



The Estonian Presidency Programme for the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)

Common Foreign and Security Policy

The European Union can be strong and effective on the global stage only by acting together. Unity is needed to bring about positive developments in the changing security environment; to promote a value-based foreign policy that focuses on both our own interests and those of our partner countries; to reinforce a global order based on international law; to promote respect for human rights; and to contribute to peace and stability in Europe's neighbourhood and beyond.

In the area of external policy, the Estonian Presidency supports the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who chairs the Foreign Affairs Council, in all its manifestations except Trade.

In its activities, Estonia supports the implementation of the **Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy**. Estonia supports a comprehensive approach that is based on a coherence of internal and external policies and a clear interface between different policy areas. It is important to strengthen the resilience of states and societies to internal and external threats, including cyber threats, and to emphasise the role of strategic communication in raising awareness of such threats. Strategic communication is also essential in explaining the EU's objectives in partner countries and to make our actions more transparent and comprehensible. Estonia attaches great importance to the implementation of the EU's sanctions policy in cooperation with our partners.

Close cooperation with partners that share the same values is crucial in ensuring the success of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. Regarding **transatlantic relations**, Estonia attaches great importance to continuing close relations with the United States and Canada and cooperation in all sectors.

Estonia promotes the objectives of the **European Neighbourhood Policy**, including restoring peace and stability in the EU's southern neighbourhood and the continued importance of the eastern neighbourhood. We strive to enhance cooperation and dialogue with our partners in accordance with their own ambitions and readiness and by taking into account our common interests. We endeavour to ensure a tangible impact on the lives of the people of our partner countries.

Under the **Eastern Partnership**, Estonia will pay particular attention to sustainable public sector reforms of the partner countries, the development of transport and energy connections, digital society, entrepreneurship and civil society as well as people-to-people contacts. Estonia fully supports the further political association and economic integration of Georgia, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova with the EU and the implementation of association agreements. Estonia sees opportunities for further developing relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus. Estonia emphasises the importance of EU's continued focus on conflict resolution in the Eastern neighbourhood. The objectives of the **Eastern Partnership summit**, that will take place in Brussels during the Estonian Presidency, are to reconfirm the EU's continued support for our Eastern Partners, to highlight the results of the cooperation thus far and to outline the way ahead.





Estonia considers it important to promote dialogue and cooperation with the **EU's southern neighbourhood**. In order to address our common security-related challenges – the resolution and prevention of conflicts, the fight against terrorism and radicalisation, illegal migration – communication and practical cooperation need to be improved. It is important to continue the implementation of bilateral and regional programmes in order to ensure the stability and sustainable development of the EU's southern neighbours and to promote democracy, the rule of law and the improvement of socio-economic development in these countries. Estonia seeks to cooperate in the development of digital solutions that support the overall development of society and facilitate the inclusion of young people.

Regarding relations with **African countries** and within the context of the renewed EU-Africa Partnership, Estonia considers it important to promote strategic cooperation aimed at resolving the socio-economic challenges faced by Africa. It is essential to continue to actively improve the security situation on the African continent, which includes organising military and civil missions and contributing to peacekeeping operations. Estonia considers it important to continue, in cooperation with the main countries of origin and destination for migration, the implementation of the partnership framework between the EU and third countries and to contribute to the launch of the European External Investment Plan. During the **5th EU-Africa Summit**, scheduled to take place in Abidjan, Estonia will focus on promoting intercontinental cooperation on young people (including education and the creation of jobs) as well as on eGovernment.

The European Union – Latin America and Caribbean countries Summit, scheduled to take place in San Salvador, is expected to strengthen relations between the regions and to review the joint action plan. Estonia intends to highlight the topics of information society, eGovernment and cyber security during the summit.

Continued cooperation with **Turkey and the Western Balkans** in addressing the issues of migration, terrorism and organised crime and in promoting energy security, economic growth and trade is important, as these sectors are closely linked to EU's security and safety.

Common Security and Defence Policy

The current global security situation is a major strategic challenge for the EU. Besides the conflicts that have flared up to Europe's east and south, our security is threatened by extremism and terrorism, cyber and hybrid threats, illegal migration and human trafficking as well as cross-border organised crime.

Estonia shall promote the strengthening of the three pillars of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy:

1. the implementation of the security and defence elements of the **EU Global Strategy** under the leadership of the High Representative;
2. **EU-NATO cooperation** that was given a fresh impetus by the Joint Declaration;
3. the implementation of the Commission's European Defence Action Plan (EDAP).

