



Recommendations from members of the TEPSA network

Priorities and Challenges of the Greek Presidency

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1. Completing the Economic and Monetary Union

During the Greek Presidency proposals that were made under the heading of a '*genuine economic and monetary union*' have to be clarified and developed for an additional fiscal capacity. It will be important to establish whether this can fulfil a macroeconomic stabilisation role, how it will be funded and what rules and conditions will be imposed on Member States drawing on the proposed funds.

2. Growth and jobs

After four years of the outbreak of the crisis of the Eurozone it is imperative to seriously address the "growth-jobs-cohesion" package on the EU level. Although the original goals of the EU-2020 program concerning higher growth and job creation can hardly be achieved in the given period, the Greek Presidency has a responsibility to develop a strategic approach to this issue. In this context it is important to emphasize, that measures to promote growth and jobs, should be developed as much as possible on the level of EU 28 and not be restricted to participants of the third phase of the EMU. Instruments and frameworks such as the Europe 2020 agenda should be used as far as possible. An appropriate level of social cohesion is not only an important factor of keeping the solid basis of European democratic structures but, not less importantly, a pillar of longer-term competitiveness of European economy like.

3. Youth employment

Considering that the current level of unemployment is economically, politically and socially unsustainable particularly in South European countries, the Presidency should work together with member states on mobilizing all available instruments for youth employment, based on the Youth Employment Initiative which should become fully operational and on implementing Youth Guarantee schemes.

4. Maritime issues

Recent years have seen a transformation of the global maritime environment, driven by the diffusion of maritime power, the "territorialisation" of the seas, changes in maritime geography, race to extract maritime resources and increasing ecological distress. The EU needs to develop a proactive global maritime strategy. The Greek Presidency should strive to create synergies between the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy, its various sea-basin strategies, as well as aspects of the CSDP.

5. Migration

Illegal border crossings and the presence of large numbers of undocumented third countries' nationals in Southern Europe (in particular in Greece, Italy and Spain) poses serious problem for the EU as a whole. As a country at the forefront of illegal migration in the EU, this problem should appear high on the agenda of the Greek Presidency. The focus should be on raising awareness throughout the EU of the gravity of the problems countries in the South face, sensitizing citizens of the situation of migrants and developing measures aiming to a fairer burden sharing among EU member states. In parallel more work has to be done with regard to the development of a proper common legal migration policy.

6. European Defence

The future of European Defence should remain high on the agenda of EU institutions. It is not sufficient to consider the result of the December 2013 European Council as only step towards a more coherent Common Defence Policy. The Greek Presidency will have the difficult task to demonstrate that the way towards a more credible Political Union has to go together with the creation of an effective Euro Defence Zone. For that purpose it is not sufficient to pool and share military production and instruments: it is necessary to revive the principle of Permanent Structured Cooperation, the forgotten mechanism provided by The Lisbon Treaty.

7. Enlargement

The Presidency should continue supporting the EU enlargement on the Western Balkans which was marked by the remarkable step forward made at the Thessaloniki Summit (2003). It is up to the Greek Presidency to keep the Thessaloniki spirit alive and to reinvigorate the political value of enlargement. The countries of the Western Balkan region should strengthen their efforts to achieve individual progress in implementing reforms. On the other hand there is also a need to continue developing additional mechanisms from the EU side, tailored to the specific needs respectively to speed up the progress.

8. European elections

The Greek EU Presidency in the first half of 2014 coincides with the major debate on the future of Europe and with the European Parliamentary elections, to be held between 22 and 25 May 2014. It thus is a crucial period for the strengthening of the support of the citizen for the European integration process. Together with other European and national authorities the Greek Presidency should stimulate the public debate about these issues.

