



THE FINNISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU
PRIORITIES, AGENDA AND RELEVANT MEETINGS
BRIEFING NOTE - EUROCITIES BRUSSELS OFFICE

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General objectives

For Finland the European Union is currently facing two main problems: its legitimacy has been weakened and it is falling to achieve clear results in the eyes of its citizens. Finland's Presidency wants therefore to be a pragmatic one in order to regain the confidence of the citizens, focusing on achievements and results rather than on big abstract discussions.

Overall goals

- ⇒ Make the Union work more effectively (better functioning of the EU, coherence of the policies, better regulation...)
- ⇒ Focus on delivering concrete results

The Finnish presidency will also have to finalise the decision on the new programmes which are due to start on 1 January 2007. Helsinki wants to avoid any unnecessary delays in those 40 policy programmes, which include programmes covered by the Structural Funds, the 7th Research Framework Programme, educational programmes and EU external-action instruments.

Focus throughout all policies

- ⇒ The implementation of the **Lisbon Strategy**: the goals are now to be put into practice, all policies should contribute to these goals
- ⇒ **Transparency**
- ⇒ **Energy** policy
- ⇒ **Environment**

Five priority areas

⇒ Future of Europe

- Constitutional Treaty and institutional reform
 - Bilateral consultations and active discussion with all MS
 - No final decision nor a midterm report to the December European Council (report only under German presidency)
- Enlargement
 - Romania and Bulgaria joining in 2007 (decision on the timetable)
 - Negotiations with Turkey and Croatia
 - General discussion on Enlargement: the aim is to achieve a new consensus on the strategy and the borders (Discussion on 'absorption capacity' but no new criteria for adhesion)

⇒ Competitiveness

- Innovation
- Implementation of the Lisbon Strategy
- Discussion on "Social Model" and "flexicurity" (A competitive Europe which is strong in social terms without trying to create a single social model)
- Political dialogue on the challenges posed by globalization

⇒ External Relations

- Reinforce the EU's international role and the constituency of its action
- EU's crisis management capacity
- Russia (re-launch of the Partnership and Energy)
- Northern Dimension
- Western Balkans ("The enlargement perspective given to Western Balkans is irreversible")
- Asia (6th ASEM Summit with a focus on climate change and energy)

⇒ Freedom, Justice, Security

- Assessment of The Hague Programme
- Streamline the decision-making procedures on police and judicial coordination
- International justice system

⇒ Better regulation

- Transparency policy
- Efficiency of procedures
- Quality of legislation and coherence of the policies
- Subsidiarity and proportionality

Urban Policy

Priorities

The theme of Finland's Presidency is "the Significance of Innovation in Urban Regions in Implementing the Lisbon Strategy." **Governance and competitiveness** are the two priorities in this field. Finland wants to emphasise the importance of regional development work in strengthening European competitiveness.

"Addressing the challenge of competitiveness cannot be done unless local authorities are on board" as this is the level at which partnerships are built. (Hannes Manninen, Finnish Minister of Regional and Municipal Affairs, at the CoR, 19.06.2006)

Finland outlines three main elements to enhance competitiveness:

1. Innovation capacity
2. Cities' contribution to welfare
3. Governance of networks, promoting partnerships

Agenda

Finland will implement the **EU urban policy agenda** approved by the informal Rotterdam Ministers' Meeting in 2004. ("Rotterdam Agenda")

As part of the Presidency, Finland will also preside over the **Urbact Programme** during 2006, with the central mission of participating in the preparations of the new Exchange of Experiences Programme.

Finland also wants to discuss how the **EU's cohesion policy programmes** could best be used to support the implementation of the Lisbon strategy.

Calendar

- High Level Meeting on Governance, 2-3 October 2006, Turku

Finland will organise a High Level Meeting on good administrative practice and governance in Turku on 2-3 October, intended for senior officials from national ministries for local administration. This will be the 3rd meeting of this kind¹ and the "High Level Group on Governance and the EU" will discuss the relations between different levels of administration. A particular focus will be on the so-called **tripartite arrangements**, on which Finland has prepared and sent a questionnaire to the member states. A second focus

¹ The first one took place in The Hague in 2004 and the second one in London in 2005.

will be better regulation and the **role of local and regional authorities in implementing the Lisbon strategy**.

