
Polish Presidency debriefs EP committees on priorities

Ministers are holding a series of meetings in parliamentary committees to present the priorities of the Polish Presidency of the Council.

Poland holds the Presidency of the Council until the end of June 2025. This text will be updated regularly as the hearings take place.

Environment, Climate and Food Safety

On 23 January, **Paulina Hennig-Kloska, Minister of Climate and Environment**, highlighted the need for climate adaptation measures, combating climate disinformation, and to advance key legislative files such as the waste framework directive on textiles and food, the European soil monitoring law, and the “One Substance, One Assessment” chemicals package. The Presidency also plans to secure agreement with Parliament on plastic pellet losses, water pollutants, and detergents rules.

MEPs asked about the Presidency’s stance on the new emissions trading system ETS II, the 2040 emissions target, renewable energy, and soil monitoring. They also debated the impact of climate regulations on competitiveness, and raised concerns about agricultural pollution and the role of genomic technologies.

Security and Defence

On 27 January, **Secretary of State at the Ministry of National Defence Paweł Zalewski** said the Presidency’s first priority is to strengthen EU support for Ukraine by using all the tools at the EU’s disposal, including the European Peace Facility and the profits from frozen Russian assets or loans guaranteed from Moscow. He also highlighted the need to reinforce the EU’s defence industries by ensuring adequate financing as well as deepening EU-U.S. cooperation, including between the EU and NATO.

MEPs quizzed Mr Zalewski on several issues, including the EU’s role in possible future peace talks between Ukraine and Russia, developing an EU defence pillar, reforming the EU Investment Bank to allow for more investment in the defence sector and establishing viable “European champions” (i.e. large corporations) in the defence sector.

Women’s Rights and Gender Equality

On 28 January, **Minister for Equality Katarzyna Kotula** emphasised enhancing digital security for women and girls, particularly in the context of the rapid development of AI, as a Presidency priority. She pledged to follow up on the Digital Services Act to make sure that AI accelerates rather than undermines gender equality. The Presidency is also determined to advance the work on the Anti-discrimination Directive.

MEPS welcomed her commitment on strengthening the digital protection of women and girls, particularly concerning deepfakes, revenge porn and hate speech. They also raised women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, the protection of LGBTQI+ communities, the challenges faced by ageing women and the prospect for an EU-wide definition of rape including the notion of consent.

Internal Market and Consumer Protection

On 28 January, **Economic Development and Technology Minister Krzysztof Paszyk** focused on the need to eliminate the remaining barriers in the single market, as well as highlighting issues around security, competitiveness, and reducing red tape. The Presidency will look for a compromise on the e-declaration of posted workers file, on late payments, and on the travel package proposals. They will also, he said, try to reach political agreements on toy safety, the Green Claims Directive and on the alternative dispute resolution file.

On digital policy, **Secretary of State, Ministry of Digitalisation Dariusz Standerski** outlined plans for an informal meeting on cybersecurity to focus on defence, the application of the Artificial Intelligence Act, and new initiatives on AI factories and the "AI Apply Strategy". On customs, **Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Finance Małgorzata Krok** stated the Presidency's intention was to reach a common position in the Council on the reform of the Union Customs Code.

MEPs asked about reducing reporting obligations, e-declarations of posted workers, the implementation of digital services act and the AI Act, including in the context of EU-US relations. Several members wanted to hear more about cutting red tape, unblocking progress on late payments, and the need for an AI liability act. Questions also focused on issues around unfair trading practices, single market on defence and climate disinformation.

Fisheries

On 28 January, **Jacek Czerniak, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development**, which includes fisheries, identified improving EU fisheries competitiveness and defending EU interests in regional fisheries organisations and international agreements as Presidency priorities. Poland will also launch discussions on the review of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and start negotiations to introduce measures against non-EU countries that allow unsustainable fishing practices.

MEPs questioned Mr Czerniak on addressing the critical state of fish stocks in the Baltic Sea, in addition to issues of security and reducing the complexity of regulations. Others supported a

reform of the CFP to better balance the interests of the fishery sector with the EU's environmental goals. MEPs also argued that trade policies should be aligned with fisheries policies.

