Policy Program

LITHUANIA'S PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN 2027

January 1–June 30, 2027

Lithuania will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from January 1 to June 30, 2027—a period during which the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the EU or the Union) faces unprecedented geopolitical, geoeconomic, and democratic challenges. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, now in its fifth year, calls for a completely new level of European security and resilience architecture.

Europe has weathered many crises in the past, but emerged from them transformed, expanded, and strengthened. Positive change requires unity and the resolve to act; therefore, the motto of Lithuania's Presidency is "A Union That Acts and Stands United."

Europe must have confidence in itself and nurture its fundamental strengths: unity based on shared values, a strong economy, cohesion, stable democracy, and a socially just society. This will enable Europe to protect its interests and contribute to maintaining a world order based on international law.

Lithuania, as a fair-minded mediator, will seek to strengthen the Union and encourage it to take greater responsibility for its own security, further increase economic competitiveness, and ensure that the green and digital transitions contribute to the creation of a safer, more competitive, and socially responsible Europe.

The European Union's multiannual financial framework for 2028–2034 must meet the needs of the times and enable the Union to effectively address emerging challenges.

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OUR PRIORITIES

1. A Secure and Resilient Europe

Europe must enhance Member States' readiness for deterrence and collective NATO defense. This objective requires an increase in defense spending across all European Union countries, rapidly filling critical military capability gaps and strengthening resilience against hybrid threats. A strong transatlantic relationship must be ensured through closer cooperation with the United States and by strengthening ties with like-minded partners. Solidarity with EU member states on the external border, which bear a disproportionate burden in securing the EU's entire eastern border, must be reflected in the EU's political priorities and practical measures.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine must be regarded as an attack on all of Europe; therefore, support for Ukraine is a priority of the Lithuanian Presidency. The European Union must fully support Ukraine as it fights for freedom, independence, and territorial integrity. Political, economic, military, financial, and humanitarian support and cooperation are consistent with the goal of achieving a just and lasting peace in Ukraine and throughout Europe.

The war in Ukraine has highlighted the need to urgently develop the European defense industry and the production of weapons and ammunition. Cooperation with Ukraine in this area is likely to yield mutually beneficial results.

The EU must strengthen its resilience by ensuring military mobility, protecting critical infrastructure and supply chains, avoiding risky dependencies, and strengthening economic, technological, and information security. The priority is to completely phase out Russian energy sources.

Lithuania, as the presiding country, will strengthen the Union's role as a geopolitical actor and support the EU's consistent efforts to strengthen a rules-based international order, implement the rules and principles of the United Nations Charter, and ensure the protection of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. Lithuania will support development cooperation and humanitarian aid aimed at strengthening the resilience of the EU and its global partners.

2. European Union Enlargement

The EU's priority is security, stability, and the well-being of neighboring countries. Given the current geopolitical situation, EU enlargement is a geostrategic necessity. We must pursue this ambitious goal, as an enlarged EU will be safer and stronger both geopolitically and economically. Lithuania, as the presiding country, will seek maximum progress regarding the accession of Ukraine, as well as Moldova and the countries of the Western Balkans, to the EU. The integration of candidate countries into the EU would contribute to accelerating political and economic reforms in these countries and to the stability of their situation.

Lithuania, in accordance with the Copenhagen Criteria, the principle of individual merit, and established methodology, will seek to advance negotiations on the accession of all candidate countries to the EU, while focusing primarily on the four leading countries—Ukraine, Moldova, Montenegro, and Albania. As the presiding country, Lithuania will support a fair approach toward candidate countries and countries seeking to become candidates in the future, and will ensure a reliable, predictable, and effective process in which the progress of these countries is properly assessed in such key areas as the rule of law, democratic governance, and the common foreign and security policy. The Lithuanian Presidency will strongly support the rapid integration of Ukraine and Moldova, as well as the countries of the Western Balkans, and the EU enlargement process, linked to the modernization and internal structural reforms of each candidate country. It will also support initiatives for gradual integration that accelerate preparations for full membership.

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3. An Economically Strong and Innovative Europe

Increasing global competition is forcing the European Union to take action to maintain its competitiveness. This requires better business conditions and access to finance, as well as the conditions necessary to foster innovation, invest in new technologies, industrial transformation, skills development, and new jobs. All of this will ensure Europe's technological leadership, including in the fields of space, semiconductors, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, photonics, and the life sciences.

To ensure long-term competitiveness, it is necessary to reduce the administrative burden and strive for clearer and more precise regulation. The Lithuanian Presidency will focus on efforts to simplify and improve regulation across all configurations of the Council of the European Union.

The green and digital transitions must be linked to competitiveness policy, and the European Union's multiannual budget must create the conditions for the EU economy's competitiveness to grow.

To ensure Europe's competitiveness, it is essential to increase the supply of affordable clean energy. This will require not only expanding the production of clean electricity but also substantially strengthening energy infrastructure.

The Lithuanian Presidency will contribute to strengthening the single market, promoting innovation, and supporting efforts to establish a Savings and Investment Union, which will increase the supply of capital and mobilize private investment.

Trade policy must remain open, while strengthening economic security, ensuring fair competition, and diversifying supply chains. The Lithuanian Presidency will support the expansion of free trade agreements with strategic partners and the strengthening of EU trade policy measures designed to protect EU industry from unfair competition and market distortions.

4. Internal Security and Democratic Resilience

Europe needs to protect its borders and curb illegal immigration; therefore, the Lithuanian Presidency will set the goal of reducing the scale of illegal immigration—it will support the full implementation of the EU Migration and Asylum Pact and more effective policies on border protection and the return of illegal migrants. A key area is combating the instrumentalization of migration, which poses additional security challenges.

During its Presidency, Lithuania will promote closer cooperation among European law enforcement agencies and the strengthening of their mandates in the fight against organized crime, with the aim of dismantling networks involved in the illegal trafficking of people, drugs, and other contraband, and to prevent cross-border crime, including cybercrime.

Deeper citizen engagement in democratic processes, civic-mindedness, and a free and independent media are crucial for strengthening the resilience of democracy. The Lithuanian Presidency will take decisive action to combat disinformation, hate speech, foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), and the falsification of historical facts.

5. A Socially Responsible and Healthy Europe

During its Presidency, Lithuania will strive to ensure that the European Union's social agenda aligns with the goal of building an inclusive society based on gender equality and social justice, and to address demographic challenges and challenges to societal resilience.

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Lithuania, as the presiding country, will work to ensure that high-quality jobs are created in Europe, that decent working conditions are guaranteed, and that a safe and healthy work environment is maintained.

Housing is a fundamental human right, and therefore Europe must work together to address housing issues.

In the field of health, Lithuania will focus primarily on improving the biotechnology ecosystem in Europe and will seek to strengthen the EU's position as a global leader in biotechnology and clinical research.

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GENERAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL

During Lithuania's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Europe's ability to act in a united and strategic manner will remain of paramount importance. The rapidly changing security environment, Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, and growing geo-economic competition underscore the need to seek solutions that not only help overcome today's challenges but also strengthen the Union's preparedness for the future. Therefore, the General Affairs Council must ensure the consistent implementation of the European Union's horizontal priorities and strengthen the EU's ability to act in a unified manner.

The Lithuanian Presidency will devote as much attention as possible to the Union's enlargement process, the protection of the fundamental values of democracy and the rule of law, the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2028–2034, the future of cohesion policy, the agenda for better regulation and administrative simplification, and the strengthening of the EU's relations with the United Kingdom and other European partners. Lithuania will seek constructive progress in these areas, while keeping its sights set on the goal of continuing to build a safer, more resilient, more competitive European Union that is prepared for the challenges of the future.

EU Enlargement

EU enlargement is a geostrategic necessity that ensures long-term peace in the European Union, as well as security, stability, and prosperity across the entire continent. Lithuania is committed to actively continuing and accelerating the EU enlargement process during its presidency so that it reflects the new geopolitical reality shaped by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

During Lithuania's presidency, the main focus will be on Ukraine's EU accession negotiations and the reforms underway in that country, particularly the strengthening of the rule of law and the fight against corruption, – once these efforts have reached the level of the essential interim criteria for the first negotiation chapter ("Fundamental Issues") and Ukraine has made sufficient progress in the area of reforms, the European Commission would submit an Interim Benchmark Assessment Report (IBAR), which would subsequently be submitted to the Council for approval.

Lithuania, guided by the Copenhagen Criteria, the principle of individual merit, and established methodology, will seek progress in EU accession negotiations with all candidate countries. As the presiding country, it will maintain a fair and objective approach toward candidate countries and potential partners. Efforts will be made to ensure a reliable, predictable, and effective enlargement process, in which countries' progress is assessed based on fundamental criteria such as the rule of law, democratic governance, and compatibility with the common foreign and security policy, among others. In this context, the Lithuanian Presidency will strongly support the accelerated integration of Ukraine, Moldova, Montenegro, Albania, and other Western Balkan countries, emphasizing that the EU enlargement process must go hand in hand with the modernization and structural reforms of the candidate countries.

Efforts will also be made to advance the preparation of Montenegro's accession treaty.

EU Internal Reforms

The Lithuanian Presidency will continue work on internal EU reforms that may be necessary to ensure the EU's readiness for enlargement. To achieve progress, Lithuania will focus on reviewing sectoral policies and EU structural programs—this will help strengthen the EU's resilience to geopolitical and economic challenges. Discussions on governance reforms will seek to strike a balance between more effective EU decision-making and democratic legitimacy, the equality of Member States, and the protection of key national interests, while ensuring that such reforms contribute to a smooth enlargement process.

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The EU's Multiannual Financial Framework for 2028–2034

Lithuania will strive to make as much progress as possible in the negotiations on the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2028–2034 and related sectoral legislation. Given the geopolitical tensions, the new MFF must ensure a swift and effective response to challenges posed by security, defense, migration, or climate change, increase the EU's resilience, and strengthen its competitiveness. At the same time, it is essential to uphold the priorities set out in the EU Treaty—namely, to ensure the continued implementation of the objectives of the Cohesion Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy.

The Lithuanian Presidency will ensure that all sectoral legislation in the MFF package is adopted on time—before the start of the new programming period in 2028. To achieve this goal, maximum progress will be needed in negotiations with the European Parliament on the adoption of sectoral regulations under the ordinary legislative procedure.

Based on the progress made, negotiations on the Regulation on National and Regional Partnership Plans for 2028–2034 will continue during the Lithuanian Presidency, with the aim of launching a trilogue and making progress in negotiations with the European Parliament on the draft regulations.

Better Regulation and Simplification

To strengthen the European Union's competitiveness and promote economic growth and innovation, it is essential to consistently implement the EU's better regulation and simplification agenda. EU rules must be clear, consistent, proportionate, and practicable, and must comply with the principle of subsidiarity as well as social, consumer, and environmental protection standards.

The Lithuanian Presidency will seek to make progress in implementing the EU's simplification agenda. To this end, work will continue on *omnibus* legislative packages and other sector-specific simplification initiatives. Above all, Lithuania will focus on packages that were not finalized before its presidency began—ensuring their consistent and expeditious consideration. Lithuania will also seek to initiate preliminary deliberations on taxation, energy products, and citizens' initiatives, and will examine new proposals to be submitted by the Commission during its Presidency.

Guided by the "One Europe, One Market" action plan, Lithuania will support the continued systematic review of the EU acquis and *regulatory deep cleaning*: Efforts will be made to eliminate duplicative and excessive requirements, simplify and harmonize administrative procedures, establish proportionate rules (particularly for SMEs and small mid-cap companies), and ensure the reuse of data. It will also promote the interoperability of digital systems and the implementation of common data standards to avoid the repeated submission of information to authorities.

Simplifying existing regulations must not become the sole means of achieving better regulation. The Lithuanian Presidency emphasizes the need to apply the principle of *"simplicity by design*" and to conduct high-quality, evidence-based impact and *ex post* evaluations. This will enable the continuous improvement of the EU regulatory system and ensure its effectiveness.

