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

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Good organisational and substantive preparation for the Presidency and its implementation is one of the Estonian Government's six priorities. Meeting this challenge will require clear leadership, thorough planning and dedication from all parties, starting from the Government members and Ministry Heads, to the Estonian Permanent Representation to the European Union, and last but not least to the members of the support personnel. The Members of Parliament (*the Riigikogu*) will also assume an important role as representatives of Estonia. Estonian nationals having work experience in European Union institutions too can contribute significantly to the success of the Estonian Presidency.

The Presidency will be a united effort on the part of the whole nation; it will provide opportunities not only to the public sector but also to Estonian businesses and the social economy sector.

The aim of the Action Plan for Preparations of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union is to clarify the tasks and activities necessary for preparing the Presidency, and specify their time frame along with those who will be responsible. This Action Plan focuses on the development of the capabilities necessary for the optimal functioning of the EU Presidency as a system and contains the principles underlying the preparation as well as specific deadlines. This Action Plan will serve as a planning document and guideline for all parties involved and will be amended as appropriate. The Government will implement the Action Plan with the assistance of the Government Committee preparing the Action Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Action Plan, Version III, was approved the 10 December 2015 session of the Government of the Republic. The Cabinet meeting of 10 August 2016 approved a new schedule for the preparations for Estonia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union. This Action Plan reflects the latest amendments.

## 1 GENERAL

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

The Presidency of the Council of the European Union, (hereinafter *the Council*), rotates among all EU Member States every 6 months. Estonia will hold the Presidency of the Council (hereinafter *the Presidency*) in the second half of 2017.

The main substantive task of the Presidency is to direct the legislative agenda of the European Union (hereinafter the *EU*) and to formulate the policies of the institution itself through different tiers of decision-making in the Council. The Presidency represents the Council in negotiations with the European Parliament (hereinafter the *EP*) under the ordinary legislative procedure. The Presidency also represents the Council, in matters within its jurisdiction, in relations with other EU institutions, third countries and the public. Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Council (hereinafter the *EC*) in which Estonia is represented by the Prime Minister, has been the major strategic body setting the agenda of the Council in relation to the selection of issues, political priorities and the pace of negotiations.

The scale and scope of legislative drafting required by the Presidency varies and rests on both the initiatives of the European Commission and the political priorities of the Member States, the Council and other institutions. The Presidency is normally prepared to lead negotiations on 500 to 700 pieces of draft legislation (including both legislation and political documents),<sup>2</sup> which are not equally distributed across policy areas. Under the leadership of Mr Jean-Claude Juncker, the current President of the European Commission, the Commission has taken a direction towards less legislative output, which may affect the number of legislative initiatives to be processed during the Estonian Presidency. Latvia, whose Presidency coincided with the beginning of a new Commission's term of office, worked on 302 drafts. The priority issues of the Presidency are normally discussed at informal ministerial meetings, held in the country holding the Council Presidency, as well as at various conferences and workshops.

By the end of the Presidency, approximately one third of all negotiated drafts are formally adopted<sup>3</sup>. Over the years and particularly after the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, the ordinary legislative procedure (formerly known as the co-decision procedure) has gained importance. Reaching an agreement with the EP as co-legislator requires increasingly more time and effort from the Presidency. The average processing time of an ordinary legislative procedure, from the submission of draft legislation to its adoption, is 1 to 2 years. Therefore, when assessing the outcomes of the Presidency, progress towards advancing negotiations on drafts during the Presidency is as important as their official adoption.

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<sup>2</sup> Poland, for example, prepared approximately 600 draft proposals, Cyprus prepared 500, and Lithuania 562.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the list of Denmark's achievements included 209 Acts (those proposed by the Council itself as well as co-decisions with the European Parliament).

In order to ensure the consistency of the Council's substantive work, three successive EU Presidencies draft an 18-month joint programme. Estonia is working in a 'Trio' with Bulgaria (scheduled for the first half of 2018) and Austria (scheduled for the second half of 2018).

The Presidency is responsible for managing the Council's work – chairing meetings in the Council, organising bilateral and/or multilateral meetings, offering and mediating compromises both within the Council and with the EP, signing and executing agreements, and, between these meetings, advancing the work of achieving agreements and forming consensus. The Presidency is also responsible for planning meetings in the Council, preparing agendas for those meetings and making sure that they reflect the relevant issues, substantive tasks, priorities and interests.<sup>4</sup> The Presidency is responsible for the application of the Council's Rules of Procedure and for the proper organisation of discussions.

The Council's leadership work operates in three administrative spheres: 1) the political – involving the Ministers, 2) the Permanent Representatives (and their deputies) who prepare the work of the Council, and 3) the experts – the working party chairs. Ministers and permanent representatives are responsible for holding negotiations on the most complicated and politically sensitive issues. The Council meets in 10 different configurations<sup>5</sup> of ministers; during the course of 6 months approximately 30-50 meetings of the different Council configurations take place. Ministry-level meetings also take place within the Eurogroup, which usually comes together in the framework of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council; under the Latvian Presidency, the Eurogroup met nine times. Each configuration of the Council also may have an informal meeting, held in the country holding the Presidency, to facilitate a more open exchange of views and discussions on general political issues<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> The exceptions are the Foreign Affairs Council, hereinafter the 'FAC', and the EC, which are not chaired by the Presidency, although it does participate in the shaping of their agendas.<sup>3]</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Nine of these configurations are chaired by the Minister of the Member State holding the Presidency, while the Foreign Affairs Council is usually chaired by the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. However, when the FAC discusses common trade policy issues, it is presided over by the representative of the Member State holding the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU.

<sup>6</sup> The only official meeting of Ministers which is held in the Member State is the meeting of the Eurogroup Ministers, which takes place within the unofficial framework of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council.

Table 1. Councils during the Presidency periods of 2014-I–2015-I.

Configurations (and fields) of the council	Frequency and format of meetings (during the Presidency period)						The responsible (co-responsible) Estonian ministry
	Greece (2014 I)		Italy (2014 II)		Latvia (2015 I)		
	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	
General Affairs Council (including enlargement, institutional issues, etc.)	4	2	6	2	5	0	MFA
Foreign Affairs Council	10	3	8	3	9	4	MFA (MD)
Economic and Financial Affairs Council	5	1	5	1	5	1	MoF
Justice and Home Affairs Council	2	1	2	1	2	1	MoJ, MoI
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council	2	1	3	2	2	1	MSA
Competitiveness Council (including the internal market, industry and research)	2	1	2	1	2	1	MEAC (MER)
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council	4	2	4	2	4	1	MEAC
Agriculture and Fisheries Council	5	1	5	1	5	1	MoA (ME)
Environment Council	2	1	2	1	2	1	MoE
Education, Youth and Culture Council	2	0	2	2	1	0	MER, MC
<i>Total</i>	38	13	39	16	37	11	
		51		55		48	

Source: The EU Secretariat of the Government Office

At the officials' level, the meetings of the two configurations of Coreper<sup>7</sup> (Coreper II and Coreper I) are chaired by the Permanent Representative and Deputy Permanent Representative of the country holding the Presidency, while the work of approximately 200 working parties or committees is chaired by the national experts of the country holding the Presidency<sup>8</sup>. Over the six months of the Presidency, between 1600 and 2000 official meetings are held in various formats of the Council. Added to this are meetings with various informal formats as well as bilateral and multilateral negotiations. For example, approximately 130 official tripartite meetings (called *trilogues*<sup>9</sup>) are held, at which the Presidency is represented either by the Minister responsible for the area involved, the Permanent Representative or Deputy Permanent Representative. Added to this are preparatory technical meetings for the trilogues, at which the Presidency is represented by the Chairs of the Council's working

<sup>7</sup> The Committee of Permanent Representatives (Coreper) is responsible for preparing the work of the Council and for carrying out the tasks entrusted to it by the Council. The meetings of Coreper are chaired, depending on the agenda, either by the Permanent Representative (Coreper II) or the Deputy Permanent Representative (Coreper I) of the country holding the Presidency.

<sup>8</sup> This number varies; some operate on an ad hoc basis and do not meet regularly.

<sup>9</sup> The participants are the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council.

parties. The estimated number of such preparatory meetings is 2 to 3 times higher than the number of official trilogues (260–390). Thus, up to 450 meetings at various levels may be held over six months with the participation of the three institutions.