Employment and Social Affairs

On 28 January, **Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy Agnieszka Dziemianowicz-Bąk** and **Minister of Senior Policy Marzena Okła-Drewnowicz** said the Presidency would focus on the future of employment in the digital transformation, a Europe of equality, cohesion and inclusion, and the challenges prompted by the EU's aging population.

MEPs quizzed the ministers on their plans for the regulation on the coordination of social security systems, emphasising the importance of finalising negotiations on the file. They also raised the impact of AI in the workplace, and the importance of addressing demographic issues in the EU. MEPs also raised the importance of social dialogue, upcoming negotiations on European Work Councils, and the expected Commission initiative on the "Right to Disconnect".

Transport and Tourism

On 29 January, **Dariusz Klimczak, Minister of Infrastructure**, said the Presidency will focus on resilience and competitiveness in the transport sector, the protection of transport operators, dual use infrastructure, and military mobility. He committed to reaching a deal with Parliament on new railway infrastructure, road and maritime safety rules as well advancing negotiations on air passenger rights rules that have been stalled in the Council since 2013. **Piotr Borys, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Sport and Tourism** added that the Presidency will focus on making Europe a safe and more popular destination for tourism despite Russia's war in Ukraine and the challenges posed by climate change.

MEPs asked the Presidency to secure adequate financing for transport policies within the next EU long-term budget, and want them to secure a Council position on the maximum weights and dimensions directive, and address labour shortages and working conditions in all transport modes. Completing Trans-European transport networks, developing high speed rail, and ensuring connectivity for Europe's islands were also raised.

Constitutional Affairs

On 29 January, **Minister for European Affairs Adam Szapka** said the Presidency wants to promote institutional reforms, stressing at the same time that EU Treaties could prove difficult to revise. The Presidency wants to complete work on the new rules on European political parties and foundations and the electoral rights of mobile citizens. They will work on the transparency of interest representation and on the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights.

Most MEPs asked questions about the need to reform the EU's institutional architecture, especially in light of imminent enlargement, with many of them highlighting the need to

overcome what they saw as the obstacle of unanimity in key policy areas either through Treaty revision or using existing rules. Some called for progress on Parliament's right of initiative, its right of inquiry, and rules on European elections.

Agriculture and Rural Development

On 29 January, **Czesław Siekierski, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development** said that the Council will discuss the future shape of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) beyond 2027. The Presidency wants to simplify the green architecture of the CAP and assess the impact of current EU trade agreements on agriculture.

Questions from MEPs focused on ensuring fair income for farmers and adapting the CAP to the future enlargement of the EU. A number of MEPs also asked about the position of the Presidency on the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement and stressed the need to invest in European food sovereignty.

International trade

On 29 January, **Krzysztof Paszyk, Minister of Economic Development and Technology**, said the Presidency will continue working on ambitious, sustainable and mutually profitable trade agreements. He hopes to finalise the legislation on the screening of foreign direct investment and resume talks on the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) scheme, the EU's preferential trade arrangement with developing countries. On Ukraine, Mr Paszyk said support for Ukraine remains steadfast, while the Presidency prefers not to extend the current temporary trade liberalisation measures with the country, but rather reach a new agreement.

MEPs asked about possible timelines for the adoption of trade deals with Mercosur and Mexico, possible shift in US trade policy as well as on trade with Ukraine and safeguards for the agricultural market. Some MEPs argued that GSP should not be a migration tool, others demanded a clear link between migration and the scheme.

Industry, Research and Energy

On 29 January, **Minister of Economics, Development and Technology, Krzysztof Paszyk** said the Presidency's priorities include boosting Europe's industrial competitiveness with a new instrument and advancing the Clean Industry Act to support businesses, address high energy prices, and cut red tape and tax burdens for SMEs. They also plan to maximize the use of spaceimaging and AI algorithms for crisis management, and improve cooperation during natural disasters.

During the debate, MEPs stressed the need to support innovative businesses through a unified capital market, and to combine environmental policies with industrial policies to achieve the ecological transition. Others focused on the importance of transatlantic relations and the need to secure European tech sovereignty.

Dariusz Stenderski, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Digital Affairs, said that his key focus areas would be cyber security, with a revised blueprint for coordinated EU response to cyber attacks and an informal Council on its civilian and military aspects. He also referred to the boosting of AI development through shared investment and simplified rules to support startups.