Strengthening Democratic Resilience

Democratic resilience is a fundamental element of protecting and strengthening democracy. It is based on the ability of society and institutions to resist external and internal threats, safeguard democratic processes, maintain citizens' trust, and ensure the protection of the rule of law, human rights, and other EU values. To ensure democratic resilience, it is essential to strengthen institutions, foster a critically thinking society, and support a free media. This foundation is also reinforced by an active

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civil society and the cultivation of European historical memory and awareness. During Lithuania's Presidency, efforts will be focused on combating hybrid threats and foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI). Lithuania will seek to strengthen coordinated EU action in this area

We will continue to promote joint EU efforts to counter FIMI and strengthen media and information literacy. Lithuania will continue to implement the European Democracy Shield (EDS) initiatives and support the activities of the European Center for Democratic Resilience. These initiatives must become an important foundation for the protection of democracy in the EU, strengthening cooperation among Member States, the exchange of information, and an effective response to evolving threats. At the same time, the involvement of candidate countries in this process will be encouraged.

Lithuania will support EU initiatives aimed at commemorating the victims of 20th-century totalitarian regimes, promote the preservation of Europe's historical memory and resistance to the distortion of history and historical revisionism, strengthen public historical awareness, and deepen understanding of the crimes of totalitarianism and the experiences of occupied countries.

Issues Related to the Rule of Law

Respect for the rule of law is one of the fundamental values of the European Union and a prerequisite for the effective functioning of the Union and for mutual trust. During its Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will ensure the continuity of the annual dialogue on the rule of law, based on the European Commission's annual report on the rule of law. To strengthen the candidate countries' preparedness for membership, their more active involvement in this dialogue will be encouraged, and reforms aimed at advancing the rule of law will be supported. Lithuania will also emphasize the need for the effective and objective application of the rule of law conditionality mechanism, which ensures reliable protection of the EU budget. At the same time, work will continue constructively within the Council on the procedure provided for in Article 7 of the EU Treaty.

Crisis Management, Preparedness, and Resilience

During its Presidency, Lithuania will promote a strategic, coordinated approach to crisis management and will seek to enhance preparedness and strengthen resilience across the European Union. Lithuania will support the implementation of the EU Preparedness *Strategy*, place significant emphasis on strengthening societal resilience and improving preparedness at all levels, and promote an approach to crisis preparedness based on the principles of *"whole-of-government"* and *"whole-of-society*" engagement. Efforts will also be made to ensure the continuity of essential functions and services and to enhance the Union's capacity to respond to cross-sectoral threats.

During its Presidency, Lithuania will strengthen cross-border cooperation in the areas of crisis preparedness and response, promote the exchange of experience, and support the building of EU strategic reserves and their regional dimension. To ensure the complementarity and synergy of measures, cooperation with NATO will be deepened, and preparedness measures will be implemented effectively.

Relations with the United Kingdom and EFTA Countries

The Lithuanian Presidency will seek to further strengthen the European Union's strategic partnership with the United Kingdom—one of the EU's key security and economic partners. Close cooperation between the EU and the UK is a key factor in strengthening European security and resilience, supporting Ukraine, coordinating efforts to counter hybrid, cyber, and disinformation threats, implementing sanctions, and developing other areas of cooperation of mutual importance.

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To this end, Lithuania will seek to implement the agreements reached during the 2025 and 2026 EU-UK high-level meetings, which open the way for more effective cooperation and the deepening of the strategic partnership.

As the presiding country, Lithuania will continue to strengthen relations with the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), expand cooperation in areas of mutual interest, and ensure the smooth functioning of the EFTA Council.

Cohesion

Cohesion policy is one of the EU's key instruments for strengthening solidarity, promoting convergence, and ensuring the balanced economic and social development of all EU regions. By reducing territorial disparities and supporting inclusive growth, this policy plays a vital role in strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of the single market. To ensure effective, inclusive, and forward-looking development across the entire EU, it is essential to foster a strong partnership among institutions at the European, national, regional, and local levels.

Building on the progress made, negotiations on the Regulation on the European Regional Development Fund (including the European Territorial Cooperation Objective ("Interreg")), the Cohesion Fund Regulation, and the European Social Fund+ (ESF+) Regulation will continue during the Lithuanian Presidency. Efforts will be made to initiate a trilogue with the European Parliament and reach a final agreement on these draft legislative acts.

During the Lithuanian Presidency, discussions will also be organized to better assess the implementation of investments during the current programming period and to prepare for the new programming period. Significant attention will be paid to the role of Cohesion Policy in strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of EU regions and addressing territorial challenges. Efforts will also be made to prepare Council conclusions on the European Commission's "Right to Stay" strategy, which aims to create more favorable conditions for people to live and work in their own regions.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

The Foreign Affairs Council's top priorities will continue to be the consistent scaling up of long-term and comprehensive support for Ukraine, support for the country's EU membership, and increasing pressure on Russia. At the same time, efforts will be made to ensure the EU's defense readiness and to build up critical capabilities, while maintaining full interoperability with NATO. Strong and sustainable transatlantic relations will continue to be the foundation of European security.

As the country holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will actively cooperate with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on matters on the Foreign Affairs Council's agenda, with the aim of strengthening the EU's geopolitical role. Particular attention will be paid to increasing the resilience of EU Member States and neighboring countries, promoting global partnerships with like-minded nations, strengthening economic security, and ensuring a rules-based international order.

External Relations

During Lithuania's Presidency of the Council of the EU, the top foreign policy priority will be to ensure continued EU political, diplomatic, military, financial, and humanitarian support for Ukraine as it defends itself against Russian military aggression. Lithuania will seek to strengthen EU-Ukraine cooperation, including in the areas of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), and will work to ensure that Ukraine becomes a full-fledged EU member state as soon as possible and is fully integrated into the European single market and defense industry. EU support for Ukraine's reconstruction and economic recovery, as well as for the implementation of Ukraine's reforms, will be promoted, including through the EU Advisory Mission in Ukraine *(EUAM Ukraine*). One of the objectives is to increase EU support for the resilience of Ukraine's energy system and its further integration into the European energy market.

Lithuania will seek to ensure that the EU firmly adheres to its policy of non-recognition of the territories of Ukraine illegally occupied and annexed by Russia. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring that Russia and Belarus are held legally accountable for international crimes. Support will be provided for EU efforts to launch the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression and the International Commission for the Examination of Claims for Damages to Ukraine as soon as possible, and to ensure broad international support for these institutions. The EU will also strengthen its actions regarding the return of Ukrainian children illegally deported by Russia and will seek to further isolate Russia and its accomplice, Belarus, internationally if the latter continues to support Russia's aggression against Ukraine or carries out hybrid attacks against the EU and Ukraine. Lithuania will support efforts to find solutions—in line with the interests of the Union and its member states—regarding the use of frozen Russian assets for Ukraine's needs.

Another objective is to tighten sanctions against Russia and the countries enabling its aggression. Particular attention will be paid to the uniform and strict application of restrictive measures throughout the EU, while strengthening the coordination of actions among EU member states to prevent attempts to circumvent sanctions and to combat the shadow fleet.

Lithuania will seek to maintain a unified and consistent EU policy toward Belarus, based on the conclusions of the Council of the European Union from October 2020 and February 2024, as well as to continue supporting democratic forces in Belarus, civil society, and the independent media.

During its Presidency, Lithuania will focus on supporting reforms in Eastern Partnership countries seeking EU membership, strengthening their security, and building the resilience of their societies. One of the priorities is to review the Eastern Partnership policy itself and ensure that its measures are applied in a more targeted manner. Lithuania will seek to

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deepen political, economic, and sectoral EU cooperation with the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and will also support the implementation of EU transport, energy, and digital infrastructure projects in these regions. At the same time, comprehensive democratic reforms will be supported in the areas of the rule of law, the fight against corruption, and other fields. Lithuania will strive to ensure that the people of the South Caucasus and Central Asia feel the greatest possible practical benefits of cooperation with the EU, and will support their civil societies, independent media, and human rights defenders. Furthermore, through sustained political dialogue, Lithuania will seek to ensure that the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey remain part of close cooperation with the EU within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

In the face of growing threats from Russia, Lithuania will actively support the strengthening of a robust transatlantic bond, practical cooperation among the EU, NATO, and the IP4, and the development of a mutually beneficial agenda with the United States and Canada. Europe, acting in concert with NATO and upholding the transatlantic bond, must strengthen its resilience, defense readiness, and capabilities, and develop its defense industry. Of great importance are EU unity, solidarity, an increase in national defense spending—including in accordance with the principles agreed upon at the NATO summit in The Hague—and a robust EU budget, which is necessary to ensure an effective response to threats. A strong and defense-capable Europe will enhance transatlantic security. The United States remains the EU's most important strategic partner, and Europe's security and defense architecture can only be sustainable by fostering transatlantic unity.

Lithuania will seek to maintain a close EU partnership with the United Kingdom, a strategic and economic partner, and to strengthen cooperation in the areas of security and defense.

Lithuania will support the EU's continued strategic engagement in the Indian and Pacific regions by promoting the implementation of the EU's strategy for cooperation in this region and fostering ties with regional organizations. Particular attention will be paid to the partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), with the aim of formally confirming the comprehensive strategic partnership between the EU and ASEAN at the 2027 summit marking the 50th anniversary of EU-ASEAN relations. A successful and productive meeting of foreign ministers from the EU, India, and the Pacific nations is expected. Lithuania will strive for a unified and consistent EU position toward China and will strengthen the coordinating role of European institutions. Particular attention will be paid to reducing the EU's trade imbalance with China and strategic dependencies, as well as to ensuring a level playing field. Efforts will also be made to encourage China to cease its support for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

During its presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will seek to strengthen the EU's geopolitical role in North Africa and the Middle East. Particular attention will be paid to countries in the Middle East facing crises caused by military conflicts. Lithuania will support efforts to find a long-term political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and will seek to mitigate the negative political and economic consequences of Iran's war. Lithuania will seek to strengthen the EU's relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and develop strategic partnerships with the countries of this region. Through the implementation of the Mediterranean Pact, efforts will be made to ensure closer EU political and economic cooperation with the countries of North Africa and the Middle East. Lithuania will support EU efforts aimed at combating terrorist organizations and armed groups that destabilize the situation in North Africa and the Middle East. In response to Iran's role in exacerbating regional instability and its provision of military support for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, Lithuania will support the continued application of restrictive measures to counter these threats.

During Lithuania's Presidency, efforts will be made to strengthen the EU's geopolitical role by developing mutually beneficial and sustainable partnerships with countries in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. During its

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will prioritize strengthening these countries' resilience and response to Russia's destabilizing activities during its presidency.

In light of geopolitical tensions and Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, Lithuania will promote consistent EU efforts to ensure and strengthen a rules-based international order, implement the principles of the UN Charter, and defend universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. Lithuania will also support reforms of international organizations, particularly the UN, to make them more effective, transparent, and accountable, and to ensure their ability to respond to ongoing or emerging challenges.

Lithuania will seek to leverage digital diplomacy to strengthen the EU's economic security, innovation potential, and competitiveness, and will promote the application of *human-centric* artificial intelligence, quantum, and other advanced digital technologies for the purposes of defense, security, and economic prosperity. Efforts will be made to strengthen the EU's leadership in shaping global digital governance and developing standards for digital technologies—including artificial intelligence—based on democratic values and human rights. Lithuania will support the implementation of the EU's strategy for international digital partnerships.

Security and Defense

In light of the deteriorating security environment and Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, Lithuania will support the further development of the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) with the aim of strengthening the Union's geopolitical role in the world.

As Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues, and in response to the challenges posed by an unstable security environment, EU member states have committed to increasing defense spending to strengthen key military capabilities by 2030 and ensure their full interoperability with NATO, to consistently invest in the EU defense industry, to improve military mobility, to streamline EU legislation relevant to defense, and to strengthen cooperation between the EU and NATO.

During its presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will seek to strengthen the defense readiness of EU member states, promote cooperation in building up critical military capabilities, strengthen the response to threats, accelerate EU military support for Ukraine, and develop the EU defense industry. To achieve these goals, the implementation of the Defense Readiness Plan 2030, the "Security Action for Europe" (SAFE) financial instrument, and the European Defense Industrial Program (EDIP) will continue. Taking into account the progress made in the trilateral negotiations on the Military Mobility Regulation, Lithuania will contribute to the completion of the process and prepare for the smooth implementation and application of the regulation.