Holding the Presidency entails organisational obligations also for the National Parliament (*Riigikogu*): meetings with the Chairpersons of national parliaments, Chairpersons and members of the EU Affairs Committees, Chairpersons of the Foreign Affairs Committees and/or National Defence Committees.

## **1.2 Preparations for the Presidency**

On 24 May 2012, the Estonian Government established a committee for preparing for the Presidency (hereinafter the *Presidency Coordination Committee*). The committee is chaired by the Secretary of State and the first meeting of the committee was held on 20 June 2012. During the early phase of preparations, which ran until the end of 2014, information on the Presidency was obtained for thorough analysis both from the EU institutions and from the recent past and future Presidencies of the Council of the EU. The analysis identified all the duties of the Presidency and evaluated Estonia's upcoming duties against its existing administrative capabilities and possibilities as well as made suggestions for capability-building. The first Action Plan for the Presidency, which included decisions concerning the principles of holding the Presidency, was approved by the Government on 30 January 2014.

While the Action Plan will be implemented during 2015-2018, the main activities will be taking place in 2017 due to the new schedule. This necessitates amendments to the central budget and its breakdown by years. When preparing Presidency events (including official and informal meetings hosted by the Presidency) and other related activities, preference is given to solutions which reduce costs while increasing developmental and creative capabilities and facilitate the multiple uses of systems. The central budget of the personnel policy comprises the cost of personnel development (language testing, trainings, paid traineeships), the salaries of the Presidency personnel, financial compensation, travel and subsistence expenses, recruitment costs and the costs of implementing occupational health and safety measures. Besides state resources, the EU structural funds will be used for strengthening the administrative capacity. The central budget of the Presidency also includes the costs of events to be organised, and the related additional tasks at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU (hereinafter *PREU*) or the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU. The external activities of the Presidency are funded from the budgets of the Presidency and the Estonia 100 Programme (hereinafter "Estonia 100") and will be carried out jointly, as far as the new schedule allows. The budget also provides funding for the adaptation of the PREU infrastructure. Budgetary planning and the development of principles for its distribution is the responsibility of the central coordination unit of the Presidency; payments will be partially decentralised.

### ***1.3 Principles of holding the Presidency***

Estonia's aim in holding the Presidency is to be a good pilot whose goal is to guide and direct the Council's activities and the EU law-making process as efficiently as possible, by building consensus and acting as an honest broker.

During its Presidency, Estonia is committed to carrying out all the key duties of the Presidency and striving for a professional and efficient Presidency with an open and transparent working style. The goals set for the Presidency must be sufficiently ambitious yet achievable and targeted to specific solutions.

This Action Plan is based on the premise that the significant improvements in administrative capability achieved during preparations for and implementation of the Presidency can be harnessed in the interests of Estonia after the Presidency. Therefore, the Presidency is an investment in the growth of the knowledge, skills and capabilities of the Estonian civil service and in the increase of our capacities for functioning within the EU.

The coordination of the Presidency will be based on a management model in which the existing national EU coordination system for strategic planning and general management is used, while everyday operational management will take place in permanent representation headquarters in Brussels.

In general, no new coordination mechanisms or structures will be created for the Presidency, but maximum use will be made of the existing EU coordination systems, work organisation and practices as well as of the sectoral expertise of the Ministries. During the preparation for and the tenure of the Presidency, consideration will be given to the temporary expansion of the coordinating system for EU affairs, including the EU Secretariat of the Government Office, the Ministries, the PREU and, according to need, enlisting other Estonian foreign representatives with competence in EU affairs.

The Government will decide, no later than by the beginning of 2017, which post will be responsible for representing the Council and act as its spokesperson in its relations with the European Parliament.

**The central coordination unit** responsible for preparations and implementing the Presidency is the Government Office, whose duties include:

- general coordination, the compilation of the Action Plan and budget, coordinating and ensuring implementation;
- development of the Presidency programme and political priorities in cooperation with the Ministries;
- coordination of recruitment and development of personnel;
- organisation of informal Council meetings and other high-level events;



- coordination of cooperation between the PREU, the Ministries and other national authorities;
- communication with EU institutions and other Member States;
- development and coordination of the implementation of the communications strategy;
- coordination of the programme to showcase Estonia's arts and culture.

Duties of the **Ministries** are as follows:

- preparing and implementing the Action Plan for the Presidency in their policy areas;
- the development and implementation of the policy issues in their area of competence, including chairing working parties and additional working formats, leading, preparing for, and coordinating negotiations; communication with EU institutions and other Member States, including development of contacts with key figures from other Member States and institutions;
- participation in inter-ministerial working groups (networks) and work formats related to the Presidency;
- the partial recruitment and development of personnel;
- organising meetings of experts from relevant fields, as well as seminars and conferences;
- the implementation of the communication plan in their area of competence.

Furthermore, several ministries are involved in performing the horizontal tasks of the Presidency within their area of competence. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for managing and coordinating the preparation and implementation of measures related to security and public order during the Presidency. The Ministry of Finance supports the Government Office in the development and implementation of the personnel policy of the Presidency and the procurement system. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for filling in, if necessary, for the Union's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy in political dialogues with third countries; the functioning of the PREU; contributing to the development and implementation of the cultural programme; advising the organisers of events to ensure the correct protocol, and coordinating the protocol of high-level events<sup>10</sup>. Along with the Estonia 100 team of the Government Office, the Ministry of Culture has a major role in the development and implementation of the cultural programme. All ministries are involved in the work of preparatory working groups, such as those for protocol, procurements, personnel and training, communication. The authority managing the

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<sup>10</sup> These are informal ministerial meetings or conferences at the level of the Ministries or Members of the European Parliament; meetings of Heads of State or Government; and high-level international summits.

parliamentary dimension of the Presidency will be the **Chancellery of the Riigikogu (Parliament)**.

#### **1.4 Shaping policy goals and the Programme of the Presidency**

The work of the institutions is continuous and primarily related to negotiations over legislation and is conducted in the framework of ordinary legislative procedure, or by co-decision with the European Parliament. Therefore, a major part of the substantive work related to the Presidency is a so called legacy work – draft legislation and other pending documents that the Presidency ‘inherits’ from its predecessor, to be continued in negotiations with the European Parliament on behalf of the Council.

As the country holding the Presidency, we must be aware of and carry forward all pending issues; however, the Presidency is also a unique opportunity to effectively direct the work procedures of the Union and to bring forth major issues that should receive particular attention. The Member State holding the Presidency prepares a programme to manage the work and bring forth the cross-sectoral issues and objectives of the Presidency. The **Presidency Programme** defines the issues that will receive more attention during the Estonian Presidency and the presiding country’s approach to those issues. The Presidency Programme builds on the work plans of the EU institutions and the objectives and issues highlighted in Estonia’s EU policy (hereinafter *EUPOL*) for 2015–2019. The Presidency Programme must be a focused strategic document, supplemented and specified by the work programmes of the Council’s formats.

The Presidency Programme is also an important source document for communications purposes. The messages formed through the Programme are central to the Presidency’s communications, which along with the manner of its implementation and visual identity, promotional items and the cultural programme have a significant impact on the identity of Estonia as holder of the EU Presidency.

Our opportunities and limitations for selecting the main themes are determined by the period of the Presidency – the second half of 2017, which coincides with the final phase of the work of the EU institutions (the next elections to the European Parliament will take place in 2019). The second half of 2017 is also when regular local elections in Estonia and general elections in Germany will be held. The Presidency and the choice of issues will inevitably be affected by crises and key events, and especially by potential European Council meetings and other high-level summits.

#### **Guiding principles for the main issues (priorities) of the Presidency**

- **Our options:** when selecting the main issues for the Presidency, we need to consider what is relevant to, and important for, Europe at this time. The selected issues (as well as the programme as a whole) should take into account, and shape, where possible, the work programmes of other institutions (the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament) as well as those of the previous Presidencies and the Trio partners. In relation to the overall political cycles of the EU institutions,

we need to be prepared to lead the discussions in the Council on the EU's multiannual financial framework.

