



Recommendations from members of the TEPSA network to the Italian Presidency

The Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) has the tradition to formulate recommendations to the incoming Council Presidency. These recommendations have been prepared by the following members of the TEPSA network: **Iain Begg** (TEPSA Board, LSE London), **Gunilla Herolf** (TEPSA Board, Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences Stockholm), **Jörg Monar** (College of Europe Bruges) and **Fabrizio Tassinari** (DIIS Copenhagen). They do not necessarily represent the view of TEPSA or its partner institutes.

Fabrizio Tassinari will present the recommendations to the incoming Italian Presidency at the occasion of "TEPSA's Pre-Presidency Conference: Priorities and Challenges of the Italian Presidency 2014" on 24th and 25th of June 2014 in Rome. The conference is organised on behalf of TEPSA by TEPSA's Italian member, the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), in cooperation with TEPSA and the THESEUS project, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission Representation in Italy, Centro Studi sul Federalismo and in strategic partnership with Compagnia di San Paolo. **March 2014**

Council of Foreign Affairs

The suffering of the Syrian people has to end. We encourage the Italian presidency to do its utmost to work towards a common EU standpoint on the conflict in Syria, with a view to ending the fighting and finding a lasting solution based on democratic rule. Simultaneously, a common asylum policy must be established in order to alleviate acute need and to have a fair distribution of burdens among EU members.

The crisis in Ukraine is already challenging some of the core assumptions guiding EU policy in the region. Drawing lessons from it, the Italian presidency should seize the initiative to strengthen the European Neighbourhood Policy and to raise its political profile, notably by building bridges to civil society. Attention also needs to be paid to the wider regional ramifications of the developments in Ukraine. The EU should show its support for the governments of Georgia and Moldova, both of which are due to sign their respective Association Agreements with the EU early in the Italian Presidency.

Events in both Ukraine and Syria have highlighted the unsatisfactory and deteriorating relationship between the EU and Russia. Recent developments have demonstrated that Russia is not engaged in the construction of a rule-based, wider European and international order. The Italian presidency should push for a comprehensive review of the EU-Russia strategic partnership. It should seek to convince Member States of the importance of three 'Cs': a consistent, coherent and common approach to a vital though sometimes threatening strategic partner, even if it means that some national interests might, on occasion, be negatively affected in the short-term.

Council of Economic and Financial Affairs

The Europe 2020 strategy is expected to be relaunched by the new Commission following a consultation exercise by the Commission. To enhance national commitment to the strategy, we recommend that two or three headline targets be identified for each Member State,

complementing the common headline targets. These should focus on the principal obstacles to growth in each country and should be given a high profile with the aim of mobilising support at national level for crucial economic reform policies. In addition, we recommend a new strategic guideline calling on governments to accelerate the pace of administrative reform and to remove public-sector obstacles to increased economic efficiency.

Significant progress towards banking union has been achieved with the agreements on a single supervisory mechanism and a single resolution mechanism. Despite this progress, the hard fact is that the underlying aims of breaking the 'doom-loop' between banks and sovereigns, assuring financial stability, and of restoring 'normal' lending have not been realised. In anticipation of the results of the ECB's asset quality review and the attendant risks of renewed market pressures on sovereign borrowers, the Italian Presidency should seek to clarify how and when the European Stability Mechanism can be used as a fiscal backstop for bank resolution. It should also re-open proposals for common deposit insurance, without which banking union will remain incomplete and unsatisfactory.

Council of Justice and Home Affairs

The shortcomings of EU migration policy are well-known, but could be alleviated in two ways.

- First, although most EU Member States already have schemes in place to allow third-country nationals to immigrate if they have a job offer, the Italian Presidency should work towards a harmonisation of the rather diverse and complex national conditions of admissions for work purposes. This would reduce disincentives to seek work within the EU for the higher skilled third-country nationals needed in many sectors, while not excluding a persisting control of national authorities over admission applications. Such a harmonisation of admission conditions should be complemented by easing the restrictions on intra-EU mobility for legally admitted third-country nationals.
- Second, persisting asymmetries in the pressures of illegal immigration on Member States continue to generate capacity problems in some Member States and tensions within the Schengen system. Too often, there is an unacceptable human cost, as was seen in the Lampedusa tragedy. The Italian Presidency should make the further development of solidarity instruments and mechanisms one of its foremost priorities, making the most of the new 2014-2020 Asylum and Immigration Fund, and by using the full coordination and deployment potential of Frontex.

Corruption costs the European economy around 120 billion euros per year, according to a recent report from the European Commission. It undermines citizens' confidence in democratic institutions and the rule of law, and deprives states of much-needed tax revenue. We urge the Italian presidency to launch new initiatives at EU level to combat corruption through improved sharing of information, better enforcement and more robust prosecution of corrupt officials.