Ukraine's security is an integral part of European security; therefore, Lithuania will seek to ensure long-term and sustainable EU military support for Ukraine through the European Peace Facility (EPF), loan mechanisms, and other financial instruments. The objectives and tasks of the EU Military Assistance Mission in Ukraine (EUMAM *Ukraine*) will be tailored to the needs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, while closely coordinating actions with NATO's Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) initiative, the "Coalition of the Willing," and other international partners. Lithuania will promote closer EU-Ukraine cooperation in the fields of security and defense, as well as greater Ukrainian involvement in joint European initiatives. Efforts will be made to strengthen mutual resilience by drawing on Ukraine's combat experience and leveraging the potential of its defense industry.

During Lithuania's Presidency, efforts will be made to accelerate the integration of Ukraine's defense industry into the European defense technology and industrial base, promote Ukraine's participation in EU defense research and innovation programs, and strengthen technology sharing and the development of joint defense industry projects.

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As the holder of the EU Council Presidency, Lithuania will seek to ensure the effective implementation of the European Defense Industrial Program (EDIP), strengthen priority areas of military capabilities, and to adequately prepare for the development of European Defense Projects of Common Interest (EDPCI) in the next multiannual financial framework (2028–2034).

Lithuania will pay particular attention to strengthening the defense of the EU's eastern border through the implementation of the "Eastern Flank Watch" initiative. To this end, efforts will be made to secure EU financial support for border defense, mine and mine-laying systems, air defense, and counter-drone measures, as well as to ensure the effective implementation of this defense project of common interest and to address gaps in border defense.

During its Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania, together with other EU institutions, will seek to consistently strengthen the capabilities of the European defense industry, promote investment and cross-border industrial cooperation, while not hindering cooperation with NATO allies and like-minded third countries. Lithuania will seek the consistent implementation of the European Defense Industrial Program, particularly in the area of long-term strengthening of the defense industry.

During its Presidency, Lithuania will prioritize initiatives to improve defense readiness. It is essential to simplify the legal framework governing defense procurement—this will enable Member States to carry out defense procurements more quickly and cooperate more effectively with strategic allies. We will seek progress in decision-making regarding the revision of the Defense Procurement Directive, with the aim of strengthening the European defense industrial base, maintaining flexibility for procurements from third countries, ensuring faster and more efficient procurement processes, and effective regulation.

Lithuania's goal will be to conclude trilateral negotiations with the European Parliament and the European Commission on the draft regulation for the European Competitiveness Fund. It will also support the implementation of the Action for the Promotion of Innovation in Defense (AGILE) to introduce advanced technologies into production more quickly and effectively and to enhance military capabilities.

As the presiding country, Lithuania will also devote due attention to enhancing the effectiveness of EU missions and operations in pursuit of the EU's strategic objectives, particularly strengthening civil-military cooperation, as well as ensuring the continuity of the EU's counterterrorism policy and its adaptation to the evolving security environment. Lithuania will seek to make more active use of EU naval operations in the fight against Russia's shadow fleet and to develop the capabilities of EU civilian missions that directly contribute to the achievement of the Union's strategic objectives. In the negotiations on the new Civilian CSDP Compact, efforts will be made to increase the effectiveness of missions and adapt them to current security challenges.

During its Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania's priority will be to strengthen European cybersecurity, resilience, and international cooperation. Work will focus on key EU legislative documents aimed at simplifying and strengthening the EU's cybersecurity framework, while ensuring a high level of cybersecurity for citizens, businesses, and the internal market. It will be important to develop the EU's cyber diplomacy policy and strengthen cooperation with international partners, particularly NATO, the United States, the United Kingdom, like-minded countries in the Eastern Partnership, and countries in the Indian and Pacific regions. Lithuania will promote the development of the EU's cyber defense capabilities, closer military cooperation, and synergy between the armed forces and civilian cybersecurity communities.

Lithuania will seek to strengthen the EU's ability to prevent hybrid threats and ensure a timely response to them. Key priorities will include monitoring hybrid incidents and establishing early-warning systems, protecting critical infrastructure, and coordinating actions by making better use of existing EU instruments and strengthening inter-institutional cooperation. Cooperation between the EU and NATO

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and deepening the partnership with Ukraine to draw on its practical experience gained in responding to various hybrid challenges.

In the area of combating foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), Lithuania will support the strengthening of the capabilities of EU delegations and CSDP missions, and will promote more active cooperation with EU candidate countries, NATO, the OECD, countries that have established security and defense partnerships with the EU, and other like-minded states.

Trade Policy, Economic Security

During its Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will seek to strengthen an open, effective, and rules-based global trading system, while also promoting WTO reform. These efforts will aim to enhance Europe's competitiveness, economic security, and resilience, and to ensure a level playing field.

Priority will be given to expanding the EU's trade partnerships, opening up new markets, and strengthening trade instruments to enhance Europe's economic resilience. During Lithuania's Presidency of the Council of the EU, efforts will be made to finalize the procedures for the EU trade agreement with Australia and to continue negotiations with the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and the United Arab Emirates. It will also promote the development of EU digital trade partnerships, including digital trade agreements and principles.

While continuing to support Ukraine and Moldova, efforts will be made to accelerate their further economic integration into the EU. To this end, trade liberalization will be consistently implemented under the renewed EU-Ukraine and EU-Moldova Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) agreements, linking this process to the gradual alignment of these countries' legislation with the EU acquis and standards. Particular attention will be paid to preparations for the DCFTA reviews: in 2027 with Moldova and in 2028 with Ukraine.

During its presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will seek to strengthen transatlantic economic ties, ensure a stable and mutually beneficial EU-U.S. partnership—including the implementation of the EU-U.S. trade agreement— as well as deepening cooperation in the field of economic security, particularly regarding critical raw materials and high technologies.

Lithuania will seek to strengthen the EU's economic security by applying existing safeguards and developing new ones to ensure a level playing field, and to defend the Union's interests against unfair trade practices and economic coercion. A comprehensive EU economic security policy will be promoted, encompassing not only protection but also the strengthening of competitiveness, innovation, and reliable partnerships. Discussions in the Council on reducing economic dependence on China (*de-risking*) will continue, with an emphasis on maintaining the EU's competitiveness in the global market and seeking to align the positions of the Member States.

During Lithuania's Presidency, work will continue on implementing the EU Economic Security Strategy, and efforts will be made to establish a special EU Council Working Group on Economic Security to strengthen the governance of the common policy, ensure horizontal coordination of the Economic Security Strategy, operational continuity, and effective decision-making.

Development Cooperation, International Partnerships, and Humanitarian Aid

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Lithuania will prioritize the establishment of sustainable, long-term partnerships based on mutual interests. It will seek to contribute effectively to addressing global challenges and to strengthen the resilience of partner countries.

Lithuania will seek a political agreement with the European Parliament on the Global Europe Regulation, which will become the main EU instrument for financing external action in the new multiannual financial framework (2028–2034), covering support for Ukraine, EU enlargement countries and their reforms, the development of the EU's international partnerships, and the implementation of the EU's *Global Gateway* strategy.

During Lithuania's Presidency, the implementation of the EU's *Global Gateway* strategy will be actively promoted, with particular attention paid to initiatives in the Eastern Partnership, Africa, and the India-Pacific regions. Efforts will also be made to promote the more effective use of blended finance instruments, increase the involvement of the private sector—particularly small and medium-sized enterprises—attract investment, and ensure its sustainability. Efforts will also be made to strengthen the capacity of the private sector in smaller countries to contribute to *Global Gateway* projects. A key priority will be to strengthen strategic communication and increase the visibility and awareness of EU support in partner countries.

The Lithuanian Presidency will promote the provision of needs-based humanitarian assistance to countries and regions affected by conflicts and natural disasters, as well as the strengthening of linkages between humanitarian aid, development cooperation, and peacekeeping. Reform of the humanitarian system must ensure that the assistance provided is effective and focused on empowering local communities and building resilience.

Lithuania will seek to ensure a coherent and strategically oriented EU approach to the Sustainable Development Goals. Discussions already underway regarding the accelerated implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the post-2030 agenda, and international cooperation toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will continue. Lithuania will coordinate the EU's preparations for participation in the United Nations High-Level Political Forum and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit to be held during the UN General Assembly. Efforts will be made to formulate a unified EU position in the negotiations on the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration.

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ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL

In light of current geopolitical challenges and the changing global order, the EU's key objectives are security, sustainable economic growth, and competitiveness. With this in mind, the Lithuanian Presidency will devote due attention to the implementation of the reformed EU fiscal rules, with a view to contributing to the EU's resilience to external shocks and ensuring adequate and sustainable funding for security and defense. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring sustainable EU financial support for Ukraine, including its reconstruction needs.

One of the key objectives of the Lithuanian Presidency will be the implementation of initiatives related to the European Savings and Investment Union (SIU). We will seek further progress in developing EU capital markets and creating better conditions for mobilizing private financing to achieve the EU's strategic goals in the areas of security, the green transition, and the digital transformation. This requires deep, efficient, and integrated capital markets, as well as regulatory clarity.

To enhance the EU's competitiveness, it is important to continue simplification initiatives and reduce the administrative burden. To this end, we will focus on reducing redundant requirements in the areas of taxation, statistics, and financial markets.

Financial Support for Ukraine

The Lithuanian Presidency will continue to regularly monitor the economic and financial consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as the implementation of already approved EU support measures for Ukraine—the *Ukraine Facility*, macro-financial assistance loans, and the G7 ERA loan mechanism. At the same time, efforts will be made to ensure sustainable and predictable financing of Ukraine's budgetary and defense needs in 2027 and beyond.

The Savings and Investment Union and the Banking Union

The Lithuanian Presidency will work actively to enhance the competitiveness, integration, and resilience of the EU financial sector across the European Union, taking into account the changing geopolitical environment. The main focus will be on ensuring clarity and simplification of the regulatory framework by reducing excessive requirements and creating conditions for more efficient operations, while ensuring a high level of consumer protection.

Lithuania will prioritize work on SIU measures that encourage the mobilization and channeling of private investment toward the goals of promoting competitiveness and increasing resilience, while ensuring that EU capital markets become deeper, more efficient, and more competitive.

Lithuania will pay particular attention to negotiations on the Market Integration and Supervision Package (MISP), which aims to remove barriers to cross-border activities of capital market participants, increase the effectiveness of the supervisory system, reduce the administrative burden, and simplify the regulation of financial markets. These changes are essential for creating a more integrated and attractive EU capital market, better suited to financing the real economy and enabling investors to operate throughout the EU without excessive regulatory barriers.

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Lithuania will seek to conclude negotiations on the pension package to provide residents with more opportunities to accumulate wealth through capital markets and secure sufficient income upon retirement. This will also promote economic growth and competitiveness in the EU.

Work will also continue on the review of the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation, focusing on a clearer, more proportionate, and less fragmented system for providing sustainability information, which will help investors make informed decisions and reduce the excessive administrative burden on financial market participants.
These efforts should contribute to the broader objective of the SIF—to create an integrated, reliable, and investment-friendly European capital market that would strengthen the EU's competitiveness and economic resilience.

Strengthening the resilience, integration, and global competitiveness of the European banking sector will be one of the key priorities. The Lithuanian Presidency will support further progress toward completing the Banking Union. At the same time, efforts will be made to ensure a consistent and proportionate regulatory framework that maintains financial stability and high supervisory standards, enables European banks to compete effectively on a global scale, and supports sustainable and innovative economic development throughout the Union. Once the European Commission submits legislative proposals on the competitiveness of the banking sector, Lithuania will immediately begin deliberations on these drafts in the Council.

The Presidency will seek to conclude negotiations on the single currency package. A robust and widely used digital euro is essential to strengthen the sovereignty of European monetary policy, increase the resilience and strategic autonomy of the EU's payments ecosystem, and ensure that central bank money meets the needs of the digital age. Concluding these negotiations will be crucial for strengthening trust, innovation, and competitiveness in European financial markets, while also ensuring the availability of cash.

Taxation

During its presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will prioritize an agenda focused on simplifying the tax system and reducing excessive requirements, with the aim of improving the investment environment and enhancing competitiveness in the Single Market. The main focus of this priority is the *Omnibus* legislative proposal in the tax area, which aims to reduce the administrative burden on businesses and tax administrators and increase legal certainty, while maintaining a high level of protection against tax fraud and aggressive tax planning. With the common goal of finalizing an agreement on the *Omnibus* package by the end of 2027, Lithuania will strive to make substantial progress in these negotiations.