- **Our interests and needs:** when selecting the main issues for the Presidency, we can emphasise the issues and policy areas which are most appropriate from the perspective of regional and national interests. Following Estonia's new EU policy (EUPOL), the Estonian Presidency intends to pay particular attention to the necessary steps towards furthering the single market, to the development of the Energy Union as well as to the strengthening of the EU's Common Foreign Policy and EU relations with the Eastern Partnership. When opting for specific actions or draft acts, we certainly need to consider the feasibility, relevance, sustainability and efficiency of handling those issues.
- **Our strengths:** when selecting the main issues for the Presidency, we should think not only of the possibilities and interests but also of our own strengths. Holding the Presidency will be an opportunity for us to share experiences and further develop the issues at the European level. Therefore, an EUPOL objective relevant across the full range of EU policies will focus on activities aimed at taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the information society and e-solutions.

A potential cross-sectoral or priority issue should, ideally, meet all criteria, i.e. addressing the issue is feasible, relevant and in our interests; there are potential results in the form of specific measures and with these issues we can create added value also for Europe.

The potential themes promoting the information society and e-solutions within all EU policies will be defined in detail in 2016, based on the principles governing the selection of the main themes of EUPOL and the Presidency. The priorities for the Estonian Presidency will be approved by the Government in the first half of 2017.

### **The Trio Programme**

In accordance with the Council's procedure, a Trio Programme will be prepared for the Presidencies of Estonia, Bulgaria and Austria in order to create a general framework for the Presidencies and ensure consistency in the work of the Council over an 18-month period. Joint action by the Trio Presidencies generates the necessary synergy for important processes. In our Trio Programme we want to see connections with the strategic objectives of the European Council to ensure better links between the European Council and the Council of the European Union. The talks on the content of the Trio Programme are based on the targets of the EUPOL.

The Trio Programme will be approved by the General Affairs Council in June 2017. The Trio Presidencies will agree on a detailed schedule for the preparation of the Trio Programme in the autumn of 2016.

## **Fact sheets**

For keeping account of, and to prepare for negotiations on the issues for the Presidency, we will implement the system of fact sheets (*fiche*), following the example of previous Presidencies. A fact sheet is a periodically updated planning and working document which defines the objectives related to a specific EU draft legislation or political document and describes the changes which have taken place in the course of addressing an issue. Fact sheets will be prepared by the relevant ministries (in cooperation with the Estonian Permanent Representation to the European Union) and approved by the Government. Fact sheets will be handled and processed via the Draft Legislation Information System. A list of possible fact sheets will be prepared, under the coordination of the Government Office, in October 2016 and the fact sheets are to be completed from November 2016 to April 2017. The fact sheets for each ministry will be approved by the Government during May-June 2017. The completion of fact sheets also supports the formation of the Programme of the Presidency. The Parliament will also be involved in the process of handling the fact sheets.

## **The model for compiling the Programme of the Presidency**

The Government will approve a draft Trio programme and the working programme of the Estonian Presidency and will be responsible for executing the work of the Presidency.

The EU Affairs Coordination Committee, established with the regulation of the Government, whose members are deputy secretary generals and representatives of constitutional institutions, will be responsible for preparing the content of the Programme. Preparatory work for the Programme will be coordinated by the Government Office's EU Secretariat in cooperation with the Ministries and by involving other possible contributors (think tanks, civil society representatives, and other stakeholders).

Active work with the Programme of the Estonian Presidency will begin in the second half of 2016 and continue until the start of the Presidency. The Government will approve the Programme of the Presidency in June 2017. Ministries will be responsible for preparing working programmes for the formats of the Council in their relevant areas of government.

## 2 PERSONNEL

An important part of preparing for the Presidency is a **Presidency personnel strategy** designed to take the strategic goal of the Presidency to the level of the personnel and to ensure that personnel contributes fully to the achievement of the substantive objectives of the Presidency.

**The implementation of the personnel strategy starts with top executives in the civil service who have a leading role in shaping and tuning the attitudes towards the EU Presidency as a whole.** The experience of previous Presidencies suggests that to have an effective and successful Presidency we need people who view participation in the EU Presidency as a positive challenge and are interested in and wish to contribute to the success of that major ‘Project’. The role of top executives is to make the Presidency an attractive and challenging undertaking that fosters personal fulfilment. However, we should not lose sight of those back in Estonia who do a major part of the ‘homework’ and whose workload will increase significantly during the Presidency.

**The Secretary of State and Secretaries General are responsible for the overall implementation of the Personnel Strategy.** Given the horizontal nature of the EU Presidency and the personnel strategy, the implementation of the strategy is coordinated by the Presidency Coordination Committee. Besides the Presidency Coordination Unit of the Government Office, the strategy is implemented by all ministries and their divisions. **The main burden of the implementation of the strategy lies with HR managers and training/development managers** as well as with the policy managers and members of the EU Coordination Committee who will be responsible for finding, recruiting and retaining a sufficient number of competent and talented workers.

The Presidency personnel strategy is about the development trends and needs of public service in the specific context of the EU Presidency, but in a longer term, it is related to the general development programmes of Estonian public service personnel and contributes to their maximal deployment. Therefore, it is paramount that the Presidency Coordination Unit of the Government Office, the Public Administration and Public Service Department of the Ministry of Finance and the Top Civil Service Excellence Centre of the Government Office cooperate in implementing the personnel strategy.

### ***2.1 Horizontal principles of the personnel strategy of the Presidency***

Taking into account the scale of the EU Presidency, the state’s limited resources and its ambition to be a successful mediator, the personnel strategy is based on a number of horizontal principles.

- **The EU Presidency is of national significance** – its preparation, outcomes and overall success require common cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels.
- **When preparing for and executing the Presidency, maximum use is to be made of the existing structures and available people.** This means that the composition of the

entire Presidency team must be optimal; civil servants are preferred when recruiting the Presidency personnel, using term-based transfers between institutions and considering later use of the Presidency experience for the development of integral and efficient governance.

- **While the Presidency entails an extra workload for the civil service**, the recruitment of additional personnel is considered to be a (temporary) derogation from the plans for the reduction of public service employment numbers. Therefore, the Government Office and Ministries will not reduce the number of their personnel involved in managing the Presidency until 2018. Various forms of working relationships will also be used on a limited basis. Moving the Estonian Presidency to an earlier term will affect the personnel recruitment plan and training schedule. The aim is to fill all additional posts in Tallinn and at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU in Brussels no later than by the beginning of 2017.
- **The personnel strategy is implemented with interagency cooperation.** The horizontal recruitment model and structures are used to ensure appropriate qualification of the personnel executing the Presidency. The participation of the Ministries in preparing for the Presidency entails increased responsibility, while also providing an opportunity to play an active role and to have a say in the Presidency. In addition, it ensures high motivation and contributes towards common goals.
- To ensure the availability of well-prepared and motivated Presidency personnel and their successful work, the **personnel development programmes as well as measures to increase motivation, support and compensation** are being developed based on the intensity of the work as well as on the level of responsibility.

## ***2.2 Personnel needed for performing the tasks of the Presidency and their competence***

The preparation, organisation and implementation of the Presidency require people with different qualifications, knowledge and skills. **The Presidency personnel can be divided into two major groups:**

- **Policy personnel** responsible for preparing the substantive content of the Presidency and executing the Presidency;
- **Support and technical personnel** responsible for coordinating the organisational set-up of the Presidency and the preparatory work for providing practical and technical solutions for the Presidency and all related events.

Given the number of EU issues and working groups, and based on the experiences of previous Presidencies and the structure of the EU coordination system in Estonia, the projected number of the Presidency personnel is 1,300, including 1,000 policy personnel and 300 support

personnel. While the majority of them are currently working as civil servants, a number of additional personnel are required and some services need to be outsourced.

Based on the roles of the Presidency, lessons learned during previous Presidencies and Estonia's experiences with being an EU Member State, an **Excellent Presidency Competence Model** was developed; the model describes the important skills, knowledge and personal qualities required from the Presidency personnel.

### ***2.3 Recruitment of the Presidency personnel***

To recruit working party chairs and deputy chairs, a body of people meeting the criteria for the job of the working party chairs and deputy chairs (called '**the Pool**') was identified. The Pool contains the details concerning approximately 500 people with the potential to fill the role of the working party chair, collected in cooperation between the Ministries and the Presidency Coordination Unit of the Government Office from within and, if necessary, outside the civil service, e.g. officials of EU institutions, people from the private or third sector.