- Senior Officials' meeting on urban policy and National Urban Forum, 24-25 October

The Ministry of Interior will organise a meeting on urban policy at senior official level in Lappeenranta on 24-25 October. The prime target of the meeting is to develop co-operation related to strengthening the **innovativeness of urban regions**, as well as co-operation related to **welfare and innovation environments**. A discussion paper will be prepared to serve as the basis for the meeting. The paper will be composed of expert articles related to innovativeness and welfare of cities in a wider sense. The Officials' Meeting will be held in connection with the annual national Urban Forum.

- Informal Ministerial meeting on cohesion policy, 21 November, Brussels

The Meeting is expected to ensure the follow-up of the Rotterdam agenda. This meeting will focus on how to support the Lisbon strategy through the EU Funds Programmes.

- Other events

Open Days - European Week of regions and cities will be held in Brussels on 9-12 October 2006. This year's theme is investment and public-private partnerships.

The Finnish Six Pack seminar on urban policy will be held on 8 November in Brussels and will focus on how cities can contribute to the Lisbon goals.

The ESPON Seminar to be held in Espoo on 14-15 November 2006 will present the results of the current ESPON research programme that will terminate at the end of the year.

The Baltic Development Forum and Mayors' Meeting (Baltic Metropolises) will be held on 29-31 October in Helsinki.

A seminar on **"Europe and its Urban Future"** will be held in Tampere on 12 December. This seminar is organised by the city of Tampere, the CoR and Uusimaa Regional Council.

Economic Development

Priorities

- **Competitiveness**
- **Lisbon agenda:** Implementation and assessment
- **Innovation:** promote innovation policy as a key component of the Lisbon strategy - Emphasis on aspects relating to the demand for innovation, including standards, public procurements, mobility of research resources and cooperation between universities and businesses
- **Energy** (see below)

Agenda

Innovation

- Adoption of a **roadmap for EU innovation policy**: the aim is to improve coordination and to launch a new approach to innovation policy
- Negotiations on the **Seventh Framework Programme for Research 2007-2013**
- **Communication** from the Commission on Innovation in September
- Analysis of the **challenges of the globalisation** for the end of the year
- **Lisbon Strategy** implementation
 - The Member States will for the first time report on the implementation of their national programmes.
 - Reports on the progress of the strategy will be submitted to the European Council in December.

Services Directive

- Finland's objective is to bring negotiations with the European Parliament to a successful conclusion so that the Directive can enter into force as soon as possible.

REACH

- Finland's aim is to have the regulation on the registration, evaluation and authorization of chemicals adopted at the second reading, by the end of the year.

Calendar²

Ministerial Meetings

- **Informal Competitiveness Council**, 10-11 July, Jyväskylä.
*Make innovation policy an integral part of the EU's competitiveness agenda
Focus on how to turn innovations into commercially successful products.*
- **Competitiveness Council**, 24 July, Brussels
Discussion on the 7th framework programme for research
- **Informal ECOFIN Council**, 8 September, Helsinki
Focus on innovations and their effects on productivity
- **Competitiveness Council**, 25 September, Brussels.
- **Informal European Council**, 20 October, Lahti.
Focus on Innovation into the Competitiveness strategy and on Energy Policy (Russia will attend the Dinner)
- **ECOFIN Council**, 7 November, Brussels
Lisbon process: focus will be on four horizontal themes which include the economic aspects of EU energy policy, innovations, labour markets and reducing administrative burden on businesses.
- **Competitiveness Council**, 4-5 December, Brussels
A summary of innovation policy challenges and a set of related recommendations will be submitted to the Council for discussion. The Competitiveness Council will also discuss the Commission's initiative to define a new internal market policy.
- **European Council**, 14-15 December, Brussels
Progress of the Lisbon Strategy

Official Meetings

- "IPR at the Crossroads" Conference, 8-9 September, Helsinki
- Conference on services and Innovation, 10-11 October, Helsinki
- Networked business and governance - Something concrete for the Lisbon Strategy, 23-24 October, Helsinki

Fringe Events

- European Productivity Conference EPC 2006 - Competitiveness through Productivity, 30 August - 1 September, Espoo

² Only the most relevant meetings organised in close co-operation with the Finnish Presidency are listed below. You will find a comprehensive list on the Presidency's website: www.eu2006.fi.