Lithuania will continue discussions and seek a political agreement on the European Commission's proposal for a recast of the Council Directive on Administrative Cooperation in the Field of Taxation (*DAC recast*), which aims to consolidate and simplify the existing system, reduce excessive administrative burdens and reporting obligations, and improve the quality and effectiveness of information exchange.

The Presidency will continue discussions on initiatives that strengthen the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion, and tax avoidance, and promote adherence to good governance standards in the tax area. Work in this area will include

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and other measures adopted by the Code of Conduct Group (Business Taxation) aimed at combating harmful tax practices.

During its Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will coordinate the positions of EU Member States in negotiations on the United Nations Model Convention on International Cooperation in Tax Matters and its protocols.

In the area of indirect taxation, efforts will be made to reach an agreement on the draft Tobacco Taxation Directive, which aims to align the taxation of tobacco and tobacco-related products with public health objectives while strengthening the functioning of the EU internal market.

The Lithuanian Presidency will continue discussions on the distance selling of imported goods, with the aim of ensuring that all goods imported into the EU are subject to VAT, regardless of their value, thereby reducing the risk of fraud and unfair competition.

The Lithuanian Presidency will launch discussions on a clearer and more consistent application of VAT rules in the tourism sector to ensure fair competition and the smooth functioning of the internal market, as well as on the compatibility of VAT rules with environmental protection objectives, should the European Commission submit relevant legislative proposals.

Customs Union

In recent years, EU Member States have seen a rise in drug-related violence and crime, as well as the resulting threats to health and security. In order to strengthen the control of narcotic and psychotropic substances and prevent them from entering the illicit market, the Lithuanian Presidency will seek to conclude negotiations on the updated Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the monitoring and control of precursors to narcotic and psychotropic substances.

EU Budget

During its presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will prepare a Council recommendation to the European Parliament on the discharge of the 2025 EU budget and Council conclusions on the guidelines for the 2028 EU budget, and will seek to have them adopted.
Lithuania will also seek to make significant progress in negotiations with the European Parliament on the regulation establishing a system for monitoring EU budget expenditures and reviewing performance for the 2028–2034 period.

EU Own Resources

Taking into account the progress of negotiations on the multiannual financial framework (MFF) and the progress achieved during the Irish Presidency, Lithuania will continue negotiations on the Council decision on the EU own resources system for 2028–2034 and the related implementing regulations.

Economic Governance and Statistics

Lithuania will pay particular attention to the implementation of the reformed EU fiscal rules, with the aim of ensuring the sustainability of EU public finances and promoting economic growth. With defense spending in Member States rising rapidly, compliance with fiscal discipline will be monitored, taking into account Member States' medium-term

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fiscal-structural plans and the *national escape clause* for the implementation of defense and energy security measures.
Lithuania will seek to ensure smooth coordination of economic and fiscal policies and the monitoring of macroeconomic imbalances within the context of the European Semester. Attention will be focused on monitoring and coordinating national structural reforms, including those aimed at reducing harmful macroeconomic imbalances (through the macroeconomic imbalance procedure). This includes the exchange of best practices in the area of structural reforms, as well as the preparation and implementation of medium-term fiscal and structural plans and Council recommendations for specific countries and the euro area.

Lithuania will closely monitor the financial aspects related to the implementation of the SAFE measure.

During its Presidency, Lithuania will continue the work begun by previous presidencies, ensuring the consistent and focused development of official European statistics. It will strive to ensure that the statistics produced meet the highest quality standards and serve as a reliable basis for shaping, implementing, and monitoring EU policy, as well as for meeting the needs of various users.

Multilateral Cooperation

During its presidency, Lithuania will seek to ensure the consistent formulation of guidelines for a common EU position in the discussions among G20 finance ministers and central bank governors. It will also actively contribute to preparing the EU's position for meetings of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) of the International Monetary Fund and to strengthening constructive cooperation with other international and regional financial institutions.

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JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS COUNCIL

A Safe and Resilient Europe: Strengthening Internal Security and Protecting the Union

The Lithuanian Presidency will seek to strengthen a European Union that is secure, resilient, and capable of responding effectively to evolving security challenges. Given the complex geopolitical situation, ongoing instability at the EU's external borders, the instrumentalization of migration, the malicious use of technology, and other hybrid threats, the main focus will be on the EU's internal security and the protection of its external borders, effective migration management, the fight against serious and organized transnational crime, the implementation of innovations, and the strengthening of the EU's resilience and preparedness for potential future crises. Efforts will also be made to achieve the greatest possible progress in interinstitutional negotiations on the 2028–2034
financial instruments in the area of justice and home affairs (BMV, IS, and AMI), with the aim of ensuring a sustainable financial basis for the implementation of the EU's internal security, migration, external border management, and other justice and home affairs policy priorities.

A sustainable, effective, and efficient migration and asylum policy

The Presidency will focus on monitoring the implementation of the Migration and Asylum Pact, identifying emerging challenges, and seeking solutions that ensure the full achievement of the Pact's objectives.

A reliable and sustainable migration policy is inseparable from the effective return of persons who do not have the right to remain in the Union. During its Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will focus primarily on strengthening the common EU return policy and implementing return reforms, as well as seeking progress on new initiatives in the area of return. To address return and readmission issues more effectively, the EU's existing incentives and levers, including visa policy measures, will be fully utilized.

With a view to more effective migration management, the Presidency will prioritize and focus its efforts on strengthening the external dimension of migration. Efforts will be made to develop comprehensive and mutually beneficial cooperation with countries of origin and transit. In addition, the Lithuanian Presidency will promote the application of innovative solutions in the field of migration management.

In implementing its priorities in the area of migration and asylum, Lithuania will pay particular attention to:

- combating migrant smuggling and human trafficking;
- new initiatives aimed at preventing abuses and ensuring an effective response to crises arising at the EU's external borders, including the instrumentalization of migration;
- the digitization of migration processes;
- promoting the implementation of innovative migration management solutions;
- the development of partnerships and cooperation with third countries and the strengthening of the external dimension of migration policy;
- strengthening the EU's competitiveness by attracting talent through effectively managed legal migration.

The EU will also continue to provide support to people who have fled the war in Ukraine, while promoting coordinated EU-level responses that are adapted to the evolving situation.

A Well-Functioning Schengen Area and External Border Management

The Presidency will pay particular attention to strengthening the functioning and resilience of the Schengen Area, especially in the face of challenges posed by hybrid threats and irregular migration.

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Effective management of the EU's external borders remains essential for the smooth functioning of the Schengen Area and mutual trust among Member States. During its Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will seek to strengthen integrated European border management, with a particular focus on ensuring the interoperability of large-scale IT systems, improving information exchange, enhancing risk analysis, situational awareness, and early warning capabilities, as well as law enforcement cooperation, thereby gradually reducing the need to reintroduce temporary controls at internal borders.

Lithuania will promote the further application of modern technologies for the protection of external borders, including digital and artificial intelligence solutions, as well as unmanned aerial vehicles and counter-drone systems, while ensuring full compliance with fundamental rights and data protection standards.

In line with the EU Visa Strategy, the Presidency will promote the modernization of visa policy, the digitization of procedures, and the strengthening of measures to prevent abuse, while ensuring that this policy contributes more effectively to the EU's security, the effective management of migration, and the goals of facilitating legitimate movement and attracting talent.

Civil Protection, Preparedness, and Societal Resilience

Given the evolving security environment, the increasing frequency of natural and man-made disasters, and persistent hybrid threats, strengthening civil protection and preparedness will remain one of the top priorities. Particular attention will be paid to strengthening societal resilience and preparedness for various crises.

The Presidency will seek progress in further developing the Union's civil protection mechanism, strengthening response capabilities, cross-sectoral coordination, and the expansion of capacity reserves (including
"rescEU"). Efforts will be made to improve preparedness to respond to the consequences of all hazards, strengthen cross-border cooperation in this area, enhance the interoperability of response capabilities, and increase coherence between civil protection, internal security, and other related policy areas.

Attention will be focused on establishing the European Union's critical communications system to strengthen cross-border cooperation among services responsible for security and rescue, ensure more effective coordination of operations during crises, and ensure the interoperability of national critical communications networks at the EU level.

Enhancing Resilience to and Countering Hybrid Threats

A coordinated, cross-sectoral response is essential to manage hybrid threats, including the instrumentalization of migration, criminal cyberattacks, disinformation, sabotage, and attacks on critical infrastructure. Lithuania will promote the integration of measures to combat these threats into all areas of justice and home affairs policy.

The Presidency will seek to improve situational awareness and strengthen preparedness at the EU level, ensure the exchange of information among Member States, EU agencies, and other partners; to enhance the resilience of migration, asylum, and external border management systems as well as critical infrastructure; and to strengthen cooperation in the areas of internal security, civil protection, and external action. Efforts will also be made to ensure that lessons learned from recent hybrid attacks against Member States and Ukraine are systematically assessed at the EU level, and to strengthen the Union's prevention, preparedness, and response measures.

Strengthening Justice and Home Affairs Agencies and Institutions

To ensure a robust and effective EU area of freedom, security, and justice, we need capable, transparent, and accountable justice and home affairs agencies, equipped with the necessary resources

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and adequate funding to respond effectively to today's challenges in the areas of security, migration, and cross-border crime.

The Presidency will support efforts to strengthen the operational capacity, governance, and transparency of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex). The focus will be on the needs-based expansion of the standing corps, strengthening support in the area of returns, and improving cooperation with third countries, while ensuring compliance with EU law.

During its presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will seek progress in discussions on the review of the mandate of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and the strengthening of its operational capabilities and capacity. Key priorities will include strengthening Europol's analytical capabilities, improving access to relevant data, ensuring more effective information exchange, and expanding cooperation with other justice and home affairs agencies, international institutions, third countries, and the private sector.

The scale and complexity of international crime require strong judicial cooperation at the EU level. The Presidency will seek progress in the review of the Eurojust Regulation, paying particular attention to strengthening Eurojust's mandate, strategic priorities, and cooperation with other institutions in the field of justice and home affairs. Efforts to develop Eurojust's cooperation with the competent authorities of third countries and international organizations will also be supported.

Taking into account the growing role of the European Public Prosecutor's Office in the EU's criminal justice and anti-fraud system, Lithuania will promote discussions on the future of this institution's mandate and on strengthening its operational capabilities and capacities. Particular attention will be paid to issues related to the governance of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, the effectiveness of its operations, cooperation with Member States, EU institutions and agencies, and relations with international partners.

In support of the European Commission's initiatives to strengthen the EU's anti-fraud framework, the Presidency will support efforts to strengthen the mandate of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and will promote the synergies among law enforcement agencies and other relevant EU institutions necessary to ensure a more effective response to contemporary security threats.

Strengthening the Area of Justice and Protecting Fundamental Rights

The Presidency will seek to strengthen an effective, resilient, and digitized European area of justice, based on the rule of law, mutual recognition, and trust. Particular attention will be paid to strengthening cooperation among Member States in the areas of criminal and civil law, with a view to ensuring the consistent and effective functioning of the EU's legal system.

The Presidency, seeking to contribute to the promotion of an area of justice that guarantees the free movement of persons, access to justice, and respect for fundamental rights, will encourage cooperation between the EU and international organizations in the field of civil law. Where necessary, work on the revision of the Regulation on the Origin of Children will continue.

It will be important to continue implementing the European e-Justice Strategy, with a particular focus on the digital transformation of the justice system, the digitization of cross-border proceedings, the interoperability of videoconferencing solutions, and the development of the "e-CODEX" electronic system. The Presidency will also seek constructive progress in preparing the Justice Program for 2028–2034, which contributes to the creation of an effective, inclusive, resilient, and digitized EU area of justice.

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The protection of fundamental rights will remain one of the top priorities. The Presidency will contribute to the implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights with a view to adopting Council conclusions, taking into account the status of the submission of the CJEU Opinion (1/25) or the status of negotiations on internal EU rules, seek progress on issues related to the EU's accession to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and promote discussions on combating antisemitism, racism, xenophobia, and other forms of hatred. The Lithuanian Presidency will promote discussions on violence against women and girls and its prevention, hate speech and all forms of discrimination, as well as on the protection of children's rights in the digital space.