In order to prepare all individuals in the Pool as well as possible to cope with their new responsibilities, development and training activities for the working party chairs and deputy chairs are foreseen to help them elaborate their skills and the knowledge required for the job. The size of the Pool depends on the number of working parties to be chaired by Estonia during the Presidency. The Estonian Presidency will be responsible for chairing approximately 200 working parties, which means that besides finding a head and deputy head for each working party, we need to have a reserve of about 20% for cases where new working (sub) parties are established or other unforeseeable changes are made in the run-up to the Presidency. The composition of the Pool was approved by the Presidency Coordination Committee. In 2016, the Government will approve the working party chairs and deputy chairs.

The Government will also approve the **policy managers** – usually deputy secretary generals – who will be responsible for preparing, implementing, communicating and ensuring the required outcomes of the issues that the programme will focus on.

Other roles (e.g. experts, coordinators, support personnel, etc.) related to the organisation of the Presidency will be filled by the Ministries.

The Government Office will provide support and technical personnel for centrally organised meetings and events. The Ministries responsible for other horizontal roles related to the Presidency will select the personnel for the performance of their relevant duties.

### ***2.4 Personnel development***

**The objective of personnel development in the context of the EU Presidency is to prepare people for a successful Presidency and, in the long term, to improve their qualifications for work in public service.** A key lever for preparing personnel for the Presidency consists of various development activities.

The presidency development activities for the Presidency personnel, with a total financing of EUR 3 million from the EU Structural Funds and the budget of the Ministry of Finance, will be carried out in 2014–2017. In addition to this amount a specific contribution of EUR 615,000 is made to the budget of the Government Office for strategic personnel placements (e.g. seconding people as national experts or for traineeships in EU institutions).

Detailed programmes and descriptions of development and training activities, their target groups, scope, timing and venues as well as organisational criteria are defined in the Presidency Training Programme prepared in 2014. Development and training activities include the development of horizontal competences, knowledge and skills as well as the language skills required for running the Presidency. The knowledge and skills development programmes also include opportunities for traineeship and participating in study trips, strategic personnel placements and workshops provided by EU institutions for the country holding the Presidency. Issue specific professional development and training activities will be the responsibility of the relevant offices and will not be provided horizontally.

While the priority target group for the trainings are working party chairs and deputy chairs, training for other target groups is also foreseen. Depending on the location of the Presidency personnel, personnel development and training events will take place either in Tallinn or in Brussels.

In order to find partners for the implementation of the proposed personnel development and training activities, national and international tenders will be organised. It is important that personnel development and training activities are of high quality and mainly based on active learning methods. Preference is given to paper-free personnel development and training activities.

The main foreign language of the Presidency is English – English will be the language of chairing working party meetings, negotiating with participants, making written text proposals, etc. Language proficiency tests were conducted in the second half of 2015 for potential heads of working parties and other personnel involved in the Presidency in order to establish their English language skills. In order to support language learning, the proposed personnel development and training activities will be conducted mainly in English.

French language training will be available for those officials who will work in formations where French is used as the working language and no translation is provided, and as a motivational measure for those whose English language proficiency is sufficient.



Smooth organisation of personnel training programmes and workshops provided by EU institutions is ensured by cooperation partners chosen by means of a public procurement procedure, supported by a special **central training environment** designed for that purpose.

Personnel development and training activities were launched by stages. In 2014, the focus was on planning a central training programme; in 2015 on public procurement of development and training activities and encouraging personnel to gain experiences related to the Presidency. 2016 and 2017 will be most intensive in terms of personnel development and training. Training is projected to be completed by no later than March 2017. Reports on personnel development and training will be prepared in 2017.

## ***2.5 Support, incentive and compensatory measures***

To ensure the availability of well-prepared and motivated Presidency personnel and their successful work, **support and compensation measures** are developed based on the intensity of the work as well as on the level of responsibility. These measures include:

- development, acknowledgement and observance of common values and attitudes;
- development and training activities and traineeships provided by the state (in the period 2015—2017);
- financial compensation;
- recovery measures;
- recognition;
- career planning for employees.

Amendments will be made to the relevant existing legislation, as appropriate, to make compensatory and incentive measures of the Presidency available.

### 3 ORGANISATION OF EVENTS IN ESTONIA AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENCY

In addition to fulfilling the role of the Presidency in Brussels, a major task is also the organisation of events in Estonia. On the one hand, these are mandatory or traditional meetings; on the other hand, the organisation of events in the country holding the Presidency is an excellent opportunity to introduce the country and its culture. **Events that can be held in Estonia:**

- high-level international summits<sup>11</sup>;
- informal meetings of ministers;
- informal meetings of experts;
- seminars and conferences held under the Presidency;
- visits to Estonia (including visits of the delegations of the European Parliament, Coreper II, Coreper I and PSC<sup>12</sup> Ambassadors, Commissioners of the European Commission);
- meetings of national parliamentary committees, the COSAC<sup>13</sup> plenary meeting and the Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy;

To ensure a consistent level of quality, an organisational standard have been prepared for each event; the standard will serve as a basis for planning resources, procuring services and work division between organisers. The standards are built on the traditions and best practices of previous Presidencies in order to facilitate the organisation of meetings at all levels.

The sheer number of events to be organised and funded by Estonia as holder of the Presidency (between 150 and 200 events, based on the experience of previous Presidencies) and the number of visitors (between 20,000 and 30,000 in the six months of the Presidency) emphasises the need for thorough planning and efficient organisation. **The Central Coordination Unit at the EU Secretariat of the Government Office** is responsible for organising high-level events and coordinating other Presidency events. Expert-level events as well as seminars and conferences held under the Presidency will as a rule be organised by the Ministries or their divisions in accordance with the relevant organisational standards. The central Coordination Unit will provide centralised services to be agreed upon by the end of 2016. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be responsible for the organisation and logistics of the events of the PREU and embassies.

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<sup>11</sup> Another Eastern Partnership Summit, which is traditionally held in a EU member state, may also take place in 2017. A regular EU-Latin American and Caribbean Summit, held in a country of the Association of Caribbean States and an EU-Africa Summit, held in an African country, are also scheduled for the second half of 2017.

<sup>12</sup> The Political and Security Committee which is responsible for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) issues in the EU;

<sup>13</sup> The Conference of Parliamentary Committees for EU Affairs.

National parliaments also have an important role in EU law-making. A number of conferences and meetings to be organised by the Estonian Parliament will reflect the parliamentary dimension of the EU Presidency. The events related to the parliamentary dimension of the Presidency will be coordinated by the Chancellery of the Riigikogu (Parliament).

The protocol and security measures will be established depending on the level of the guests. The State Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be responsible for the **coordination of the event protocol** of the meetings at the levels of Heads of State or Government and Ministers. The State Protocol Department will provide training on the protocol for organisers of expert-level events, issue a manual on the protocol to facilitate the organisation of events and, as appropriate, advise event organisers during the Presidency. Discussions on organisational and protocol-related issues and information exchange between ministries, the Chancellery of the Riigikogu and other stakeholders will be held in the inter-ministerial working group on protocol-related issues and inter-ministerial working group on procurement issues.

**Ensuring the security of events**, i.e. protecting individuals and guarding objects, will be based on the fundamental principles of ensuring public order and security during the Estonian Presidency, formulated by the Ministry of the Interior, and on the security assessment that is periodically updated depending on the level of a meeting, as well as on the Regulation of the Government “Principles for the organisation of the protection of individuals and guarding of objects, implementation methods and the procedure for cooperation”.

### ***3.1 Organisation of events***

Organising a big number of events in Estonia in the period of six months of the Presidency entails considering, among other things, the following:

- events should be resource-efficient, yet, when planning an event, it should be taken into account that each choice may entail extra costs (e.g. transport costs from the airport to a low-rent venue may be higher than savings on the rent);
- the availability of venues and high-quality accommodations, as well as the capacity to ensure guest safety, places limits on planning a number of major events on the same date;
- when planning the calendar of events, the preference is that similar events be organised in succession to reduce the cost of installing equipment;
- according to the Government Office, there are no suitable venues available in Estonia for meetings that can accommodate a large number of participants and also provide facilities for the interpretation of a large number of languages; however, a number of venues can be adapted for that purpose;
- the calendars of Presidency events and local events will be coordinated in cooperation with local authorities;

- stakeholders and NGOs may plan meetings on the same dates as important Presidency meetings or topical meetings that would add a burden on transport and accommodation;
- the choice of venues in Estonia is affected by the limited number of direct flights from Europe. Events should be planned based on the principle that each delegate can travel from their home country to the venue of an event as quickly and with as little effort as possible;
- Estonia will hold the Presidency from July to the end of December and, therefore, weather conditions should be taken into account when planning events, in particular in the last months of the year. The beginning of the six-month term of the Presidency coincides with the tourism season in Estonia, which affects the cost of accommodation and transport.

