiding country, but as the need for organisation of a summit may arise in connection with political programmes or policies under discussion, the organisation unit must be ready to organise also an EU summit, if necessary.

In addition to successful organisation of a meeting, the guests will get an impression of Estonia as a host in a broader sense – from their arrival at the airport to accommodation and catering. Success of events depends undoubtedly on their content and message, but smooth organisation supporting values and messages of Presidency will make Estonia a reliable and friendly country for the guests. The events are divided into **four categories** to facilitate budgeting and planning:

- Official and informal working parties, conferences and seminars on expert level (level 1);
- Meetings, conferences and seminars of high-level experts (level 2);
- Informal meetings of ministers and conferences on the level of ministers or members of EP (level 3);
- Meetings of heads of governments and state, high-level international summits (level 4).

As for rooms of the events, a major criterion is their size, taking also account of detailed requirements to a translation booth set by the EC, the number of entrances, the location of a media centre, security requirements and logistical convenience (incl. access, parking, restrooms, catering, working spaces of delegations). The level of the events and number of participants creates the **need for different rooms**:

- large conference halls (at least 300 m²) and rooms with other purpose, which could be adapted for organisation of informal meetings on the level of ministers (at least 600 m²);
- representative dinner rooms for at least 100 persons¹³ (at least 200 m²);
- conference halls in theatre or plenary style, enabling to organise meetings of working parties (at least 100 m²);
- very large halls (at least 800 m²) enabling to organise summits or conferences.

Organisation of large number of events in Estonia in six months means taking account of the following circumstances:

- Estonia will hold the Presidency from January to the end of June and weather-related risks shall be taken into account when planning the calendar. Tourism season begins at the end of this period, increasing accommodation and transport rental costs.

¹³ The size of dinner rooms depends on the events. Up to 400 people may participate in a dinner of an unofficial meeting of ministers and there may be even bigger events. However, in the events with higher number of participants, dinner can be divided also between several organisation sites.

- Events shall be planned with limited resources/ efficiently?, however account shall be taken that any choice may cause other costs (e.g., transport costs to and from a cheap meeting site located far from the airport may exceed the saving from room costs).
- Stakeholders and NGOs may also plan meetings for the same time with major or thematic meetings, placing additional load to limited transport and space resources.
- Weather-related risks, geographic location of Estonia and availability of (direct) flights connection have impact on the selection of location of the events. Planning of events should be based on the principle that a delegate should not spend more than half a day to reach from their home country to the meeting site in Estonia.
- According to the initial data of the Government Office, there are no ideal locations in Estonia for organisation of all major meetings, but could be venues suitable for such meetings after some adaptations.

Organisation of any event includes many minor activities. To ensure uniform quality of events, standards shall be established for organisation of meetings on every level (incl. division of tasks), providing also the basis for procurements of services. A key factor for the collection of preliminary information needed for smooth organisation of events (e.g., special needs for catering and access, security requirements) is a **comprehensive and user-friendly accreditation system**. In addition to identification of persons (entrance cards) and registration of guests, the system could support all fields of organisation, including keeping account over delivered souvenirs, display the transport requests and free transport, etc. Upon drafting event budgets, it is reasonable to divide organisation of meetings into three parts: **reception (and departure), conference service and hosting**.

Reception and departure

Taking account of the distance between Estonia and major European cities and transport connections, most delegates will arrive at the events held in Estonia by plane, landing in Tallinn Airport. Basing on the level of the guests, they will meet the organisers in VIP room of the airport or reception gate of the Presidency. Reception and departure costs depend mainly on the number of arrivals and departures and travel kilometres. The main activities in timely delivery of people from the place of arrival to the conference or accommodation site are following:

- Reception at the airport

Tallinn Airport is quite well prepared for reception of higher number of high-level guests than usual and there are several possibilities for organising logistics. Permits granting access to the security area of the airport shall be obtained in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, Air Traffic Service and the company in charge of security check at the airport.

- Organisation of transport

Events of levels 3 and 4 require regular passenger cars, VIP passenger cars and buses. Transport can be outsourced as full service with a driver or only the vehicles separately. Organisation of transport includes also traffic management, maintenance of streets and convenience of use of public transport to the airport for the participants in the events of levels 1 and 2.

- Cooperation with cities and rural municipalities

Cooperation with local governments/municipal authorities is important mainly for coordination of event calendars and ensuring public services and amenities.