The Presidency will continue work on improving the European Union Institutions' Data Protection Regulation (EU DPA). Particular attention will be paid to simplifying the applicable data protection framework and ensuring consistency, first and foremost by harmonizing the relevant rules across all EU bodies and agencies.

Taking into account geopolitical challenges and the need to strengthen societal resilience, the Presidency will promote discussions on historical memory and the falsification of historical facts, while seeking to ensure the protection of fundamental rights.

As Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues, one of the top priorities will be the legal fight against impunity, ensuring accountability for international crimes, and expanding measures for reparations.

The fight against organized crime and terrorism, lawful and effective access to data for law enforcement purposes, and the application of advanced technologies

One of the most serious threats to the security of EU citizens is organized crime, which is increasingly carried out on a cross-border scale using digital technologies. The Presidency will continue efforts to strengthen the fight against terrorism and organized crime, while monitoring the crime landscape to assess emerging threats.

During its Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will support the full implementation of existing EU measures and promote cross-border operational cooperation through the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), which serves as the foundation for operational cooperation in the fight against organized and cross-border crime. The legal framework for combating organized crime will be strengthened, taking into account the evolving operational models of criminal groups, technological changes, new investigative tools, and other relevant aspects. Efforts will also be made to strengthen the protection of children from criminal acts, both online and in real life.

The Presidency will take a consistent approach in the area of criminal law. Efforts will be made to ensure the effective and harmonized horizontal application of model criminal law measures adopted at the EU level, as well as uniform standards of criminal liability in areas such as illicit trafficking in firearms, the fight against organized crime, and the smuggling of migrants. The complex geopolitical situation, hybrid threats—including the exploitation of migrants as a weapon and the instrumentalization of migration—the active role of organized crime in the smuggling of migrants and the proliferation of firearms to third countries hostile to Lithuania, as well as the increasing frequency of acts of sabotage and attacks against critical infrastructure, all call for a coordinated international response at the EU level. Therefore, Lithuania will promote a unified approach to combating hybrid threats and organized crime across all areas of justice policy and will seek to make as much progress as possible in negotiations on legislative initiatives that strengthen measures to combat organized crime. The Presidency will also seek progress

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in negotiations on the European Investigation Order, thereby strengthening effective judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

An effective fight against crime is inseparable from timely and lawful access to data. The Presidency will promote discussions on improving access to electronic evidence, active cooperation with service providers, and addressing issues related to data encryption and cross-border access to data. Particular attention will be paid to a balanced model that ensures security and the protection of fundamental rights. Efforts will also be made to improve the practical application of electronic evidence measures and to find solutions that keep pace with technological developments.

During its Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania will continue discussions on effective access to data for law enforcement agencies while maintaining high standards of cybersecurity and the protection of fundamental rights, and will coordinate discussions on the guidelines prepared by the Commission regarding the use of encryption technologies.

Taking into account rapid technological developments, the Presidency will promote the responsible, proportionate, and legally compliant use of artificial intelligence systems in the areas of internal security and migration management. Particular attention will be paid to the application of artificial intelligence solutions in the management of external borders, risk analysis, and the detection of criminal activities, as well as to the capacity of law enforcement agencies to use advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, in migration and asylum processes. Lithuania will encourage Member States to exchange best practices, develop a common understanding and standardization of processes, and build capacity in this area.

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EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH, AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS COUNCIL

The European Union's labor market and social protection systems must adapt to demographic, technological, and economic changes. The Lithuanian Presidency will seek to strengthen the European social model, promote quality employment, fair labor mobility, social inclusion, and equal opportunities, while contributing to European competitiveness, social justice, and societal resilience.

Support will be provided for the implementation of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the goals of increasing employment, improving skills, and reducing poverty set out in its Action Plan through 2030. As part of the European Semester, the EPSCO Council's contribution to assessing the employment and social situation will be coordinated.

In the area of employment, the focus will be on fair labor mobility, quality jobs, an inclusive labor market, and safe and healthy working conditions.

In the area of social policy, priority will be given to the resilience of social protection systems, the adequacy of pensions and long-term care, the reduction of poverty and social exclusion, and the protection of vulnerable groups in society.

Equality, equal opportunities, and non-discrimination will be horizontal priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency. The full participation of all people in social and economic life will be promoted, with particular attention paid to gender equality and the challenges posed by demographic changes.
Modern, high-quality, and universally accessible health care is a fundamental pillar of well-being, economic stability, social security, and societal resilience.

Worker Mobility

Priority will be given to initiatives under the Fair Labor Mobility Package.

Discussions on worker mobility will continue with a view to reaching decisions on the proposal to create a European Social Security Passport (ESSPASS) and on strengthening the role of the European Labor Authority (ELA).

A decision on a digital European Social Security Passport would make it easier for people working or traveling in the European Union to exercise their social security rights, while enabling Member States to exchange information more quickly and securely, simplify administrative procedures, and strengthen the coordination of social security systems.

A stronger role for the European Labor Authority would make it possible to ensure compliance with the European Union's rules on labor mobility more effectively, improve administrative cooperation among Member States, and enhance the services provided to workers and employers.

Quality Jobs

Quality jobs help people enter and remain in the labor market, enhance workers' well-being and productivity, and enable employers to better attract and retain skilled workers.

In light of demographic and technological changes, discussions will focus on sustainable labor market participation, upskilling, safe and healthy working conditions, and quality jobs for a longer working life.

The Lithuanian Presidency will seek to reach decisions on the Quality Jobs Act.

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Negotiations will also continue on improving working conditions for interns and adopting an updated EU quality framework for internships.

Worker Safety and Health

In the area of occupational safety and health, a holistic approach to workers' safety and health will be promoted, with physical and mental health viewed as an integral part of workers' well-being and sustainable participation in the labor market. To ensure a comprehensive assessment of the work environment, significant attention will be paid to work organization, psychosocial risks, leadership culture, and the impact of technological change on workers, as well as to strengthening the competencies of both employers and employees.

The Lithuanian Presidency will propose practical solutions that Member States could integrate into their national occupational safety and health systems.

Social Policy

Lithuania, as the presiding country, will initiate discussions on the future of social policy and the ability to adapt to demographic, economic, and technological changes, while preserving the European social model. The main focus will be on the links between social protection and the labor market, adaptation to changing working conditions—including new forms of work and the impact of technology—the development of services and innovation, and the resilience of systems.

Demographic changes are placing an increasing burden on pension and long-term care systems. In line with an integrated approach to these policy areas, their links to active and healthy aging, longer working lives, the reconciliation of work and care responsibilities, and an appropriate living environment will be strengthened. During Lithuania's Presidency, taking into account the Report on Pension Adequacy and Long-Term Care, relevant Council conclusions will be prepared, and the implementation and further development of European care policy will be supported.

In light of the adopted Council Recommendation on combating housing exclusion, including homelessness, discussions will be encouraged on increasing access to housing for vulnerable people, best practices on sustainable housing support solutions will be shared, and issues related to the prevention of homelessness and policy coordination will be addressed.

In implementing the European Pillar of Children's Rights, dialogue among Member States on current issues related to the implementation of the Pillar will be promoted, as will the exchange of best practices, with the aim of finding effective solutions to reduce child poverty and social exclusion, guided by the principles of ensuring children's rights and meaningful child participation.

Equality

Equality, equal opportunities, and non-discrimination are essential prerequisites for a fair, competitive, and prosperous Europe. During its Presidency, Lithuania will support the implementation of the European Union's equality policy, the protection of fundamental rights, and opportunities for all people to participate fully in social, economic, and democratic life.

During its Presidency, Lithuania will support the implementation of the directives on standards for equality bodies and will seek to lay the groundwork for further discussion on strengthening the protection of individuals against discrimination based on religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

In the area of gender equality, support will be provided for the implementation of the Women's Rights Action Plan and the EU Gender Equality Strategy for 2026–2030. Gender equality in the labor market will also be promoted, with a focus on developing the skills needed for the future labor market, achieving a work-life balance, and removing barriers to a competitive and inclusive labor market.

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Based on the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) study "Breaking Barriers, Building Resilience in the EU: Gender Equality for a Future-Ready Workforce," the Lithuanian Presidency will promote discussions on developing the skills needed for the future labor market and creating working conditions that ensure a balance between work and personal life. Efforts will also be made to adopt Council conclusions on the implementation of the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action and the importance of gender equality for sustainable employment.

Health

Health is a strategic priority for the European Union and a fundamental pillar of the EU's resilience, security, and competitiveness.

The Lithuanian Presidency will prioritize the promotion of innovation and the development of health biotechnology across the European Union, the integration of mental health into all policy areas, and the strengthening of the preparedness and resilience of health systems.

The European Biotechnology Act I will be of paramount importance; its aim is to strengthen Europe's life sciences ecosystem, foster innovation, and enhance global competitiveness. Efforts will focus on strengthening the resilience of the health biotechnology sector by fostering innovation, improving access to resources and technologies, creating a favorable regulatory environment, and ensuring safe and responsible development. These efforts will contribute to building a stronger and more competitive health biotechnology sector, help ensure faster and broader access to innovative treatments for patients, improve healthcare outcomes, and contribute to a better quality of life.

At the same time, as part of the broader EU simplification agenda, the review of the EU regulatory framework for medical devices and *in vitro* diagnostic medical devices will continue, with the aim of ensuring continued access to safe, high-quality, and innovative health technologies.

Mental health will remain a key priority on the agenda, – efforts will be made to ensure that mental health considerations are taken into account across all policy areas, while strengthening the psychological resilience of society, addressing new challenges, and supporting the well-being of individuals and communities.

Strengthening the preparedness and resilience of health systems will remain a strategic priority. During Lithuania's Presidency, efforts will be made to promote the continuity of health care during emergencies, closer cooperation and coordination among Member States, and better preparedness for cross-border health threats. An approach focused on understanding and preventing psychological trauma will be supported, and an assessment will be conducted on how health systems can contribute to strengthening societal resilience by mitigating the impact of crises on psychological well-being and mental health before, during, and after crises. These efforts will help strengthen the Union's capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to future health crises and other major threats.

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COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL

The Lithuanian Presidency will focus primarily on enhancing the EU's long-term competitiveness, deepening the internal market, developing a resilient and modern industry, and strengthening the space sector.

In the area of the internal market, efforts will be made to ensure the consistent implementation of EU law, remove the most significant barriers to the free movement of goods and services, and reduce regulatory fragmentation and the administrative burden. Attention will be focused on strengthening the services market, implementing digital solutions, and ensuring more effective market oversight.

To strengthen the EU's long-term competitiveness, discussions on the European Competitiveness Fund will continue, and efforts will be made to simplify the public procurement system and promote the improvement and modernization of corporate law provisions, competition rules, and state aid regulations. These measures are aimed at ensuring a level playing field, promoting investment, and fostering the sustainable development of the European Union's economy.

In the area of industrial policy, priority will be given to strengthening an innovative, green, and resilient European industry and strategic value chains. Innovation will be promoted, particularly in the fields of quantum technologies, photonics, biotechnology, and startups, while the space sector will be strengthened to ensure security, investment, and technological progress.

Research and innovation are essential drivers of the European Union's technological leadership, strategic autonomy, and competitiveness, while also fostering democratic values and academic freedom, particularly in the context of geopolitical uncertainty, demographic change, and intense global competition.

Internal Market and Industry

A stronger and more effective EU internal market. The Presidency will take measures to ensure that the internal market, including the digital market, functions as a single economic space where rules are applied consistently and their uniform implementation is ensured across all Member States.

Lithuania will seek to make progress in implementing the *"One Europe*, *One Market*" *roadmap* and in removing *the "Terrible* Ten"—the ten main barriers to the Single Market—to ensure the free movement of goods and services and fair competition within the EU.

Efforts will be made to achieve an ambitious goal of ensuring *the enforcement* of EU law, reduce regulatory fragmentation, and promote transparent and regular monitoring of relevant progress.