### **Events calendar planning**

The political calendar of the Presidency comprises three linked calendars: the political calendar of the Presidency, the calendar of meetings in Brussels and the calendar of meetings in Estonia. The central Presidency Coordination Unit of the Government Office is responsible for the calendar of events in Estonia, while the PREU is responsible for the political calendar and the calendar of working parties in Brussels. The political calendar of the Presidency and the events to be held in Estonia will be planned in accordance with the new schedule. It should be borne in mind that the political calendar will be available at the end of November 2016 and the first Presidency events may already take place in the first half of 2017; some events are also scheduled for the first half of 2018. The calendar should be planned taking into account that August is a holiday month for European institutions and no substantial work is done. The national parliaments of the countries holding the Presidency in the second half of a year are also expected to hold the events which the preceding Presidency did not hold; therefore, the number of events for which the Riigikogu is responsible will increase. Previous Presidencies have used various calendar models, distributing the events across the six months of the Presidency (in a state-owned venue of suitable size) or concentrating the events in a couple of months. When planning the calendar of events, the following aspects should be taken into account:

- the calendar takes into account the priorities of the Presidency, the needs of the responsible Ministries and the timing of large-scale conferences and high-level meetings in order to avoid overlapping;
- excluding weekends and national and European holidays, approximately 90 working days will be available for events in the second half of 2017. Preparatory events for the Presidency may also take place before 2018;
- the calendar on the website of the Presidency should be easily updated and user-friendly (including venues and descriptions of routes).

## **The central Coordination Unit for the Presidency**

The central Coordination Unit at the Government Office comprises two teams: the Event Coordination Team and the Services Team. **The Event Coordination Team** is responsible for planning and organising events in the run up to and during the Presidency, communicating with partners, including local authorities, embassies of other countries and the Organising Committee of Estonia 100. **The Services Team** is responsible for ensuring services in accordance with the approved standard, planning tenders and advising organisers of the events. Duties of the central Coordinating Unit at the Government Office:

- horizontal coordination of all events related to the Estonian Presidency, resource planning and coordination of the events calendar;
- organisation of informal meetings of ministers and summits;
- organisation of high-level workshops and conferences;
- centralised provision of support services for events organised by other authorities in order to save money.

### **Duties of the Ministries are as follows:**

- preparing an events programme in the area of government of each Ministry in cooperation with the central Coordination Unit, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior;
- organisation of informal meetings of experts;
- organisation of expert-level seminars and conferences.

## **3.2 Services**

Proper organisation of Presidency events requires professional services. The impression created during an event will determine whether a participant wishes to return to Estonia as a tourist and would recommend Estonia as a tourist destination, thus supporting our tourism sector and economy after the Presidency. Such impressions are created from the moment a guest arrives at the Airport, and at the accommodations and extend to the catering.

### **Accreditation**

The organisation of an event comprises a number of activities. A key factor for the collection of preliminary information necessary for the smooth organisation of events (e.g. catering, special requirements for access and security) is a **comprehensive and user-friendly delegate accreditation system**. Besides enabling the identification of individuals (e.g. by using badges), the system should support all fields of organisation, including planning the calendar and transport, booking accommodation, and keeping account of souvenirs. In order to find or

commission software solutions facilitating the organisation of events, the Government Office has signed a cooperation agreement with the Centre of Registers and Information Systems.

### **Reception at the airport**

The majority of delegates will arrive in Estonia through Tallinn Airport. Heads of State or Government, ministers, guests of equal protocol level and the accompanying delegations are greeted in the airport's VIP lounge.

Delegates travelling separately from the head of their delegation and participants of expert-level meetings are provided information about transport, about Tallinn and Estonia and the event at the airport Presidency information desk.

### **Delegation liaison officers**

At ministerial meetings, liaison officers act as an interface between organisers and delegations, accompanying and advising guests during the programme (arrival and departure, organisational information, access paths, special requests, etc.). When recruiting and training liaison officers who will represent Estonia, special attention should be paid to their language proficiency, experience and organisational skills.

### **Transport**

During Heads of State or Government and minister-level events, transport services are provided using VIP cars and minibuses. Transport can be outsourced either as a full service with a chauffeur or vehicles only. Delegates travelling separately from the head of their delegation and participants at expert-level meetings will use public transport or taxi service. Coaches are used for the transport of heads of delegations and delegates to and from event venues. During expert-level meetings, coaches are used if the number of participants requiring transport to and from the same venue is sufficient, the distance is long and the location is not easily accessible by public transport. Cooperation with local authorities is essential to ensure the maintenance of roads, streets and public spaces and the availability of public transport.

### **Conference service**

Estonia does not have a multifunctional conference centre that would allow the organisation of meetings, seminars and conferences that meet the established Presidency standards at the same venue during the six months of the Presidency. This means that a number of venues, which should be adapted to suit the purpose, must be used, either at different times or at the same time. Given the need to adapt the venues, the most resource-sustainable and reasonable way is to hold several subsequent events at the same place. In terms of logistics, the most rational and, from the guests' point of view, most convenient way is to hold the majority of Presidency events in Tallinn, which has the largest number of potential venues and hotels as well as a fast connection to the airport.

The main **conference services** supporting the Presidency events are:

#### Event venues

A key to the success of Presidency meetings and other events is the functionality of event venues and the professional organisation of events.

Venues of different sizes will be needed depending on the structure and level of an event and the number of participants.

Informal meetings of ministers require a plenary meeting room (hollow square style) for up to 90 participants with sufficient space for the so-called back-row and a sufficient number of interpreters' and sound engineers' booths, an observation room with at least 60 seats, a media centre for at least 300 members of the press and a number of auxiliary rooms. Interpreters' booths should be located in the plenary meeting room and meet the detailed standards of the European Commission.

Informal expert meetings usually have between 30 and 160 participants and are held in a hollow square style plenary meeting room. Only some expert level meetings require interpreting. There is little need for auxiliary rooms at informal meetings of experts. The number of participants at different level conferences is between 50 and 100 people; therefore, the need for venues varies. Normally, we will need one theatre-style plenary meeting room and rooms of different setups for parallel sessions and discussions.

Formal dinners are served at suitable exclusive or historic venues, while during informal expert meetings dinners may be held at restaurants suitable for the level of the event and number of participants.

#### Interpretation

Interpretation will be provided by using both local interpreters and the services of the European Commission Directorate General for Interpretation (SCIC). Informal meetings of ministers are normally held with a 6-6 language regime (meaning that the participants can speak in six languages, with interpretation provided: French, German, English, Italian, Spanish and the official language of the Presidency). Broader language regimes are generally used at the meetings of the ministers of justice, ministers of the home affairs and ministers of agriculture (traditionally, such meetings have a 23-6 language regime which means that delegates may speak in their native language but that interpretation is only provided into six languages) as well as during summits with third countries and minister-level meetings with third countries. The broadest language regime is used at the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) at which simultaneous interpretation is provided from and into all official languages (including Irish). The DG SCIC has laid down detailed requirements for the size and equipment of an interpreters' booth which need to be taken into account when selecting venues for meetings.

#### IT support

The delegates' working area has an IT support desk and computers as well as equipment for photocopying, printing and scanning. In the plenary meeting room, internet connection is provided by a Wi-Fi network, while the data transfer rate and number of electric sockets must be sufficient to meet the needs of all participants. At the venues of minister-level meetings, operative information is provided through a dedicated information channel equipped with TV screens. The IT support services manage the interpreting equipment. At high-level events that attract the interest of the press and at which a press centre is set up, internet connection must be sufficient for the press and transmission services (for uploading large scale visual materials, videos and photos as well as for webcasting the event). The media centre should be located at the venue or in its vicinity.

#### **Information materials and aids**

Information materials containing the programme of the event and practical information as well as materials introducing Estonia are available in an electronic format to all participants. To support the image of Estonia as a country that has its finger on the pulse of technology, we wish to introduce new and upcoming digital possibilities to participants, the press and all guests. When using the possibilities offered by digital technologies it should be borne in mind that these may change thanks to continuing technical progress.