Conference service

A precondition for the success of meetings and other events of the Presidency is smooth organisation of the meeting site enabling the delegates to concentrate on discussions. Working premises of a meeting shall include rooms for meetings, coffee breaks and service activities, and have sufficient technical equipment for office work, communication etc., taking also account of work forms used in other EU Member States. To avoid organisational problems, it is important to prefer former experience of the meeting site in organisation of international conferences as well as mutual cooperation of service providers. The costs of conference service depend mainly on the level and extent of meetings and number of days. The main conference services supporting Presidency events are:

- Working premises of meetings

It is logistically more rational and more convenient for the guests to organise major meetings in Tallinn, which has the largest number of proper conference venues, hotel rooms and rapid transport connection with the airport. Events of levels 2–4 should be held in three venues as a maximum. Combination of meeting venues brings along division of capabilities between places, higher costs and the risk that systems, rooms or security may not function. As for locations of the meetings organised by ministries, it is not reasonable to set rigid limits, but to proceed from the rationale and purpose of the meeting.

- Translations

Services provided by Estonian translators as well as by the European Commissions Directorate General for Interpretation (SCIC) translators are used for organisation of translation. Translation regime at informal meetings of ministers is usually up to 6/6 (which means translation into six languages: French, German, English, Italian, Spanish and the official language of the presiding country). Broader regime is generally used at meetings of the ministers of justice, ministers of the interior and ministers of agriculture (23/6) and during regional summits. SCIC has set detailed requirements to the size and equipment of a translation booth, which shall be taken into account when selecting working premises for meetings.

- Catering

The programme of events of levels 3 and 4 includes a gala lunch or dinner for ministers. For the delegates of events of levels 3 and 4, it is a tradition to offer buffet catering during events of levels 1 and 2. In addition to lunch and dinner there will also be coffee tables during pauses at the events.

- Press centre

During informal meetings of ministers, the Presidency will ensure rooms and technical equipment for a press centre at the meeting site or nearby. In case of a medium meeting of level 3, account should be taken of the needs of approximately 100 journalists, but their number can be also up to 300-400, depending on the policies/topics under discussion. The requirements to a press centre of level 1 and 2 events depend on the policies under discussion. The communication unit is responsible for organisation of work of the press centre.

- Liaison officers of delegations

In the events of levels 3 and 4, the connecting link between the organisers and a delegation will be liaison officers (two per each country), who will escort and assist the guests during the entire programme (bilateral meetings, special requirements, access cards and organisational information). Upon recruitment and training of liaison officers as representatives of Estonia, attention shall be paid to their language skill, general knowledge and experience and organisation skill.

- Publications and logos

Publications including programme of the event and practical information but also publications introducing Estonia will be made for the participants of events of all levels. Additionally, the symbols of the Presidency as well as logotypes of sponsors will be displayed in the events held under the auspices of the Presidency.

- ICT support

When describing ICT services needed for the participants in a meeting, account shall be taken of the fact that ICT possibilities may essentially change in four years due to technological progress. We would also like to introduce the new ICT possibilities to support the image of a technology-loving country. Many private companies would also be able to provide technical support.

Hosting

In addition to the official work programme, each delegate will have also a certain amount of spare time in Estonia. Based on the leisure time, guests will decide if they want to return here as tourists, and recommend Estonia as a tourism destination also to their friends and colleagues, which would develop tourism sector and economy of Estonia also after the term of

Presidency. The hosting costs of events mainly depend on the number of guests and duration of stay. The major factors related to hosting are:

- Accommodation

During events of levels 3 and 4, the presiding country will cover accommodation of ministers, while accommodation costs of other delegates will be covered by delegations. In selecting the working premises and accommodation, account shall be taken of their mutual distance. Participants in the meetings shall have a convenient and quick option to travel between them.

- Souvenirs

Souvenir sets related to the Presidency of Estonia will be completed for the delegates according to their level, based on the creative competitions organised by the communication unit and the Estonia 100 organisation team.

- Cultural programme and spouses programme

Cultural programme for the delegates of the Presidency events is based on the programme of the Estonia 100 events held in Estonia, as much as possible. In case of events of levels 3 and 4, the ministers can come to meetings with their spouses, for whom a separate agenda will be drafted for the time of the work meetings.

- Availability of medical care

Operative medical care shall be available to the guests of the Presidency events in the conference centre as well as elsewhere. For this purpose, agreements will be concluded with health care providers.