A Deeper Internal Market for Services. Services account for the largest share of the EU economy, but their cross-border provision still faces unjustified and disproportionate barriers. The Lithuanian Presidency will strengthen the internal market for services—including faster exchanges of in-demand skills—by seeking to improve the effectiveness of digital internal market tools and by continuing discussions on the barriers that have the most negative impact on the internal market for services (*the "Terrible Ten"*).

Free movement of goods. Efforts will be made to strengthen the internal market for products and to develop a modern product system that promotes the free movement of goods, ensures high standards of product conformity and a high level of consumer protection, and is adapted to the rapidly changing digital age. Support will continue for the gradual implementation of the Digital Product Passport; market surveillance and enforcement will be strengthened, including at the EU's external borders; the administrative burden associated with market surveillance

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process, and efforts will be made to streamline the process of developing standards (key instruments for the presumption of conformity). In the area of the free movement of goods, legislative progress in the negotiations on the European Products Act package—aimed at amending the EU Products Regulation and the Standardization Regulation—will be particularly important.

European Competitiveness Fund. The Lithuanian Presidency will continue discussions on the European Competitiveness Fund, which will be included in the upcoming multiannual financial framework.

The fund is designed to strengthen Europe's technological and economic base, reduce strategic dependencies, and attract private investment by supporting innovation, strategic value chains, and critical infrastructure. The Lithuanian Presidency will seek to ensure that the fund contributes to sustainable growth, resilience, and competitiveness throughout the European Union, while strengthening the single market and promoting cooperation among Member States.

Simplification of the public procurement regulatory framework. As the presiding country, Lithuania will seek to make progress in shaping the EU Council's position on the creation of a simplified public procurement regulatory framework, with the aim of promoting sustainable public procurement, addressing security issues, and strengthening the single market by enhancing the EU's global competitiveness. These efforts will aim to facilitate the day-to-day operations of businesses, contracting authorities, and other stakeholders.

In the area of company law, Lithuania will seek progress in deliberating the European Commission's proposal on the 28th regime, with the aim of enabling businesses to establish themselves and expand successfully in the internal market under common rules and using digital tools.

The Lithuanian Presidency will also focus on the European Commission's planned initiative to revise the Shareholder Rights Directive, with the aim of improving and simplifying the enforcement of shareholder rights—particularly in cross-border investments—thereby contributing to the more effective functioning of EU capital markets.

Effective enforcement of competition rules. A properly functioning internal market is the foundation of the EU's competitiveness. The smooth functioning of the internal market is impossible without effective competition among economic operators. The Lithuanian Presidency will continue to promote the consistent and effective implementation of EU competition rules to ensure a level playing field and respond to the challenges posed by changing markets. Further modernization of EU competition and state aid rules will be supported to ensure that market developments and the EU's strategic priorities are properly taken into account.

In the area of industrial policy, the Presidency will prioritize strengthening a competitive, innovative, and resilient European industry, ensuring the European Union's long-term economic security, strategic autonomy, and global leadership. Industrial policy will be consistently linked to the implementation of the green and digital transitions and to a regulatory environment that fosters investment. In line with the Clean Industry Pact, particular attention will be paid to strengthening strategic value chains, modernizing industry, and developing high-value-added sectors, including the defense industry.

The Lithuanian Presidency will seek significant progress in negotiations on the Industrial *Accelerator Act*, with a primary focus on faster permitting procedures, ensuring more effective implementation of strategic projects and a reduced administrative burden, as well as measures aimed at developing leading markets in Europe. Progress will also be sought in negotiations on the upcoming *Chips Act 2.0*, which aims to strengthen Europe's semiconductor ecosystem, increase the resilience of supply chains, and ensure technological autonomy.

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The Presidency will constructively seek progress in negotiations on the Digital Fair Dealing Act, with the aim of ensuring a high level of consumer protection in the digital space, taking into account vulnerable consumers, legal certainty for businesses, and the development of a competitive and innovative digital economy. Lithuania will support more effective protection of consumer rights, particularly in the digital space and e-commerce, enhance the effectiveness of the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Regulation, and promote closer cooperation among national consumer protection authorities.

In the area of intellectual property, the Presidency will continue its work and seek progress in further developing the system of supplementary protection certificates for pharmaceutical and plant protection products, and will coordinate the EU's common position at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

To ensure the security of supply of critical raw materials and reduce dependence on third countries, significant progress will be sought in negotiations on the establishment of a European Center for Critical Raw Materials. This center is expected to contribute to the coordination of EU actions, the strengthening of supply chains for critical and strategic raw materials, the expansion of processing capacities, and cooperation with reliable international partners.

The Lithuanian Presidency will strive to ensure that EU industrial policy is focused on tangibly increasing competitiveness, mobilizing investment, and ensuring the long-term resilience of the European economy.

Research and Innovation

During its Presidency, Lithuania will prioritize work on the future multiannual financial framework and related legislative initiatives, with the aim of making progress in negotiations on the EU's general research and innovation program "Horizon Europe" (2028–2034) and the European Atomic Energy Community's research and training program "Euratom" (2028–2032). In addition, the Presidency will be ready to launch negotiations on the Council Regulation on joint undertakings under the "Horizon Europe" program (2028–2034), as well as on the revision of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) Regulation and the EIT's Strategic Innovation Agenda.

The Presidency will promote the creation of a cohesive, researcher-driven, and excellence-based European Research Area. Particular attention will be paid to supporting the gradual integration of candidate countries into the European Research Area, building on the experience of previous enlargement processes and ensuring that enlargement enhances Europe's overall competitiveness. The Presidency will continue negotiations on the European Research Area Act.

Work will also continue on the European Innovation Act and the future Advanced Materials Act, with the aim of strengthening the European Union's technological leadership and increasing industrial capacity.

As the presiding country, Lithuania will seek to strengthen the European innovation ecosystem, promote the development of advanced technologies, and improve the conditions for the growth of innovative companies in the internal market. It will also support initiatives to reduce the regulatory burden, improve access to financing, strengthen intellectual property protection, promote the attraction and retention of talent, and create more favorable conditions for the commercialization and deployment of innovations in EU markets.

Taking into account the progress of negotiations, work will continue toward adopting decisions related to the Innovation Act regarding a more favorable regulatory environment, as well as the most appropriate measures for the development of startups and scale-ups.

In the field of quantum technologies, the Lithuanian Presidency will support efforts to strengthen the strategic advanced technology base, European technological autonomy, research leadership, and industrial resilience in key areas. The Presidency will continue constructive discussions on

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initiatives related to strengthening the quantum technology ecosystem, developing infrastructure, fostering innovation, and ensuring the resilience of supply chains.

Taking into account the legislative process, efforts will be made to advance the examination of the *EU Quantum Act* and related policy measures.

In the field of biotechnology and bioproduction, the Presidency will contribute to strengthening Europe's competitiveness in the life sciences, biotechnology, and bioproduction sectors by fostering a more favorable environment for innovation, investment, and the adoption of new solutions. Efforts will continue to implement initiatives in the European biotechnology and bioproduction sectors, while ensuring a high level of safety, quality, and the integrity of the internal market.

Depending on the progress of negotiations, proposals will be discussed regarding a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework of measures to strengthen the Union's biotechnology and bioproduction sectors (*European Biotech Act 2.0*), as well as related sectoral initiatives.

Space

The Lithuanian Presidency, recognizing the importance of the space sector in various fields (including security and defense, agriculture, the protection of critical infrastructure, climate change monitoring) and the sector's strategic contribution to European competitiveness and independence, will place particular emphasis on an inclusive EU space policy, recognizing the contribution of startups, innovative small and medium-sized enterprises in building a diversified, resilient, and strong space ecosystem.

The Lithuanian Presidency will seek progress in negotiations on the *EU* Space *Act*, which aims to establish a coherent legal framework for space activities in the EU, ensuring the safety, resilience, and environmental sustainability of these activities.

Efforts will be made to advance negotiations on the space component within the framework of the European Competitiveness Fund, with the aim of ensuring stable and adequate investment in existing and future programs and components, and recognizing the importance of the space sector for security and defense.

The Lithuanian Presidency will seek progress in negotiations on the regulation governing the European Union Space Program Agency (EUSPA), which would more clearly reflect the agency's role in ensuring the security and resilience of space activities, attracting users, and promoting innovation.

Affordable Housing

Lithuania, as the presiding country, will contribute to the implementation of the European Plan for Affordable Housing and will pay particular attention to making progress in negotiations on the Affordable Housing Act. Efforts will be made to find solutions aimed at creating a sustainable housing supply, while taking into account the varying situations of housing markets in Member States and the needs of vulnerable groups.

A high-level conference on housing will be held to discuss an integrated approach to housing policy, covering the expansion of housing supply, housing quality and sustainability, the reduction of energy poverty, and the promotion of investment in affordable housing.

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TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, AND ENERGY COUNCIL

Lithuania, as the presiding country, will base the agenda of the Transport, Telecommunications, and Energy (TTE) Council on three priorities: resilience, modernization, and competitiveness. The Presidency's activities will focus on the following strategic areas: long-term financing of the EU's energy and transportation sectors, investment stability, the security and resilience of European energy and transportation systems and logistics chains, EU military mobility policy, the development of the single market, and enhancing competitiveness.

The security, resilience, and reliability of service provision in the energy and transportation sectors across the EU must become an integral part of EU energy, transportation, and telecommunications policy. The Lithuanian Presidency will seek to ensure adequate EU financial resources to meet the most critical needs of these sectors, and will devote due attention to establishing clear priorities for the security of the protection of critical infrastructure, and service continuity, as well as to enhancing the economic security and resilience of Member States. Particular attention will be paid to coordinated EU action in addressing challenges related to critical infrastructure security, military mobility, and the continuity of essential services.

The cornerstones of energy policy are European energy security, independence, and resilience. Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the rise of hybrid threats, and the risks associated with dependence on external energy suppliers have once again demonstrated that a strongly integrated, resilient, and strategically oriented EU energy policy is essential to ensuring security of supply, competitive energy prices, electrification, and the transition to a climate-neutral economy.

Transport

Europe's transport infrastructure must be modern, safe, and resilient to external shocks. Therefore, the Lithuanian Presidency will focus not only on the expansion and modernization of physical networks but also on protecting transport corridors of particular importance from cyber and hybrid threats, and will strengthen crisis preparedness. During its presidency, Lithuania will seek to make maximum progress in the trilateral negotiations on the Connecting Europe Facility and will also promote political discussions on a long-term EU transport financing model.

Lithuania, as the presiding country, will devote due attention to implementing the Military Mobility Regulation, which harmonizes rules on military transport and cross-border movement at the EU level.

The Presidency will seek maximum progress in negotiations on the Passenger Package, which will make it easier to plan, compare, and purchase trips using different modes of transport on a single platform, while ensuring passenger protection.

The agenda also includes further discussions on the greening of the transport sector, with the aim of ensuring the implementation of the EU's climate change mitigation commitments and the competitiveness of EU industry. Issues related to corporate fleets of zero-emission vehicles, the need for alternative fuel infrastructure, and its planning and development will be among the most important during the Lithuanian Presidency.

With the aim of creating a modern, safe, and competitive railway system in Europe, the Presidency will begin deliberating on legislative proposals regarding the review of the European Railway Agency's mandate and the update of the European Train Drivers Directive.

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The agenda of Lithuania's Presidency will include consistent support for the resilience of European supply chains and transport links with neighboring countries. Efforts will be made to strengthen transport integration with Ukraine and Moldova, including the possible renewal or extension of transport agreements, given the strategic importance of these connections.

In the field of air transport, it is important to strengthen the competitiveness of EU carriers in the global market, ensure a high level of flight safety, and promote sustainable and socially responsible air transport; therefore, progress will be sought in negotiations on the Air Transport Services Regulation, in line with the Aviation Strategy that has been developed.

Recognizing the importance of the maritime transport sector to the EU's competitiveness, security, and resilience, the Lithuanian Presidency will devote due attention to ensuring the continuity of EU maritime industry and port strategies. While maintaining its commitment to promoting the modernization of the maritime transport sector and enhancing its safety and resilience to external factors, Lithuania will seek swift and unanimous agreement among EU Member States in shaping and coordinating the European Union's positions on safe shipping, ship-source pollution, seaport operations, and other related issues.