#### **Catering**

Heads of delegations and delegates are provided 1 or 2 buffet catering, depending on the level and duration of an event; separate working dinners may be served to heads of delegations; events may also include coffee breaks between sessions. Official dinners are held for heads of delegations. Other participants can either take part in official dinners along with heads of delegations or are served a separate buffet dinner, depending on the level of the event and the venue.

Menus are planned so as to introduce our guests to local, fresh and healthy food; when preparing the menus we will cooperate with programmes and interest groups that have similar goals.

#### **Accommodation**

At minister-level meetings, the Presidency traditionally covers the cost of accommodation for heads of delegations and one member of each delegation. Based on the events' standard, heads and members of delegations attending, high-level events are accommodated, if possible, at 4-star hotels at the least. With regard to the expert-level meetings, the Presidency usually offers a choice of hotels of different price levels located in the vicinity of the event venue; the participants can book a hotel room through the Presidency's website.

#### **Medical assistance**

Prompt medical assistance must be available for all participants both at event venues and elsewhere. For that purpose, agreements are signed with providers of medical services.



## **Gifts and souvenirs**

Sets of gifts and souvenirs for delegates and gifts for heads of delegations are prepared based on the results of competitions to be held by the Communication Team of the Presidency and the Organising Committee of Estonia 100. A number of sets are distributed to the officials of other Member States in Brussels. Therefore, the ordering, storage and delivery of the sets of gifts will be decided after the results of the competitions are available.

## **Cultural programme**

The cultural programme of the Presidency builds, as much as possible, on the Estonia 100 programme. However, short cultural programmes are usually available when using the programme of public events is not possible (e.g. official dinners). Such programmes are prepared taking into account the level and profile of the participants and the venue of the specific event.

Ministers attending informal meetings can be accompanied by their spouses who will be offered a separate programme. However, spouses rarely accompany ministers during informal meetings and, therefore, a number of Presidencies have set a minimum number of participants for spouses' programmes. If the number of participants is smaller than the minimum number, spouses are provided with information on and recommendations for events held during their stay in Estonia.

## ***3.3 Procurement***

Tenders for Presidency events are coordinated by the Central Coordination Unit at the Government Office. When preparing and carrying out tenders, we wish to make maximum use of the existing expertise in the public sector. The volumes and conditions for tenders are determined by the inter-ministerial working group on procurement issues. The Government Office has signed cooperation agreements with the Centre of Registers and Information Systems on the procurement of IT software and hardware, and with the State Shared Service Centre on other procurements.

When preparing the schedule of procurements, we will identify the risks related to the goods or services to be procured in order to eliminate those risks already in the planning stage. The main risks to be considered include a small number of potential tenderers or lack of competition, underestimated contract price, possible delays in the tender procedure, description of goods or services so that the goods or the services would meet expectation and time constraints on organising procurement procedures, including on preparing and assessing tenders. The majority of tenders will be carried out in the second half of 2016.

Our aim is to sign contracts that are as flexible as possible in terms of both quantities as well as time and allow taking into account any possible changes in the Presidency calendar. Besides the provisions of the Public Procurement Act and the general principles of the EU

Presidency, the following principles are applied when planning and carrying out procurements:

- Procurements are to be carried out in the form of e-procedures to ensure efficient procedure and communications;
- Framework contracts are concluded;
- Tenders are assessed based on the award criterion of ‘the most economically advantageous tender’, while taking into account the operating costs of the goods or services. The goal is to achieve economic advantage and the best quality for the budgeted amounts;
- Respect for the environment – if possible, preference is given to solutions from which the whole society would benefit in the long term. We will take into account the main environmental impacts and comprehensive life cycles of the goods and services to be procured.

As the experience of other Member States shows, the Presidency as an event of European importance will attract sponsors in various fields, such as transport, tourism, ICT services, catering, etc.

Sponsor agreements are subject to the provisions of the Public Procurement Act applicable to a negotiated procedure with the publication of a contract notice.

## 4 THE ESTONIAN PERMANENT REPRESENTATION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

### ***4.1 Adaptation of the PREU building for the Presidency and supporting activities***

Approximately 90 people are currently working in the existing premises of the PREU, but their number will increase to 190–200 people by the term of the Presidency. In addition to the permanent personnel, there will be a major increase in the number of officials from Estonia working in Brussels short-term (a few days) who will also need a mobile workstation in the premises of the Representation or the General Secretariat of the Council. Furthermore, the Presidency will bring more visitors from other Member States, third countries and EU institutions, international organisations, NGOs and the private sector. The extension of the PREU and the intensive work schedule will put the physical infrastructure of the representation to the test.

Riigi Kinnisvara AS has carried out a work space analysis for the extension of the premises of the PREU as well as the adaptation of technical possibilities and working conditions, and concluded that **the Presidency can be held using the existing premises**. Based on the analysis, it was decided to manage the Presidency from the current PREU building, which will save costs compared with renting additional premises, facilitate the organisation of work and simplify internal communication. There are 180 workstations planned in the building; however, additional temporary workstations will allow increase that number. There will be 3 or 4 workstations in each room; the relevant ministries will provide the seconded employees with laptop computers.

Specific solutions should take into account the Presidency needs and the nature of the work as well as support the representative function of the premises. The PREU premises will be functionally reorganised (redecorating rooms, upgrading lifts and the heating system, upgrading the power and communication systems, ensuring high quality internet connection). The experience of previous presidencies shows that the premises of the Permanent Representation and the General Secretariat of the Council are also expected to host a number of official events/receptions; therefore, design documentation is being prepared for construction work to close the courtyard of the building in order to expand the reception area. If the Brussels City Government approves our application, we will be able to build an extensive indoor area that can also be divided into meeting rooms.

During the periods of preparing for and holding the Presidency there is a growing need for meeting and video conference rooms. The PREU currently has three rooms equipped with video conferencing technology; however, during the Presidency we will need additional space and capacities both at the PREU and in the premises of the General Secretariat of the Council.

To address the issue of the lack of space we can use, in addition to the PREU space, the offices of the Estonian Delegation in the building of the General Secretariat of the Council and the offices at the disposal of the Presidency can be used. The adaptation of the PREU building will take place in accordance with the existing schedule; the offices of both the delegations and the Presidency in the Council building will be moved to a new location (House of Europe) in late 2016 and early 2017. The Estonian Presidency will also use the new House of Europe where the meetings of the European Council will be held. When using the rooms in the building of the General Secretariat of the Council, the Council or Coreper meetings to be held the same day are given priority over other events.

## ***4.2 Support activities in Brussels***

The organisation of numerous meetings held in Brussels during the term of the Presidency requires tight cooperation. Given the substantial increase in the number of PREU personnel and the Ministers and delegations arriving from Tallinn before and during the Presidency, the number of administrative personnel will be temporarily increased in line with the plan of representation personnel approved by the Coordination Unit.

The administrative personnel will be responsible for the provision of the following **support services during the Presidency**:

- Logistics and transport services – the PREU will ensure transport for ministerial-level delegations and other delegations in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg. In accordance with the applicable procedure, transport services will be provided, as a priority, to ambassadors, ministers and top executives of ministries.
- IT and telecommunication services –the PREU will ensure data communication and IT support services for personnel and guests, provide technical support during events held in the premises of the PREU and ensure cyber security;
- Secretarial and protocol services – the PREU will ensure necessary support services for personnel and guests, technical preparations for events (booking rooms, ensuring the availability of technical solutions and equipment, flower arrangements on tables) through correct administration and document management;
- Accounting services – PREU will ensure correct accounting. The personnel of the PREU will double and the budget will increase accordingly.
- Security services – the PREU will ensure the security and safety of personnel and guests in the premises and proper handling of state secrets. As the Presidency will significantly increase the number of events and meetings held in the premises of the PREU, increasing the responsibility of the representation in managing the information related to state secret;
- Administrative support services – formalities and documentation related to additional personnel being seconded to Belgium and communication with the protocol

department of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The support services also include assistance in concluding rental agreements, obtaining identification documents, finding schools for children, opening bank accounts and obtaining medical coverage. The personnel returning to Estonia after the term of the Presidency may also need support (e.g. termination of contracts).

## 5 COMMUNICATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

A key to the success of the Presidency is efficient communication both with the Estonian public and with other nations. The EU Presidency and the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia will provide a unique opportunity to show Estonia as a reliable and innovative Member State.