On 30 January **Marcin Kulasek, Minister of Science and Higher Education**, outlined three main focus areas: openness and inclusivity, synergies between EU and national programs, and AI and science. He stressed the need to develop EU cooperation networks without losing top talents, and the value of synergies between EU and national research programs.

MEPs called for the full implementation of the 5G toolbox and for the simplification of administrative procedures to foster innovation. Others highlighted the need to improve EU cooperation in research and innovation, retain top talent, and ensure an inclusive access to funds. The discussions also covered the need for ethical standards in AI, a strong support for scientists, as well as academic freedom and the free flow of scientific knowledge.

On 20 February, **Climate and Environment Minister Paulina Hennig-Kloska** highlighted, as Presidency's priorities, ensuring affordable energy for households and businesses and reducing dependence on energy supplies from countries like Russia. She also highlighted guaranteeing the security of critical infrastructure and the integration of energy grids, particularly after the recent synchronisation of Baltic States' networks with Western European grids.

Industry Minister Marzena Czarnecka identified, as priority, diversifying energy supplies to mitigate price shocks and reducing dependence. Ms Czarnecka told MEPs that the Presidency will work on the gas storage regulation, and highlighted Poland's commitment to nuclear energy. She also stressed the need for an EU approach to protect critical infrastructure and ensure transparency in energy imports.

In the debate, some MEPs questioned Poland's plans to phase out coal and reduce dependence on fossil fuels and sought clarification on the Presidency's strategy for diversifying LNG supplies to prevent blackmail from major suppliers.

Several MEPs stressed the importance of investing in grid modernisation to enhance security and resilience and others called for greater transparency in tracking gas imports and accountability among member states.

Culture, Education, Youth and Sport

On 30 January, **Education Minister Barbara Nowacka** said the Presidency wants to include young people – as part of a new cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue - in EU-level debates and projects to strengthen EU values of democracy, freedom and rule of law, thereby making them more resilient against the risk of disinformation and manipulation. Providing better support to teachers is also a priority, she said, and EU education ministers will gather in May to discuss what they can do to improve this.

The Presidency wants to advance work on the “European degree” – a degree awarded jointly by several universities in different EU countries – by adopting a roadmap to implement it. A European quality assurance system to guarantee trust among universities and improve the recognition of higher education diplomas will also be discussed, **Minister of Science and High Education Marcin Kulasek** said.

Culture Minister Hanna Wróblewska said the Presidency will present proposals to support young artists and creators, and will launch discussions on the future of the Creative Europe programme beyond 2027. Audiovisual and intellectual property rights, security and AI, and a possible revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive are also among the Presidency’s priorities, she said.

Piotr Borys, Secretary of State of Sport, will focus on pushing EU countries to better promote sport in schools, address mental health, and adopt a common methodology to gather statistics on sport.

MEPs questioned the ministers on countering Russian disinformation under the European Media Freedom Act, as well as on delays in the creation of the European degree, pleading for EU-wide recognition of diplomas, including Erasmus+ and vocational education training. MEPs also raised concerns about possible reductions in Erasmus+ funding, which ensures the financial sustainability of the European Education Area, which in turn is essential for the “Union of Skills”.

Civil liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

On 6 February, **Minister of the Interior and Administration Tomasz Siemoniak** said the Presidency will work on strengthening security at the EU's external borders and combatting the instrumentalisation of migration. He reported that discussions on returns as well as cooperation with third countries are currently ongoing, while a ministerial debate on future protection status for Ukrainian refugees is planned for June.

In their questions, MEPS focused on the implementation of the Asylum and Migration Pact as well as the question of returns, the fight against drug trafficking and the issue of hybrid threats against critical infrastructure, among other topics.

On protection of children in digital space, **Rafał Rosiński, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Digital Affairs**, promised to do his utmost to reach a Council position in order to be able to start negotiations with MEPs on legislation to prevent child sexual abuse on the internet.