In the field of inland waterway transport, Lithuania will begin deliberations and seek to formulate the EU Council's position on the directive concerning the recognition of professional qualifications in inland waterway navigation, taking into account the growing importance of this sector in the European transport system.

The Presidency, taking into account the legislative process, is prepared to resume discussions on ending the practice of seasonal time changes.

Telecommunications and Postal Services

In the field of telecommunications, one of the Presidency's key priorities will be to conclude negotiations on the authorization procedure for systems providing mobile satellite services using the harmonized 2 GHz frequency band, which is important for the EU's technological sovereignty, security, and defense, in order to provide clarity to market participants as soon as possible.

Another priority is the creation of a single EU telecommunications market. Particular attention will be paid to negotiations on the Digital Networks Act, which aims to establish uniform rules for the provision of electronic communications services across the EU and to promote the development of cross-border services, increase investment in the development of digital infrastructure, and ensure the resilience of this infrastructure. The Presidency will seek to establish a Council position on this matter, taking into account the deadlines set out in the "One Europe, One Market" roadmap.

During the Presidency, efforts will also be made to adopt a Council decision on the EU's position at the World Radiocommunication Conference 2027 (WRC-27)—to ensure the coordinated development of a radio spectrum policy that serves the EU's interests.

To enhance the EU's technological independence and digital competitiveness, it is essential to ensure cybersecurity and resilience across the EU, while maintaining cooperation and interoperability with allies. The Lithuanian Presidency will work on key legislative proposals aimed at simplifying the EU's cybersecurity framework while ensuring a high level of cybersecurity for citizens, businesses, and the internal market.

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The Presidency will prioritize negotiations on the cybersecurity legislative package:

- ✓ the review of the Cybersecurity Act (CSA2), which aims to agree on strengthening the security of ICT supply chains, improving the EU's cybersecurity certification system, and strengthening ENISA's mandates;
- ✓ amendments to the Network and Information Systems Security (NIS2) Directive, aimed at agreeing on the simplification of cybersecurity requirements, increasing legal clarity, and ensuring more consistent implementation of the directive across the EU.

The Presidency will also continue negotiations on the Digital *Omnibus* Package, particularly the parts related to the simplification of cybersecurity provisions, and will seek to accelerate its adoption and implementation, with a special focus on reducing the administrative burden.

The Lithuanian Presidency will also prioritize the implementation and improvement of the EU *Cyber Blueprint*. Efforts will be made to agree on a common EU taxonomy for cyber incidents and crises and to deepen cooperation among EU Member States.

The Lithuanian Presidency will advance discussions on horizontal and sectoral cybersecurity initiatives aimed at achieving the long-term goal of European cybersecurity and technological preparedness, such as the implementation of the European Cybersecurity Action Plan for Health, and transformative technologies (6G, quantum technologies, and the transition to post-quantum cryptography).

In the postal sector, the Presidency will launch negotiations and seek to establish a partial EU Council position on the EU Delivery Services Act, which aims to ensure the financial sustainability of the universal postal service and create a level playing field for all operators in the postal market. Lithuania will promote constructive and results-oriented negotiations to ensure that the new legal framework reduces the administrative burden on businesses and institutions and promotes the development of high-quality postal services in remote areas, both domestically and across borders. There are plans to organize an expert-level conference on the proposed changes to the postal sector and their potential impact on consumers and the single market.

Digitalization

The Lithuanian Presidency will promote the Union's digital policy initiatives that enhance competitiveness, European technological leadership, and strengthen trust and the resilience of the internal market.

Building on the European Data Union strategy, the Presidency will seek to ensure coordinated work within the Council to increase data availability for the development of artificial intelligence, simplifying EU data regulation, and strengthening the EU's global position in the areas of international data flows and technological sovereignty, while maintaining an appropriate level of protection for public institutions, businesses, and citizens, as well as legal certainty.

With the aim of promoting a competitive and digital European economy, facilitating business operations in the single market, and contributing to the creation of a uniform and secure environment for digital interaction between the private and public sectors, the Presidency will seek to conclude trilogue negotiations on the proposal for a regulation establishing the European Business Digital Wallet.

The European Business Wallet should form the digital infrastructure for the "28th Regime" strategy "Digital First" by simplifying cross-border interactions and reducing the administrative burden. In addition, the European Business Wallet should contribute to the practical implementation of the "digital by default" principle, creating more favorable conditions for the growth and expansion of EU companies and strengthening their competitiveness.

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The Lithuanian Presidency, seeking to reduce the burden *of the acquis* in the field of digital data while maintaining the same level of protection and enhancing competitiveness, will also strive to achieve maximum progress in the trilogue negotiations on the Digital *Omnibus* Package.

As the country holding the presidency in the area of Europe's capacity to develop and deploy digital infrastructure, the presiding country will seek to finalize the EU Council's position on the Act on the Development of Cloud Computing and Artificial Intelligence, while maintaining cooperation and interoperability with allies. This initiative is particularly important for addressing the capacity gap in the EU's cloud and artificial intelligence infrastructure and aims to at least triple the capacity of EU data centers over the next 5–7 years, as well as to support a common EU-wide cloud policy in the areas of public administration and public procurement.

Energy

The Presidency will focus its efforts on strengthening the resilience and protection of critical energy infrastructure and ensuring the necessary funding. Efforts will also be made to increase Europe's energy independence by accelerating electrification, the development of local renewable energy, and the decarbonization of the energy system, while ensuring the integration of the EU energy market and cross-border interconnectivity. At the same time, efforts will be made to strengthen the EU's support for Ukraine and Moldova.

Energy Security and the Protection of Critical Energy Infrastructure

Given the tense geopolitical situation and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, it is of the utmost importance to ensure the European Union's energy security. During war or hybrid attacks, critical energy infrastructure becomes one of the primary targets, with the aim of severely disrupting the functioning of states and economic activity. The Presidency will seek to ensure sustainable and adequate EU funding for measures to protect critical energy infrastructure. To this end, it will be important to conclude negotiations on the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2028–2034, the Connecting Europe Facility, and the Networks Package, so that issues related to the financing of European energy security and resilience to the threats posed by climate change are adequately addressed.

The Presidency will actively continue the implementation of the "REPowerEU" plan to end the European Union's dependence on unreliable energy sources, prevent manipulation of energy markets, and ensure market conditions conducive to competitive energy prices. The implementation of the "REPowerEU" plan will aim to phase out Russian oil from the EU market.

The Presidency will work to establish the Council's position on legislation regarding energy supply security, covering gas supply security, preparedness for risks in the electricity sector, and the regulation of mandatory oil reserves. Improving these legislative measures is crucial to ensuring effective preparedness for potential energy supply disruptions and to increasing the resilience of the EU's energy system to threats, including hybrid and cyberattacks, as well as disruptions caused by climate change.

The Presidency, in cooperation with partner countries, will seek to ensure that the European Union imposes stricter restrictions on the activities of Russia's shadow fleet. This fleet helps Russia circumvent Western sanctions and evade the oil price caps set by the G7, and also poses a threat to cables and pipelines in the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, and other European waters. The Presidency will take further measures—expanding the list of sanctioned vessels and related companies, continuing discussions on a ban on maritime services, restrictions on strategic Russian energy projects, and the implementation of a common EU maritime surveillance system.

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Strengthening the EU's energy network infrastructure, market integration, and ensuring energy affordability

A well-functioning EU energy market is essential for security of supply and price stability as the energy system transitions toward greater electrification. Existing infrastructure gaps, limited cross-border interconnectivity, and market segmentation restrict the flexibility of electricity supply and increase the risk of price spikes. Targeted investments in strategic cross-border energy networks and interconnections, along with the implementation of regulatory measures to ensure flexibility, resilience, and competition, are priority objectives. The Presidency considers the Networks Package to be a key instrument for achieving these objectives and, if the situation in the negotiations so requires, will seek a political agreement on it in the trilateral dialogues. The Presidency will also seek to strengthen the integration of the European energy market by implementing
the objectives of the "One Europe, One Market" roadmap and the Electrification Action Plan. In the trilogues, the Presidency will seek consensus on the Electricity Network Charges Regulation and will continue work on implementing the Affordable Energy Action Plan, which is necessary to ensure more affordable energy for consumers and businesses, while also creating conditions for economic growth and industrial competitiveness.

Expanding renewable and clean energy sources and increasing energy independence

In order to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels, increase the EU's energy independence, and combat climate change, the Presidency will seek to promote competitive domestic production of renewable and clean energy and to make more effective use of the EU's own natural, technological, and infrastructure resources to create a decarbonized and reliable energy system. To accelerate the integration of renewable energy, it is essential to modernize and expand grid infrastructure, particularly cross-border interconnections, which are crucial for ensuring a stable and competitive electricity market. It is also important to ensure market flexibility by promoting the development of storage facilities and empowering consumers to become active market participants. It is also necessary, as the pace of electrification increases, to ensure that renewable energy actually replaces fossil fuels in the heating, transportation, and industrial sectors.

The Presidency will seek to establish the EU Council's position on the Energy Union and the reform of the climate policy governance system, including the phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies. It will also seek progress in negotiations on the Strategic Guidelines for the post-2030 period. To this end, it is necessary to improve the existing legal framework for energy efficiency and renewable energy and to ensure that the 2030 targets are achieved through the most cost-effective measures, so that EU member states can plan record-breaking investments in energy infrastructure, the deployment of clean technologies, and innovation.

The Presidency will seek progress in establishing uniform EU standards to ensure the sustainable operation of data centers. The operation and expansion of data centers must be based on mandatory minimum sustainability criteria and the efficient use of energy and infrastructure resources. It is also necessary to take into account the capacities of Member States' energy systems and grids.

The Presidency will seek to conclude deliberations on two important legislative proposals concerning nuclear safety and the decommissioning of nuclear power plants. Efforts will be made to conclude negotiations on the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation and Decommissioning of Nuclear Power Plants and the Ignalina Program Regulation, thereby contributing to ensuring a high level of nuclear safety and the smooth implementation of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant decommissioning program.

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Support for Ukraine and Moldova and Their Energy Integration

Europe's energy security is inextricably linked to the security of Ukraine and Moldova and their integration into the EU's energy system. Substantial, effective, and rapid support for Ukraine's energy security and for the protection and restoration of the country's energy infrastructure must remain one of the European Union's top priorities. The Presidency will continue to provide active political, humanitarian, and expert support to Ukraine, with the aim of increasing the resilience of its energy system, ensuring a reliable energy supply, and contributing to the integration of Ukraine and Moldova into the European energy market.

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AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES COUNCIL

Agriculture and fisheries are inextricably linked to Europe's food security, economic competitiveness, the vitality of rural and coastal areas, and the sustainable use of natural resources. In the face of geopolitical, economic, and climate changes, Europe's agriculture and fisheries sectors need predictable rules, adequate investment, and the ability to adapt to new challenges.

The upcoming new EU financial period will be crucial in shaping the long-term direction of European agricultural and fisheries policy. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring a smooth transition to the 2028–2034
and the shaping of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) after 2027, with the aim of ensuring long-term policy stability, adequate funding, clear and proportionate rules, and an appropriate balance between common European objectives and the needs of Member States.

Competitive European Agriculture After 2027

During Lithuania's Presidency, discussions on the future CAP will be closely linked to the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2028–2034, which establishes the new EU funding structure.

Lithuania, as the presiding country, will seek to finalize the Council's position on the remaining provisions of the CAP Regulation, reflecting the decisions adopted at the MFF level. Once the European Parliament has adopted its position, efforts will also be made to achieve as much progress as possible in the interinstitutional negotiations. If required by the course of the legislative process, the Lithuanian Presidency will also seek agreement on transitional measures to ensure the continuity of support and legal certainty.

In the interinstitutional negotiations, the main focus will be on the key provisions of the CAP Regulation concerning interventions, eligibility criteria, and the implementation system, as well as on related amendments to the Common Market Organization (CMO) Regulation.

The Lithuanian Presidency will strive to ensure that the final CAP legislative package provides for simpler rules that are understandable to beneficiaries, a reduced administrative burden, and sufficient flexibility for Member States, while taking into account the specific resilience needs of different regions, including those along the EU's eastern border.

Resilient and Secure European Food Systems

The Lithuanian Presidency will pay constant attention to the situation in agricultural markets and food supply security, as well as to rapid responses to market disruptions, by strengthening the resilience of food supply chains and ensuring adequate protection for European producers.