In the context of the Presidency, communication has **six objectives**:

- to ensure the **information exchange necessary for effective cooperation** both within the Presidency team and with key institutional cooperation partners, as well as the shared understanding of the goals, work organisation, preparations for and running of the Presidency;
- to bring to the public media and strategic target groups a **clear understanding of the principles and substantive goals of the Presidency** and to create a basis for potential cooperation, appropriate expectations for the Presidency and its outcomes;
- to explain to the public the organisation of, preparations for and running of the Presidency;
- to inform the domestic and foreign public and the media about **EU policies and decisions**;
- to communicate the interim and final outcomes of the Presidency to the public, media and strategic target groups;
- to take the opportunity to introduce Estonia as the country holding the EU Presidency to the other EU nations, showcasing the identity of Estonia as the Presidency nation, based on the brand of Estonia

It is essential:

- to ensure the availability of information about preparations for the Presidency – ongoing procurements and competitions, and preliminary information about upcoming procurements and competitions;
- to provide stakeholders an opportunity to *participate in* the preparations;
- to prefer modern and innovative communications solutions in order to support the image of Estonia as an innovative e-Country.

### 5.1 Organisation of communication

Communication concerning the Estonian Presidency in 2016–2018 will be organised by the **Presidency Communication Network** established in 2015 and comprising: a) the **Presidency Communication Team** at the Government Office; the team is responsible for overall coordination of communication; b) the Government Communication Unit; c) the **Brussels communication unit** at the PREU; d) the PR coordinator of the Chancellery of the *Riigikogu*; and e) the **Presidency Communication Coordinators of Ministries** will be responsible for the organisation of communication in their areas of responsibility.

Estonia's foreign missions and Estonian officials will also be involved in the organisation and carrying out of communications relating to the Presidency; they will be provided with the necessary information and an overview of the organisation of the Presidency.

The Presidency communication network has been actively involved in the development of the strategic concept of the Presidency's communication.

The areas of responsibility and tasks of all actors will be specified by the Estonian Presidency's communication strategy (to be completed in late 2015).

## ***5.2 The target groups for communication***

The main target groups for Presidency communication are:

- the Estonian public;
- Estonian officials;
- the personnel involved in preparing for and running the Presidency;
- policy-makers from EU Member States and institutions;
- European think tanks and political research centres;
- Estonian and international media and reporters;
- opinion leaders from Estonia and other Member States;
- officials from EU institutions;
- compatriots working at EU institutions and international organisations;
- diplomatic missions of foreign countries in Estonia;
- cooperation partners and officials interested in the progress of the preparations.

### 5.3 Principles of communication

The strategy of the Estonian Presidency is characterised by keywords, such as *professional* and *reliable*. Communication principles are also guided by the strategic objectives of the Presidency – the Presidency communication must be:

- **consistent** – all parties share a common understanding of the communication strategy and its objectives; communication is based on uniform messages;
- **coordinated** and with clear division of roles – the principles of information exchange and areas of responsibility have been agreed upon and cooperation takes place between different communication network participants;
- **planned** – communication is target-based and follows the agreed Action Plan, taking into account both the brand of Estonia and the main themes (priorities) and messages specified in the Presidency programme;
- **flexible** –the ever-changing nature of conditions is taken into account in the communication, including a complete readiness for crisis communications;
- **target-group based** – communication is planned based on key target groups and their needs;
- **sectoral** – each ministry is responsible for targeted communication in their area of government;
- **competent** –spokespersons and representatives of Estonia as holders of the Presidency are trained and prepared in the field of communications;
- **inclusive** – the process of preparations for the Presidency is transparent; experts are consulted on creative ideas and solutions; volunteers are involved – all interested parties can contribute to the success of the Presidency and the anniversary year.

### 5.4 Communication messages

The messages to be conveyed during the preliminary communication stage are defined in the Communication Strategy of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The Estonian EU Presidency identity, which includes visual identity, messages and marketing solutions, will be developed, based on the brand of Estonia, during 2016. The identity is developed in cooperation with Enterprise Estonia and the Organisational Team of Estonia 100; communication and marketing experts will be involved on a voluntary basis.

The main messages to be used in communications will be developed, based on the Presidency programme, in the first half of 2017. Communication activities will take place in three stages:



preliminary communications (2016); intensive preparations for and holding the Presidency (2017); and conclusions and outcomes (first half of 2018).

## **5.5 Communication stages**

Based on the schedule of the preparations for the Presidency and the tasks specified above, communication is divided into three stages, distinguished by their own objectives and consequently, also by their functions, target groups, channels and actions.

### **Preliminary communications (2016)**

At this stage, the main target groups are those in Estonia – the wider public, the media and opinion leaders as well as the Russian-speaking population of Estonia.

Communication targeted to Estonia focuses on raising the population’s awareness of the EU and of the Presidency, and creating expectations relevant to the context of the Presidency. At this stage, we will also focus on coordinated and targeted internal communication to the groups/individuals performing various roles within the framework of the Presidency and to the officials involved in running the Presidency.

The main focus of external activities is on establishing relationships with the Brussels-based international media corps and other EU media channels and members of the press.

We will work actively with the Brussel and EU think tanks; the work includes both preparing the issues in the scope of the Presidency programme and planning communication to strategic target groups (EU and international media, policymakers, opinion leaders, etc.).

Communication through official channels of the Council will be prepared in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Council.

Other important preparatory actions are also in line – development of the official Presidency website and social media channels; development of content for the website; developing the concept of the media centre for journalists in Tallinn and technical preparations in coordination with the Estonian Public Broadcasting, etc.

#### **Estonian media**

An important target group at this stage is the media – it is essential to help various media channels to prepare for professional and competent reporting on EU-related topics.

In the 2016 – 2018 period, the Estonian Presidency, the logic behind the functioning of the EU and other strategic topics can be dealt with in more detail in the ‘media club’ format. Journalists who are reporting, and will in the future report, on EU issues will be invited to the media club, by the agreement of the various media channels. Important topics related to the Presidency and the principles of the functioning of the EU will be addressed in workshops and discussions.

In the second half of the period, communication will focus more on explaining, in cooperation with the media, the substantial objectives of the Presidency to the public and on initiating discussions about possible decisions and choices.

#### Estonian EU Presidency identity

The identity of Estonia as a country holding the EU Presidency will be developed in order to introduce Estonia within Europe. This identity will be based on the outcome of the renewal process of the brand of Estonia. A comprehensive identity of the Estonian EU Presidency, including the main messages, logo and visual design as well as marketing solutions will be developed during 2016. This work also includes the design of the official Presidency website and various items with the insignia of the Presidency to be distributed both in Tallinn and in Brussels as well as elsewhere. The Estonian EU Presidency identity also includes the concept of promotional items and souvenirs to be approved by the end of 2016. In accordance with good practices, the visual identity of the Presidency and the related marketing solutions will be made public only shortly before the start of the Presidency.

#### Communication channels

At the preliminary communications stage, the main communication channel is the website, which introduces preparations for the Presidency ([eesistumine.ee/presidency.ee](http://eesistumine.ee/presidency.ee)); the website is in Estonian and partially available in English and Russian. Considering the need to inform the Russian-speaking population both in Estonia and in neighbouring countries, and the Eastern Partnership countries, the essential information is also available on the website in Russian. Bearing in mind the needs of the Presidency team, the website also has an intranet part with log-in access.

In the first quarter of 2016, a monthly Presidency newsletter will be issued in Estonian, containing the most important news on the preparations and later also on the Presidency. Dedicated social media channels will also be launched in 2016.

#### **The Presidency (2017)**

This stage, covering the period before and during the Presidency, entails a shift in focus – the focus is now on Brussels, EU issues and the Brussels-based international media covering EU issues. In Estonia, introducing the organisational side and the substance of the Presidency to the public continues to be a priority.

Before the start of the Presidency, direct contacts are established both in Brussels and elsewhere with the representatives of international media channels in order to introduce the objectives and priorities of the Presidency. Furthermore, a more detailed plan is developed for communicating the objectives/programme of the Presidency and the necessary partnership agreements will be set.

At the beginning of the Presidency, information events concerning the objectives/programme of the Presidency are organised in think tanks in Brussels and in other strategically important locations, in order to discuss the relevant issues in the format of workshops, conferences, etc. held before and during the Presidency. The main target groups comprise policy-makers in

Member States and EU institutions as well as opinion leaders across the EU. An information package is also developed for Estonian missions in other Member States for the purpose of introducing Estonia as holder of the Presidency and our substantive goals.