Ministry of Industry

- **Conference on challenges of globalisation for a knowledge-based economy**, 21-22 September, Helsinki
<http://goingglobal2006.vtt.fi/>
The focus of the event is on the challenges that globalisation poses to knowledge-based economies. The conference deals with globalisation vis-à-vis S&T, innovation systems, economies, societies and development.
- **2006 Manufuture Conference**, 9-10 October, Tampere.
The Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and innovation TEKES
- **European Enterprise Award Ceremony**, 7 December, Brussels CoR.
European Commission, CoR

Social Affairs

Priorities

Employment and social policy

- Debate on ‘**flexicurity**’ => the aim is to reach a consensus on general principles (Combine flexibility and competitiveness with a sufficient degree of security)
- Meeting the challenges created by globalisation by increasing **labour productivity**, improving the **quality of work** and the way it is organised
- **Worker’s mobility**
- **Debate on Europe’s demography** with the objective, on the basis of the Commission Communication, to identify the required measures in 2006-2010 as part of implementation of the Lisbon strategy
- Family policy and **reconciliation of work and family life** particularly in relation to the **role of men**
- Issues relating to **legal immigration** as a way of ensuring the availability of labour in an ageing Europe will be discussed as part of the demographic debate

Justice and Home Affairs

- Formulate and define political guidelines on future cooperation
- Promoting the establishment of a **common European asylum system** and political guidelines on the control of the EU’s external border
- Mainstream **human rights** policy

Health

- Promote the principle of **Health in All Policies (HIAP)**

Agenda

Employment and social policy

- Decision setting up a **European Globalisation Fund**
- Follow-up of the Communication on **Demographic change**
- Commission’s **green paper on the future of labour law**
- Political agreement on the **Working time directive** amending the Directive of 2003
- Negotiations on the **Temporary Work Directive**

Health

- Finalise the decision-making process on the **EU public health and consumer-protection programme** for 2007 - 2013
- **EU legislative proposals on health** (coordination of social security, revision of legislation on medical devices, proposal for a Directive on tissue engineering)
- Follow-up of the **Commission's alcohol strategy**, the **green paper on mental health** and the communication on nutrition and physical activity

Gender policy

- Implementation of the **Gender Equality Pact** adopted by the European Council in March 2006
- Finalise arrangements on the setting up of a **European Gender Equality Institute**
- Preparation of the **European Year of Equal Opportunities 2007** at national level

Justice and Home Affairs

- **Assessment of The Hague Programme** based on a first political assessment from the Commission on progress in implementing the Hague programme. (Four Communications published in June)
- Comprehensive examination of **immigration issues**
- Negotiations in view of the establishment of the **European Fundamental Rights Agency** in 2007

Calendar

Ministerial Meetings

- **Informal ministerial meeting: Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs**, 6-8 July, Helsinki
Focus on population's age structure and the challenges created by globalisation
- **Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA)**, 24 July, Brussels
- **Informal Ministerial Meeting Justice and Home Affairs**, 20 - 22 September
Tampere
The meeting will discuss concrete priorities and the implementation of the agreed objectives of The Hague Programme.
- **JHA Council**, 5 October, Luxembourg
- **Informal Ministerial meeting on Gender Equality**, 6-7 October, Helsinki
- **JHA Council**, 13-16 November, Madrid

Barcelona Process

- **Employment Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council**, 30 November - 1 December, Brussels
- **JHA Council**, 4-5 December, Brussels

Official Meetings

- Conference on Labour Mobility in the Lisbon Agenda, Helsinki, 4-5 September
- Moving Forward Together - Finland's EU Presidency Conference on Drugs, 6-7 September, Turku
- Expert Conference on Health in All Policies (HIAP), Kuopio, 20-21 September
- High Level Group on Gender Equality, 25-26 September
- Conference on men and gender equality, Helsinki, 5-6 October
- **Fifth European Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion**, Tampere, 16-17 October

The meeting aims for instance at assessing the poverty situation in Europe and the experience of the European inclusion policies from research, policies and civil society viewpoints.