The **Minister of Justice, Adam Bodnar**, highlighted the Polish Presidency’s commitment to the ongoing negotiations on the victims’ rights directive and the anti-corruption directive, as well as on trans-border cooperation in fighting organised crime. He pledged to document war crimes committed by Russia during its war in Ukraine, as well as develop mechanisms to hold those guilty accountable.

MEPs questioned the Presidency's stance on the need to uphold the role of state institutions and civil society within EU member states, as well as on the tools required to fight organised crime, and how to ensure respect for human rights in the operation of return hubs in safe third countries.

Development

On 18 February, **Jakub Wiśniewski, Undersecretary of State** identified resilience as a core focus for development policy. He said the Presidency would also focus on investing in human capital, the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, as well as Ukraine, the Middle East, and "forgotten" or protracted crises. The Presidency would work towards the implementation and ratification of the Samoa Agreement with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, and the future of the Sustainable Development Goals.

MEPs questioned the Undersecretary about EU contingency plans in response to the decision of the Trump administration to suspend development aid and efforts to dismantle the USAID aid agency. They also raised issues around the EU's flagship Global Gateway initiative, as well as the conflict in Eastern Congo, Gaza, and aligning EU development policy with security priorities.

Economic and Monetary Affairs

On 19 February, **Minister of Finance Andrzej Domański** said the Presidency would work on boosting EU defence spending, competitiveness, and on simplification of EU financial legislation. He committed to advancing negotiations with the Parliament on the Crisis Management and Deposit Insurance package (CMDI) and on the Retail Investment Strategy (RIS), as well as starting talks on the Framework for Financial Data Access (FIDA). The Presidency will also try to secure a compromise position in the Council on payment and e-money services and the digital euro.

MEPs focused on unlocking private investment in the EU economy, the development of a digital euro amid controversy around the project, cutting red tape to lessen the burden on companies, and realistic plans for strengthening EU defence.

Regional Development

On 19 February, **Katarzyna Pełczyńska-Nałęcz, Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy** highlighted as Presidency priorities the right to stay in one's native region, and supporting EU regions bordering Russia and Belarus. The Minister said there could be no competitiveness without cohesion, and vice versa, adding that member states support preserving key aspects of current cohesion policy, including regional decision-making, as preparations for the next multi-annual budget progress.

MEPs quizzed Pełczyńska-Nałęcz on plans reported in the media to centralise cohesion policy at the national level, and to merge existing programs. They expressed scepticism about the Commission's promises to keep regions at the centre of development policy, and stressed the

importance of not using territorial cohesion funding only for crisis support or other time-sensitive priorities.

Foreign Affairs

On 19 February, **Foreign Affairs Minister Radosław Sikorski** said European security is the Presidency's number one priority. The EU has to strengthen its military power to be able to "face all threats coming from the east" and maximise its military and economic support for Ukraine. The Presidency will also focus, he said, on enlargement. On transatlantic relations, he stressed the importance of working together with NATO allies and avoid trade disputes. Europe should not be seen as a competitor by the US, he said.

MEPs quizzed the minister on the possibility of EU peacekeeping troops in Ukraine, on Russian frozen funds, and on how soon EU defence autonomy could be achievable. Several MEPs expressed doubt that the US can be still considered an ally, while others called for new partnerships with countries that have not heretofore been EU's traditional partners, such as Latin America.

Public Health

On 20 February, **Health Minister Izabela Leszczyna** focused on three priorities: the digital transformation of healthcare - through ensuring appropriate funding for the implementation of the European Health Data Space - health promotion and disease prevention, as well as the mental health of children and adolescents. Work will continue on the revision of the pharmaceutical package, with the Presidency hopeful of reaching a common position among member states by the end of June, so negotiations can start between the Council and Parliament.

MEPs quizzed the minister on a number of other topics, including antimicrobial resistance, medical devices, access to medicines and joint procurement, health workforce shortages, and the impact of climate change on public health.

Further information

EP Multimedia Centre: presentation of the EU Council's priorities by Polish Ministers: video extracts from EP Committee meetings (SEDE, FEMM, IMCO, AFCO)

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Contacts

Federico DE GIROLAMO

Press Officer

 (+32) 2 28 31389 (BXL)

 (+33) 3 881 72850 (STR)

 (+32) 498 98 35 91

 federico.degirolamo@europarl.europa.eu