The military capability of the EU depends on the willingness of the Member States and other actors to commit resources to defence and to use these resources as effectively as possible. The Estonian





Presidency will highlight the importance of defence spending and seek to promote discussions on the implementation of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and a European Defence Fund (EDF). Estonia supports the Commission's initiatives, in particular in the field of defence research and development and in strengthening the European defence industrial base in order to create better opportunities for involving and funding the small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the sector. In line with the conclusions of the European Council of 2016, we plan to review the Athena mechanism for the financing of common costs relating to EU's military operations by the end of 2017; the Athena mechanism is an opportunity to improve the usability of the EU's Battlegroups set up as an EU's rapid response capability. In cooperation with the European External Action Service and the European Defence Agency, we will organise a ministerial level political-strategic cyber exercise to walk through the EU's crisis management decision-making processes through the prism of cyber security. The Estonian Presidency wishes to promote closer cooperation between the EU and NATO.

Estonia will promote a review of the EU civil crisis management tools and objectives and adding, as appropriate, new sectors on the list if they provide clear added value.

Development [Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid]

The Estonian Presidency will continue monitoring the implementation of the **Agenda 2030** in the EU's development cooperation policy. **Digital solutions and technologies** are among the targets and means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Estonian Presidency will promote horizontally and more systematically the role of digitalisation as an enabler for development in the EU's development policy. Building on previous work, we will promote the use of digital solutions and technologies and their potential in supporting economic growth and job creation, enhancing the access to and availability of public services for citizens and contributing to more transparent, efficient and inclusive governance.

The formal negotiations on the **future framework for cooperation between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries** are expected to start in the second half of 2018 at the latest, as the current Cotonou Agreement expires in 2020. The Estonian Presidency will strive toward a common vision on the nature of the future form of cooperation with the ACP countries in the Council that would enable a start to timely negotiations.

The Estonian Presidency will focus on strengthening the **resilience of societies and states** to crises from the development perspective, including improving the cohesion of security and development cooperation activities. The need for better coordination between humanitarian aid and development cooperation will be highlighted in this context with special attention on protracted crises. The resilience of states and societies and the **root causes of forced migration** are interconnected. We will aim to enhance the complementarity and coherence of different financial instruments when addressing the root causes of migration to ensure an effective response to the ongoing refugee crisis.

The Estonian Presidency will support a principled and effective collective response by the EU and its Member States to man-made humanitarian crises and natural disasters with special attention to protracted displacement. In the World Humanitarian Summit follow-up process we will focus on aid





effectiveness and innovative solutions in humanitarian aid.

Trade

An open economic environment is very important for Estonia. It is of the utmost importance for the Estonian Presidency that the **European Union continues to be at the forefront of promoting a rule-based liberal trading system**. Despite the rise of protectionist sentiment, **the Presidency will aim to step up EU's efforts to liberalise trade and investment**. Free trade benefits entrepreneurs, contributes to economic growth and helps to create jobs. Meanwhile, special attention will be given to the implementation of a more responsible trade policy, which could boost EU's economic growth and support globalisation in accordance with our values and standards.

The multilateral dimension of international trade will be a key priority on our agenda. The Estonian Presidency will be committed to the preparations for the **WTO Ministerial Conference (MC11)** scheduled for December 2017. In particular, the Presidency will endeavour to agree on a constructive Council position and support the Commission in its efforts to advance the EU's common goals at MC11. **With regard to plurilateral negotiations**, the Estonian Presidency will seek to continue **the negotiations on the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) and the Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA)**.

The Estonian Presidency will also continue to engage in a number of ongoing **bilateral negotiations**. Given the advanced stage in talks with **Japan**, the aim will be to facilitate discussions in the Council with a view to concluding the negotiations. During its Presidency, Estonia will seek to make as much progress as possible in negotiations with **Mercosur and Mexico** and continue negotiations with **Tunisia** and **ASEAN** countries amongst others. The adoption of negotiating directives for free trade agreements with **Australia, New Zealand and Chile will be one of the objectives of the Estonian Presidency**. Depending on the progress, we are ready to work on the mandate for negotiations on the modernisation of the EU-Turkey **Customs Union**. The Presidency will strive for Council's authorisation to sign and provisionally apply the **EU-Singapore and EU-Vietnam free trade agreements**. In light of the European Court of Justice decision concerning competencies in trade agreements, we will carry out discussions on the way forward in EU's trade negotiations. The EU stance to have an ambitious, balanced and high-standard trade agreement **with the US** remains unchanged. The second half of 2017 will bring greater clarity on the approach to trade policy by the new US administration.

The Estonian Presidency will focus on steering the discussions on the main parameters of a **Multilateral Investment Court** towards an agreement by the Council. The Presidency will also work to progress the **EU-Myanmar Investment Protection Agreement and the EU-China Investment Agreement**.

Under the legislative priorities, the Estonian Presidency will put emphasis on continuing the work on **Trade Defence Instruments proposals**, especially on **the new anti-dumping methodology** in the WTO context. We will also advance discussions on **Dual-Use Items** draft legislation.