- **Social Model Conference** - Expert conference "EU's evolving social policy and national models - Seeking a new balance" and meeting of the Social Protection Committee, Helsinki, 8-10 November
The Conference will address issues concerning EU's impact on the Member States social policies; it will try to challenge the economic and social policy into a dialogue.

Fringe Events

- Research Benefits for Ageing Population: Dissemination Conference for European Research Results, Helsinki, 14-15 September
National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES),
- **Housing as a Fundamental Social Right**, Helsinki, 18-19 September
Ministry of Environment, FEANTSA
First gathering of decision-makers, NGOs, and human rights experts and practitioners exclusively devoted to the right to housing
- **WHO European Healthy Cities Network Meeting, Local Governments for Health and Equity**, Turku, 18-21 October
National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, City of Turku
- EU Human Rights Forum - event, Helsinki, 7 - 8 December

Culture and Education

Priorities

Promote European competitiveness

- In accordance with the Lisbon Strategy, Finland's Presidency will continue to promote the content and creative industries as key resources for creating economic growth, employment and competitiveness in Europe. The Presidency will focus particularly on creating an enabling environment for the production and distribution of online content (film, music, literature and other audiovisual content).

Education

- Establishment of a **European area of higher education**. Ways to modernise higher education and cooperation in the field of vocational training will be discussed as matters to be implemented under the Lisbon Strategy.
- **Lifelong learning** and the **quality and efficiency of education**, research and innovation and their **connection with the economics of education**, especially better cooperation between universities and the business world

Culture

- **Mobility of art and heritage collections** and exchange of exhibitions
- **Free movement of artists** and persons working in the cultural sector

Youth policy

- Strengthen implementation of the open method of coordination and propose concrete objectives for **youth participation and information**.

Agenda

Culture

- Preparations for ratification and implementation of the **UNESCO Convention** of the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions concluded in the autumn of 2005, at the Community level and in the Member States.
- Draft Action Plan for the **mobility and exchange of art** and cultural heritage collections
- Preparation of the new **Council Work Plan in the field of culture**
- Decision declaring the **European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008**
- Finalise decisions on **multi-annual programmes** (Integrated Action Programme in Lifelong Learning, the Culture 2007, MEDIA 2007, Youth in Action, and "Citizens for

Europe”)

Youth

- Follow-up to the Commission **White Paper on Youth (2001)**
- A resolution will be adopted on **young people’s participation and on youth information**

Education

- Proposal for a Recommendation on a **European Qualifications Framework** covering the entire education system. The objective of the planned EQF is to facilitate the transfer and recognition of qualifications.
- Decision on the **Lifelong Learning programme**. Most important funding tool of educational cooperation.
- Proposal on the Recommendation on **key competences for lifelong learning**
- Proposal on the **European Quality Charter for Mobility**
- Discussion on the Commission Communication on **modernisation of European Universities** and on the creation of a **European Institute of Technology**
- Communication on efficiency and equity in education
- Communication on Adult Learning
- Recommendation on the quality of teacher training

Calendar

Ministerial Meetings

- **Education, Youth and Culture Council**, Brussels, 14 November
- **Informal Education Council**, Helsinki, 5 December
Ministerial follow-up conference on the Copenhagen process (European cooperation in vocational education)

Official Meetings

- Informal Meeting of the Committee on Cultural Affairs (CAC), Porvoo, 21-22 July
- Conference on lifelong learning, equality, and efficiency, Helsinki, 28-29 September
- Conference on Adult Education, Espoo, 3-4 October 2006
- Taking the Steps: Education and Training 2010: Improving lifelong guidance policies and systems, Jyväskylä, 6-7 November
Lifelong guidance policies in Europe (<http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/guidance2006/>)

Fringe Events

- Young Active Citizenship, Hyvinkää, 1-4 July
Ministry of Education, Finnish Youth Co-operation - Allianssi, City of Helsinki, Finnish Youth Research Network
- **At the sources of knowledge - Competitiveness through basic education**, Helsinki, 28-29 September
*Organised by the City of Helsinki, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and the CoR. (Conference programme at www.localfinland.fi/educ)
The conference will deal with education delivery methods and learning outcomes in EU Member States, and also with the results of the PISA study.*
- 12th Culture Forum: “Religion and Cultures - from Confrontation to Genuine Dialogue”, Espoo, 30 November - 2 December