3.2 Principles for organizing events and their implementation of meetings

Events of levels 3 and 4 will be organised with central management by the Government Office, in cooperation with the relevant ministry, the State Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior responsible for security of the Presidency. Events of levels 1 and 2 will be organised pursuant to standards usually by the ministries and/or their agencies. **The tasks of the central organisation unit of the Government Office are:**

- To coordinate horizontally all Presidency-related events held in Estonia, resource planning and the Presidency calendar;
- To ensure organisation of events of levels 3 and 4 in cooperation with the ministries responsible for the field, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior;

- To offer horizontal support services in order to support the events organised by other agencies/departments and achieve financial saving. Possible central support services are transport, liaison officers of delegations, security, accreditation software, translation, ICT solutions, conference services, gifts, protocol, catering, etc.;
- To draft standards for organisation of events, in order to simplify the work of government authorities, introduce values of the Presidency and ensure high level of organisation.

For the Presidency period, the coordination unit of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union Presidency will increase to approximately **30 persons** (the specific number will be clear after appointment of persons responsible for support services) and will be divided into an event coordination team and the horizontal support services team. **The event coordination team** will be responsible for setting standards for centrally organised events before and during the Presidency, planning and organisation, communication with partners, including embassies located in Tallinn and the Estonia 100 organisation team. **The horizontal support services team** will gather field information needed for organisation of events, prepare technical descriptions of procurements and will be responsible for ensuring standards and services in relevant fields, or will consult the organisers. Upon recruitment, the horizontal support services team will prefer former field-related experience in public as well as private sector, because high-quality and comprehensive technical descriptions of procurements will ensure smooth daily organisation and prevent later problems.

The abovementioned event levels are followed in protocol and security management. The State Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for **coordination of the protocol of events** of levels 3 and 4, and will also consult the organisers of events of expert level and organise training courses, if necessary. More specific principles of protocol management will be drafted by relevant working party. **Security of events** will be based on the security action plan for the Presidency drafted by the Ministry of the Interior and regular risk assessments, based on the level of meeting.

Planning of event calendar and resources

Planning of simultaneous major events on the same dates is limited by the number of accommodation places with sufficient quality and capability to ensure safety of the guests. **The organisation unit of the Government Office is responsible for the calendar of events held in Estonia, while PREU is responsible for the calendar of working parties in Brussels.** The first version of the general calendar will be completed in the II half of 2016 at the latest. It will be specified in I half of 2017, but calendar may also be amended any time during the Presidency period. **When planning the calendar of central events, account shall be taken of the following aspects:**

- Apart from weekends, national and European holidays, approximately 100 working days are available for events in the first half of 2018. Preparatory events of the

Presidency may also take place before 2018. Calendar shall be well coordinated to ensure that all meetings get attention and major events do not overlap.

- Time and season of events have impact on the budget. Former presidencies have used various calendar models – events can be distributed to six months (in the premises with suitable size and good access owned by the state) or concentrated to a couple of months.
- The calendar of Brussels events must be coordinated with institutions in Brussels (first and foremost, the General Secretariat of the Council) as well as the responsible ministries.
- On the web page of the Presidency, the event calendar shall be easy to update and use (including places of events and description of access) and compatible with other calendar applications.

Organisation of procurements

Similar formats of Presidency events allow to use more extensive framework procurements upon organisation of procurements, if possible and necessary. Procurement conditions shall be flexible and take account of possible changes in the calendar (especially procurements related to accommodation and working premises). **There are four options for organisation of Presidency-related procurements:**

- Procurements are organised by the coordinating authority;
- Procurements are organised by another public authority on the basis of authorisation;
- Procurements are organised within the framework of internal transaction (e.g. state-owned company);
- Procurements are purchased from private sector as service.

More specific principles of organisation of procurements will be developed by a working group, which members are the Ministry of Finance, the Government Office and ministries with experience in more extensive common procurements. **Procurements of centrally organised events and framework procurements are coordinated in the EU Secretariat of the Government Office.**

By 2018, Estonia has fully transferred to e-procurements. Information seminars will be organised to service providers in order to increase the number of participants in the procurements, and technical descriptions of procurement competitions (including idea competitions) will be published on the web page. According to the experience of other Member States, the presidency as a pan-European event will also interest sponsors. In planning of procurements, the **legal sponsorship options** will also be analysed within the

framework of Estonian legal acts. The common fields of sponsorship are transport, tourism, food industry and ICT solutions.