Conferences and informational/cultural events are to be held for different target groups before and during the Presidency: These events are organised by both the government agencies and other partners in Tallinn, Brussels and elsewhere.

High-level meetings and events are supported by the Presidency Communication Team, while thematic events are organised by the communication coordinators in ministries.

Regarding the communication targeted to Estonia, the media club will continue introducing the programme and priorities of the Presidency and the representatives of the Estonian press will be invited to go on a study trip to Brussels. The visual identity, objectives and messages of the Presidency as well as the marketing solutions designed to introduce the Estonian Presidency internationally will be presented to the public. In order to support active reporting on policymaking in the European Union and on the issues which are a focus of the Presidency, it is also important to provide the media with sufficient information on summits and ministerial meetings held in Brussels. Therefore, the number of reporters representing the Estonian Public Broadcasting in Brussels should be increased before and during the Presidency.

Residents of Tallinn will be informed, in cooperation with the Police and Border Guard Board, about traffic restrictions and other changes.

#### The Media Centre

A media centre equipped with state-of-the-art technical solutions will be established in Tallinn to provide facilities to foreign press covering the Presidency events. The media centre will be located in the vicinity of the relevant event venue to provide facilities for press conferences, briefings and interviews as well as the necessary working environment and services to members of the press. The Estonian Public Broadcasting will be responsible for ensuring webcasting and videos of high-level events held in Tallinn during the Presidency. The General Secretariat of the Council will provide logistical and technical support to major press conferences held in Brussels at the premises of the Council.

#### Visit of members of foreign press to Estonia

At the beginning of the term of the Presidency, members of the foreign press residing in Brussels and reporting on EU issues are invited on a press visit to the country holding the Presidency; the visit traditionally coincides with the visit of the Commissioners of the European Commission and includes meetings with the top politicians of the presiding country, introduction to the Presidency programme and objectives, as well as a cultural and entertainment programme introducing the country. This visit programme also includes the opening of the Presidency in Tallinn; the concept of the opening event will be developed as a part of the international programme in cooperation with the Organisational Committee of Estonia 100.

## Communication channels

Immediately before the start of the Presidency, official channels of the Presidency will be launched - the most important of them being the official Presidency website, which includes the accreditation system, the Presidency calendar, introduction of the programme and objectives of the Presidency, as well as the permanent news feeds. The primary target groups of the website are the media covering EU issues, officials of EU institutions and EU policy-makers. The official languages of the Presidency website will be Estonian, English, French and German.

Before the beginning of the Presidency, a Twitter account of the same name will be launched in English, targeted primarily to the media covering EU issues (in Brussels and elsewhere). The official Presidency website will be managed from Tallinn and other social media from Tallinn and Brussels (with Twitter mainly from Brussels).

### Conclusions and outcomes (first half of 2018)

Conclusions will be drawn in the weeks and months immediately following the term of the Presidency and communicated to all strategic target groups and important partners both in Estonia and elsewhere.

## 5.6 *Introducing Estonia and the organisation of cultural events*

Events supporting the EU Presidency outside Estonia will be organised together with the planning of the cross-border activities of Estonia 100 under the **Common International Programme** (hereinafter *the Foreign Programme*). The **objectives** of the programme are the following:

- to increase the visibility of Estonia in various areas in the period 2015–2018 (based on the discussions of the Foreign Programme working group, the main areas are: culture, entrepreneurship, ICT, tourism and housing, education and research);
- to act in a focused manner and in specific target countries;
- to live up to the expectations related to the EU Presidency – to carry out the events related to the Presidency, to cooperate with international organisations;
- to be a cooperation partner to embassies and representations in planning and carrying out the activities intended for 2017 and 2018;
- to support various cooperation networks in using the themes related to 2017 and 2018 and in developing international relations (bearing in mind also the impacts that carry on beyond 2018);
- to prepare the programme for 2018 presenting themes connected with expatriate Estonian communities and kindred indigenous peoples;

- to reflect success stories back to Estonia and share information about programme activities.

### **Foreign Programme working group**

To advise on the programme and coordinate administrative cooperation, a working group was established in early 2014, comprising representatives from the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Education and Research, Enterprise Estonia and the Government Office. Based on the items on the agenda, the working group cooperates with other authorities and organisations. The purpose of the working group is to exchange information on developments in various areas, act as contact points within the group members' organisations and to disseminate information on the Foreign Programme. Besides the working group members' mailing list, summaries of meetings and other information concerning the programme are forwarded to a wider audience involved in the objectives and activities of the programme.

### **Target countries of the Foreign Programme**

In the summer of 2015, the priority target countries of the programme were identified. These countries are all EU Member States, except for those in which Estonia does not have foreign representations. As regards the latter, two exceptions were made: Bulgaria (a Presidency in the Trio with Estonia) and Hungary (linguistic and cultural relations). The activities of the international programme will also take place elsewhere in Europe. The exact number of target cities for the events related to the Presidency will be decided in discussions with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the autumn of 2016. The Foreign Programme brings together different themes and helps to create a single framework for introducing Estonia in more distant target countries.

List of priority target countries of the Foreign Programme:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Spain, The Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, France, Sweden, Romania, Germany, Finland, Denmark, The Czech Republic, Hungary, The United Kingdom, Georgia, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, Russia, The United States of America, Canada, China, Japan.

In exceptional cases, events are supported also in other countries (e.g. in countries of significant international influence, etc.).

### **The Brussels programme**

The Brussels programme will receive special attention in the context of the EU Presidency. An important place in the Brussels programme is given to cooperation with two important cultural and music centres whose role as co-organisers of events and attracting local audiences

cannot be underestimated. The Brussels programme includes a concert to be held in the Great Hall of the Bozar Gallery in the autumn of 2017. The concert will feature a repertoire and performers suitable for the celebration of the beginning of the Estonian presidency. In addition to the Opening Ceremony, negotiations are under way with Bozar for holding a number of musical events and film, art and architecture exhibitions. Some of the events will be continued in the second half of the season, in 2018 within the Estonia 100 Programme. The second major musical partner is Flagey, whose art directors have agreed to associate several events in 2017 and 2018 with Estonian music. Estonia's participation in 3 or 4 programmes, including orchestral, choir and jazz music programmes as well as a programme of animation films, is being negotiated. Finalised agreements with Bozar and Flagey are due to be concluded in the summer of 2016. In addition to the larger projects, negotiations are under way for implementing a couple of smaller ideas in the field of music. Working contacts have been established in the field of visual art (e.g. with the Contemporary Art Centre WIELS) and an Estonia-themed exhibition is planned to be held in the Musical Instruments Museum in Brussels. Besides the cultural events, discussions have been held concerning education and research (bearing in mind the objectives of the Estonian Liaison Office for EU RTD in Brussels).

### **Preparing the Foreign Programme**

The main drivers of the programme will be various thematic or cross-cutting events. The events to be held in 2018 in foreign countries can be largely divided into two categories: thematic events that form a regular part in international relations, and events that will take place under the auspices of the EU Presidency and the Estonia 100 Programme that year, as well as the events specifically designed for the Foreign Programme.

Calls for proposals with the purpose of identifying suitable events for introducing Estonia in foreign countries in 2018 will be announced (with the deadlines at the end of 2015 and in the summer of 2016). The purpose of the calls for proposals is to collect specific proposals from organisations in different fields and their foreign partners (whose existence and capacity to contribute in the target country is one of the prerequisites of submitting a proposal). Thus, by the middle of 2016 we should have an overview of the general readiness for organising events under the Foreign Programme (including costs, geography, etc.).

In addition to the ideas identified through the calls for proposals, it should be kept in mind that some target locations may not be covered by events. Therefore, we intend to prepare a range of short programmes which can be used in different target locations (for example, to enliven a reception or an event).

In addition to the events, the public space projects also have an important role. Estonia can be introduced at indoor and outdoor exhibitions, installations, etc. held in public buildings or in the urban space. All activities related to the public space will be based on a single concept to be determined as a result of the competition for ideas announced by the Government Office.

The winning idea is expected to attract attention to Estonia, be vivid and captivating and create new opportunities to introduce our country through different themes. What is also important is how the idea is realised and disseminated, transported and presented in different locations.