Environment

Priorities

- **Eco-efficiency:** “Towards a new generation of environmental policy” (wider scope, new mind set, innovative methods)
- **Climate change**
- **Biodiversity**
- **Air quality**
- **Marine environment**
- **Waste issues**
- **The Baltic Sea**
- **Cooperation with Russia**

Agenda

- **Climate Change:** UN climate regime and international negotiations
- Communication on **Biodiversity** and Action Plan
- Review of the **6th EAP’s Thematic Strategies**
- Review of the **6th Environmental Action Programme**
- Framework Directive on **Marine Environment**
- Directive on **Air Quality**
- **EURO V emissions limits** for light vehicle
- Revision of the **Waste** Framework Directive
- Strategy for the Sustainable Use of **Natural Resources**
- **Life + Regulation** (second reading at the EP)
- Directive Proposal for **Mercury**
- Directive on Priority Hazardous Substances in Water
- Commission Report on the Implementation of the Emissions Trading Directive

Calendar

Ministerial Meetings

- **Informal Environment Council**, Turku, 15-16 July
Focus on a new generation of environmental policy and on the protection of the Baltic Sea. Discussion paper: “Going Global on Eco-efficiency”

- **Environment Council**, Luxembourg, Brussels, 23 October
Aim is to reach a political agreement on the directive on Air Quality
- **Environment Council**, Brussels, 18 December
Aim is to reach a political agreement on the directive on Marine Environment and on the Waste Framework Directive

Official Meetings

- Informal EU Workshop on climate change, Naantali, 11-13 July
- Meeting of Directors-General for Water, Saariselkä, 30 November
- Network for Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL), Espoo, 7 - 8 December

Fringe Events

- European Construction Network (ECN), Helsinki, 17 July
- Actions for the 2010 Biodiversity Target in Europe - How does research contribute to halting the biodiversity loss? - XVI European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS), Espoo, 16-19 November
- Seminar on the Sustainable Use of Renewable Natural Resources contributing to competitiveness and Well-being in Europe, Brussels, 28 November
- EU Environmental Lawyers Network, Helsinki, 29 November

Mobility and Transport

Priorities

- Logistics in European transport
- Third country transport relations
- Road safety
- Short sea shipping

Agenda

- Discussion of the **communication on transport logistics**. The communication (June 2006) emphasizes intermodality which enables the integration of different transport modes. Smoothly running, integrated transport systems are essential for the Union's industries and competitiveness.
- Discussion on the results of the mid-term **review of the White-paper**

Calendar

Ministerial Meetings

- Transport, Telecommunication and Energy **TTE Council (Transport)**, Luxembourg, 12 October
- **TTE Council (Transport and Telecommunications)**, Brussels, 11-12 December

Official Meetings

- Verona IV - Road Safety Conference, Verona, 3-4 November
- Visit and Meeting of Transport Attachés, Oulu, 13-15 December

Information

Priorities

- ICT in the Lisbon strategy
- Information and data security

Agenda

- Proposals on spam and malware and on the development of a **European data security strategy**
- e-communications legislative package
- **i2010** Information Society Strategy
- Regulation on **roaming charges**
- Finalise the decision on the **Media 2007** programme
- Proposal for a "**Audiovisual Media Service Directive**"
- Commission's proposal to amend the **Television without Frontiers Directive**

Calendar

Ministerial Meetings

- **Informal Dinner of Telecommunications Minister**, Brussels, 10 December
- **Transport and Telecommunications Council**, 11-12 December

Official Meetings

- **I2010 Conference**, Espoo, 27-28 September

Energy

Priorities

- **External Dimension**, in particular **Cooperation between the EU and Russia**
- **Energy efficiency**
- **Renewable energy resources**
- **Security of the energy supply**
- **Internal markets in electricity and gas**

Agenda

- Discussion on the development of the **EU's energy policy** based on the green paper "A European Strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy".
- Preparatory work for the adoption of a prioritised **action plan** on energy policy in spring 2007 based on the discussion on the green paper
- **First annual Strategic Energy Review**

Calendar

- **Energy Council**, Brussels, 23 November