3.3 Adaptation of the building of Permanent Representation for the Presidency and supporting activities

88 people are currently working in the current premises of PREU, but by the term of the Presidency, number of employees will increase to **190–200 persons**. In addition to the personnel working permanently in Brussels, there will be major increase in the number of officials from Estonia sent to Brussels for a short time (some days), who will also need a mobile workplace in the representation or in the premises of the General Secretariat of the Council. Furthermore, the Presidency will bring more guests from the other Member States, third countries, EU institutions, international organisations, NGOs and private sector. The extension of PREU and intensive work schedule will put physical infrastructure of the representation to the test.

Riigi Kinnisvara AS has conducted a work space analysis for extension of the premises of PREU, adaptation of technical possibilities and working conditions, and found that the **Presidency can be held using the existing premises**. Based on this, the objective is to stay during the Presidency in the current building of PREU, which will save money compared to renting additional spaces, and will allow organising work and internal communication much better. It is possible to create 150 permanent workplaces and a necessary amount of mobile workplaces (up to 30) in the building, but room solutions and adaptation of the building and working conditions will require additional investments.

Specific solutions shall take into account needs proceeding from the role of the Presidency and nature of the work, as well as best practices of contemporary working environment. Excellent working environment corresponding to the needs and use of modern technology will support achievement of the goals of the Presidency. Functional reorganisation of rooms and more intensive use of the building that was taken into use ten years ago will require **maintenance repair, renovation of lifts and the heating system, and to some extent also adaptation of power and communication system**. The experience of former presidencies shows that the premises of permanent representation and the General Secretariat of the Council must also enable organisation of number of official events/receptions, therefore the courtyard area of the building will be partially closed in order to expand the reception area.

There are two rooms in PREU which have the equipment needed for video conferences, but the Presidency requires additional capabilities in both PREU and the coordination centre of the Presidency in the Government Office, and establishment of a temporary relevant capability in the premises of the General Secretariat of Council. Increasing number of employees will require improvement of the quality, infrastructure and capacity of internet connection in the premises of PREU.

In addition to the building of PREU it is also possible to use three working rooms in the General Secretariat of the Council used by the Estonian delegation and four official rooms assigned to the Presidency, in order to resolve possible room problems in Brussels. As for the rooms located in the building of the General Secretariat of the Council, the needs of the Council formation or Coreper taking place in the same day will have a priority.

PREU and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will draft a **detailed plan for bringing the building into compliance with the needs of the Presidency.**

Support activities in Brussels

Numerous meetings held in Brussels during the term of the Presidency will be a logistical task requiring excellent cooperation between all parties. PREU will coordinate the calendar of events held in Brussels during the Presidency together with relevant officials of PREU and EU institutions. Upon drafting the calendar, the priorities of the Presidency, the needs of the responsible ministries, and the time schedule of events in Estonia will be taken into account.

Taking account of sharp increase of PREU personnel and the number of ministers and delegations arriving more frequently from Tallinn before and during the Presidency, **number of administrative personnel will be temporarily increased according to the plan of representation staff approved by the coordination unit of the Estonian Presidency.** Local employees may be used to increase the administrative personnel, if it is necessary and economically feasible.

4. COMMUNICATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

A major condition for ensuring success of the Presidency is an efficiently organised communication to the public in Estonia and abroad. Presidency in the EU and celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia will provide an opportunity to introduce Estonia as a reliable and innovative Member State of the EU. Detailed communication strategy will be developed in 2016. It is essential that such planning fields of the Presidency as political planning, personnel, procurements, protocol and sponsorship would be interconnected and carry the same communicative objectives.

The communication goals of the Presidency are:

- To ensure a functional internal communication of the Presidency, supporting the Presidency team;
- To ensure operative and clear information to public on the developments in the EU policy areas;
- To create possibilities for conscious reflection of the organisation of work and on policies of the Presidency in the press of European countries;
- To increase interest of Estonian population in the matters of the EU;
- To increase awareness of Estonia as a reliable and innovative country in Europe and worldwide.

It is essential:

- To ensure availability of information of the preparations of the Presidency – procurements and competitions are open, preliminary information of coming procurements and competitions is available and everyone has equal possibilities for participation;
- To ensure possibility for stakeholders to participate in the preparations – several idea solutions will be found through open competitions and volunteers are involved in the organisation.

The Government Office in cooperation with PREU in Brussels will be responsible for the communication of the Presidency of Estonia.

Ministries bear responsibility for communication in their areas, thus the coordination centre will be formed by communication managers of ministries and other institutions, including cooperation participants from Enterprise Estonia and the Estonian Institute.