The Lithuanian Presidency will engage in active dialogue with Member States regarding the proposed updated directive on unfair trading practices in the agricultural and food supply chain and will seek progress in reconciling Member States' positions.

It will be important to balance high animal welfare standards with the feasibility of implementing new requirements, taking into account the differing conditions in Member States. The Lithuanian Presidency will pay particular attention to negotiations on the protection of animals during transport and will seek pragmatic and workable solutions based on science and practical experience.

In the area of food and feed safety, clearer and more effective rules must ensure a high level of protection for people, animals, and the environment. Lithuania will seek progress in negotiations with the European Parliament on
the simplification of the "Omnibus X" package.

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A Stronger and More Viable EU Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector

The Lithuanian Presidency will strive to enhance the resilience of the EU fisheries and aquaculture sector by ensuring the sustainable achievement of social, economic, and environmental goals. Priority will be given to funding for the EU's Common Fisheries Policy under the 2028–2034 multiannual financial framework. Efforts will be made to reach an agreement on a regulation establishing specific conditions for support to the EU fisheries and aquaculture sector. The primary objectives will be to promote the sector's development, increase its competitiveness, support the modernization of the fleet and the energy transition, and ensure long-term stability.

To achieve these objectives, work will continue in light of the conclusions of the evaluation of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy, with a particular focus on regulatory simplification and reducing the administrative burden. In the Council of the EU, efforts will be made to reach a consensus on the regulation of the European Maritime, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) and on amendments to legislation establishing multiannual fisheries management plans.

Lithuania will coordinate preparations for sessions of regional fisheries management organizations, joint committee meetings, and negotiations under EU fisheries partnership agreements, ensuring that they are ready in a timely manner. Efforts will be made to accelerate the adoption of amendments to fishing opportunity regulations, ensuring sustainable resource management and predictability for EU vessels. Work will also be carried out on a new-generation system of autonomous tariff quotas (ATQs) based on sustainability criteria, balancing the raw material supply needs of the EU processing industry with the interests of EU producers.

In light of the European Commission's Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture by 2040, efforts will be made to formulate political guidelines for the Council of the EU on strengthening the EU's external fisheries policy and negotiating positions, ensuring the sustainable management of shared resources and fair competitive conditions for EU vessels.

All of these priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency will be united by the goal of creating a long-term vision for the EU fisheries and aquaculture sector, balancing its economic viability with the sustainability of fish stocks and the well-being of communities dependent on the sector.

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ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL

Climate change, pollution, and the loss of biodiversity are fundamental challenges of our time, and addressing them requires immediate and coordinated action.

Climate change is closely linked to global security, peace, and sustainable development. Having set a 2040 climate target, the EU remains committed to its climate action agenda, while also using diplomatic means to encourage other countries to reduce global emissions and strive for climate neutrality.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has further underscored the need to reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports and accelerate the transition to a climate-neutral, resource-efficient, and circular economy, as well as to pay greater attention to the synergies between nature restoration and defense measures.

During its Presidency, Lithuania will seek to ensure that the green transition contributes to building a stronger, more resilient, and more competitive Europe, while protecting natural resources, pursuing the goal of net-zero emissions, and ensuring the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across all sectors.

To achieve these goals, Lithuania will focus heavily on negotiations regarding the first EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS I), as well as the remaining parts of the EU's post-2030 climate policy framework and circular economy objectives.

Climate Change Mitigation

The European continent is one of the fastest-warming regions, and extreme weather events—heat waves, droughts, and floods—are increasingly posing a direct threat to human health, infrastructure, and economic stability. Therefore, decisive and immediate action is needed to ensure a sustainable and secure future.

As the presiding country, Lithuania will actively contribute to the EU's efforts to consistently pursue the goal of climate neutrality by 2050 and will prioritize the package for implementing the EU's 2040 climate target. During the Presidency, significant progress will be sought in negotiations on the post-2030 climate policy framework. The main focus will be on the review of the EU's first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement, as well as on the setting of Member States' national greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction and removal targets and flexibility measures, including the responsible use of international credits.

To achieve the goal of climate neutrality, it is essential to reduce CO_2 emissions from road transport, which still account for about 30 percent of the EU's total net CO_2 emissions. The Lithuanian Presidency will work to conclude negotiations on new CO_2 standards for passenger cars and light commercial vehicles to facilitate a gradual transition to the use of fully zero-emission vehicles.

Enhancing Long-Term Resilience

Europe's natural environment, waters, and seas continue to face various negative pressures; therefore, the Lithuanian Presidency will place significant emphasis on enhancing long-term resilience. By improving the condition of natural ecosystems, the aim will be to ensure the closely related well-being of society and stable food security, as well as to strengthen preparedness for and protection against extreme events.

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To ensure systematic, consistent, and comprehensive preparedness and to increase the EU's overall resilience to climate change, the Lithuanian Presidency will seek progress in negotiations on the package for an Integrated European Climate Resilience and Risk Management System.

The Lithuanian Presidency will continue to focus on strengthening the resilience of water resources and implementing the European Water Resilience Strategy. Efforts will be made to ensure a balance between the sustainable use of water resources, the protection and resilience of aquatic ecosystems, and the EU's strategic autonomy and competitiveness.

The Presidency will also be prepared to launch discussions on the revision of the Marine Strategy Framework and the Maritime Spatial Planning Directives, which are necessary to ensure coherent marine governance and create conditions for improving the state of the seas, while increasing resilience to climate change.

Taking into account the forthcoming report by the European Environment Agency on the state of Europe's nature and the ongoing preparations for the implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation, the Lithuanian Presidency will promote discussions and the exchange of best practices on the restoration of nature and ecosystems in the EU and the improvement of their condition.

Circular Economy and Zero Pollution

During its Presidency, Lithuania will seek to create conditions for sustainable development and enhanced competitiveness, while ensuring effective pollution prevention, high environmental protection standards, and adherence to the principle of circularity. Lithuania will be prepared to discuss the Circular Economy Act, which aims to accelerate decarbonization and the transition to a circular economy, thereby enhancing the EU's economic security, ensuring a unified market for secondary raw materials, and promoting the demand for and supply of high-quality recycled materials.

Simplification for Sustainable Competitiveness

To achieve its environmental goals, the EU has established a robust legal framework covering key objectives: improving air, water, and soil quality; protecting biodiversity; reducing pollution; and building a more sustainable circular economy. However, it is essential to simplify EU legislation and reduce the administrative burden, while strengthening competitiveness, maintaining high environmental standards, and ensuring the public's right to participate in decision-making and to seek redress through the courts.

As the presiding country, Lithuania will seek consensus on the Environmental Simplification *Omnibus* package and explore opportunities to simplify rules related to the circular economy, industrial emissions, environmental impact assessments, and permitting. This will ensure tangible practical benefits for public authorities and businesses, including SMEs.

International Climate and Environmental Protection Agenda

The Presidency will seek to ensure that ambitious global and regional environmental and climate policies and multilateralism are maintained, particularly in preparation for international negotiations on climate change, biodiversity, plastics, air pollution, chemicals, and waste management.

As the presiding country, Lithuania will seek to effectively represent the EU's priorities at the Bonn session of the subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in preparation for the upcoming COP32 Conference of the Parties. The main focus will be on the second review of collective progress in implementing the Paris Agreement, the achievement of the new climate finance target for 2035, and the approval of the UNFCCC budget for 2027–2028.

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With the aim of ensuring a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment and preventing the adverse effects of chemicals and waste on human health and the environment, Lithuania will represent the EU's interests at the joint meeting of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions.

Lithuania will coordinate the positions and actions of EU member states to advance negotiations on an international, legally binding treaty on plastics.

As the presiding country, Lithuania will seek concerted and ambitious solutions to reduce air pollution during the review of the Gothenburg Protocol to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP). As chair of the 65th session of the CLRTAP Working Group on Strategies and Review, Lithuania will promote constructive dialogue with the aim of making progress in strengthening international cooperation and policies on air pollution and air quality.

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EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE, AND SPORTS COUNCIL

The Education, Youth, Culture, and Sports Council is laying a solid foundation for Europe's future: Decisions are made to ensure the most favorable conditions for public well-being, with the aim of creating an environment where education and a focus on youth help society grow, culture opens the door to creativity, and sports promote all-around development.
The topics on the agenda—ranging from quality education and youth affairs to culture and sports—are directly linked to the EU's competitiveness and unity.
In the context of rapid technological, demographic, and geopolitical changes, investment in people is a long-term guarantee of European cohesion and the flourishing of European values; therefore, efforts will be made to ensure that these areas become effective strategic tools for building a strong, open, and inclusive Europe.

Education

One of the most important legislative issues during Lithuania's Presidency will be the new-generation "Erasmus+." As the presiding country, Lithuania will participate in interinstitutional negotiations and, building on the progress made, will work constructively to contribute to a final agreement by the end of the trio presidency cycle.

An important part of the Skills Mobility Initiative is the Regulation on the Portability of Qualifications and Skills (Skills Mobility Act). The regulation aims to facilitate the portability of qualifications, establish a common EU standard for digital qualifications, thereby promoting worker mobility and helping to address skill shortages in the EU labor market. Building on the progress made, the Presidency will seek to advance negotiations on this Regulation.
Under the overarching theme "Attractive Careers for a Secure Future," the Lithuanian Presidency will focus its education agenda primarily on the teaching professions. Discussions on the Teachers' Agenda will continue, promoting political dialogue on how to enhance the attractiveness, sustainability, and professional development of teaching careers across all sectors of education. The discussions and events organized during the Presidency will aim to contribute to shaping a European policy response that helps Member States attract, retain, and support education professionals.

Youth

In the area of youth policy, Lithuania, as the presiding country, will seek to strengthen young people's participation in democratic life and ensure that their voices are heard in European Union decision-making.

The main focus will be on young people's digital literacy, constructive dialogue, and safe participation in the digital space. These areas will be linked to youth citizenship, emotional well-being, and safety.

The Lithuanian Presidency will continue the 12th cycle of the European Union Youth Dialogue, based on Objective 4 of the European Union Youth Strategy, "Information and Constructive Dialogue." Measures will be sought to help young people critically evaluate information, act responsibly in the digital environment, and participate meaningfully in public and democratic life.

The European Union Youth Conference will examine the impact of the digital environment and social media on young people's emotional well-being, civic engagement, and safety. Based on the recommendations of the youth delegates, Council conclusions on youth empowerment in the digital age will be drafted, with the aim of strengthening young people's psychological, civic, and democratic resilience.

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Taking into account the results of the European Union Youth Dialogue and proposals from Member States, negotiations will begin on a resolution regarding the new European Union Youth Strategy.

Culture

In the field of culture, the main focus will be on progress in legislative processes.

The Presidency will seek to conclude interinstitutional negotiations on the "AgoraEU" program and on the decision governing the implementation of the European Capitals of Culture initiative for the period 2034–2047. It will also seek progress in negotiations on the European Heritage Label and on the proposal for the EU KIDS ACT, which aims to strengthen the protection of minors in the digital environment, reduce risks to their safety, health, and well-being, ensure the safer development and use of digital services, and provide protection against harmful content, unwanted contact, and features that promote addiction, as well as on the revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

The Presidency will emphasize the role of culture in strengthening the resilience of societies—by fostering democratic values, strengthening civic awareness, empowering communities, and highlighting the contribution of the cultural and creative sectors to the EU's competitiveness.

Sports

Physical activity and sports are increasingly important in people's lives, as they promote health, enhance well-being, and bring communities together.

The Presidency will seek progress in negotiations on the revision of the EU recommendation on physical activity for health. Lithuania will seek to provide Member States with clearer guidance on how to develop effective cross-sectoral mechanisms and will promote higher-quality data collection and monitoring to inform the development of more sustainable policies.

As the presiding country, Lithuania will seek to strengthen the key features of the European model of sport, based on shared European values. By highlighting the economic and social value of sports and physical activity and encouraging greater youth participation, the aim will be to ensure the long-term viability of this sector throughout Europe.

The Lithuanian Presidency will invite Member States to join the discussion on raising the profile of the sports and physical activity sector and strengthening its role in society.

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