4.1 Target groups of communication

The main target groups of communication of the Presidency are:

- Estonian officials;
- Policy-makers in the EU Member States and institutions;
- Estonian and international media publications;
- Estonian foreign missions;
- Compatriots in EU institutions;
- Diplomatic missions of foreign countries in Estonia;
- Cooperation partners and officials interested in the progress of preparations.

4.2 Communication principles and the main messages

The strategy of the Estonian Presidency can be characterised by several keywords, such as 'pragmatic', 'competent' and 'reliable'. Communication principles are also proceeding from this objective – communication of the Presidency is:

- **cohesive** – all participants have common understanding of the goals of communication;
- **coordinated** and with clear division of roles – cooperation takes place between different communication units, information exchange principles are agreed;
- **planned** – communication is based on objectives;
- **flexible** – there is complete readiness for crisis communication;
- **target group based and sectoral** – every ministry is responsible for communication in their field of activity;
- **competent** – chairpersons of working parties, ambassadors and representatives of Estonia are trained and prepared in the field of communication;
- **involving** – the process of preparations of the Presidency is transparent, experts are consulted in case of creative idea solutions; volunteers are involved – all interested parties can contribute to the success of the Presidency and the anniversary year.

The basic messages of communication underline Estonia's belonging to the Nordic region, and its objective to promote digital environment and social involvement.

4.3 Means and channels

Press centre of the Presidency will be established in Tallinn with all contemporary and proper technical solutions enabling operative transmission of information in Estonia and abroad. Major press conferences will be held in Brussels in the building of the General Secretariat of the Council and these will be logistically supported by the its staff.

An increasing presence of Estonian journalists in Brussels is essential for observing the summits and meetings of ministers in that city. To increase the knowledge of Estonian journalists of the EU, relevant training sessions, study visits and information meetings will be organised for the journalists before the Presidency.

A virtual environment consolidating Presidency information based on the government web portal will be created in 2015. In the first stage, the objective of the homepage will be provision of organisational information of the preparations of the Presidency; during the Presidency it will be a central information channel for all target groups.

Communication during the Presidency will use social media for information and involvement, participating actively and deliberately in more popular channels monitored also by traditional media.

Conferences, visits and cultural events will be held for various target groups before and during the Presidency, organised by government authorities as well as other partners in Tallinn, Brussels and the Member States. Events related to the Presidency will be organised also by diplomatic missions in other Member States.

4.4 Visual identity and souvenirs

A joint design contest for finding visual identity and compatible logotypes for the Presidency of the EU and the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia will be organised in the beginning of 2016.

Visual identity will be used by the central web portal of the Presidency, information booklets about Estonia, advertising souvenirs etc. Souvenirs of the Estonian Presidency will be practical and innovative – idea solutions will be found in cooperation with designers and ordered together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Enterprise Estonia.

4.5 Introduction of Estonia and organisation of cultural events

The international programme of the Presidency of the EU is based on the Estonia 100 programme covering the entire year 2018, mainly focusing on its external dimension. The guests arriving within the framework of the Presidency can enjoy the Estonia 100 events in Estonia and the Estonia 100 international programme has been also drafted taking into account the needs of the Presidency. The year 2018 will improve possibilities to make Estonia more visible in Europe and worldwide. We plan initiatives which can focus the attention and in turn will get the necessary impulse to make the event somewhat different (not inevitably bigger), more comprehensive, more visible, more meaningful, etc. **The geography and volume** of the programme will depend on the content, possibilities and needs.

The core of international programme includes substantial ideas which may originate from different fields. In addition to the cultural field it is essential to also involve other areas which are positively related to the image of Estonia (e.g. e-capability, natural environment etc.). We want to show interconnected and fresh entities (interconnected entities with fresh breathing?). In order to create general concept, ideas will be collected and a vision will be defined and completed, achieving a narrative passing through the entire international programme, which is connected to the creation of the concept of the Estonia 100 programme. The framework of ideas will be completed in the second half of 2014. After that, attention will be concentrated on specific initiatives. In addition to events (including events in public space) it is essential to plan the involvement of foreign countries and experience culture, including the fields of tourism and food culture. The venues of cultural events will vary, but Brussels is in the centre of the Presidency.

Financing of the initiatives shall follow the principle that the resources from the budget of the Presidency of the EU or Estonia 100 would create added value. The objective is not to do more or more spectacularly, but more efficiently and to make maximum use of the chosen possibilities, because surpassing the general information and visibility threshold is a complicated task.