

BACKGROUND NOTE

Session I: PRIORITIES OF THE POLISH PRESIDENCY IN THE EU COUNCIL

Poland takes over the presidency of the Council of the European Union for the second time. Thirteen years after the first Polish presidency, and twenty years after joining the EU, Poland presents an ambitious [presidency programme](#), the main goal of which is to implement the [priorities](#) set around the topic of security.

Russia's ongoing armed aggression against Ukraine threatens the security of the entire continent, but it is also a war against the principles and values represented by the European Union. The Polish presidency will make efforts to respect and promote these values by the EU, emphasizing the special role of civil society.

The Polish presidency coincides with the beginning of the institutional cycle (including the [new 18-month programme](#) of the Council), which provides an opportunity to set goals, suggest solutions and start processes for the next five years. On 1 January 2025, the time of hard work for a safe and prosperous Europe for future generations begins.

Therefore, the Polish presidency will support activities strengthening European security in all its dimensions: external, internal, information, economic, energy, food, and health.

1. Defence and Security

The Polish presidency emphasizes the need for coordinated and ambitious action to strengthen European defence, complementing NATO's efforts. Priorities include increasing military spending, addressing defence capability gaps, and bolstering the defence industry. Support for critical dual-use infrastructure, such as East Shield and the Baltic Defence Line, will be key. The presidency will also push for an in-depth debate on defence financing within the EU to ensure sustainable investments in security.

Strengthening international cooperation is another focus, particularly with NATO and like-minded non-EU countries, including the USA, UK, and South Korea. The aim is to enhance collective defence capabilities and maintain a unified approach to external threats. Poland will also advocate for equal opportunities for defence industry entities of all sizes across Member States, ensuring broad and inclusive support for Europe's security.

2. Protection of People and Borders

Internal security remains a priority, with efforts to reduce irregular migration, improve return policies, and strengthen the EU's external borders. The presidency will work to ensure the proper functioning of the Schengen Area while addressing hybrid threats, including the instrumentalization of migration. New solutions will be sought to comprehensively tackle challenges at the EU's borders and maintain stability within the Union.

In addition, the Polish presidency will enhance civil protection capacities, focusing on disaster resilience, rescue, and humanitarian assistance. Efforts will target organized crime, terrorism, and radicalization, particularly in the context of security risks stemming from Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Strengthening cooperation among Member States will ensure more effective responses to internal and external threats.

3. Resistance to Foreign Interference and Disinformation

To protect democracy, the presidency will focus on countering disinformation and foreign manipulation while addressing polarization and radicalization. Civic education and the strengthening of civil society will play a crucial role in building long-term resilience. Coordination among Member States to combat information manipulation and mitigate the effects of hostile actions in cyberspace will be enhanced.

The development of secure and modern digital services will also be prioritized to ensure greater stability in the information space. Combating climate-related disinformation will be part of broader efforts to improve public understanding and resilience against misinformation, making the EU more secure in the face of evolving challenges, including climate change.

4. Business Security and Freedom

The Polish presidency will tackle challenges from technological advancements, energy transitions, and geopolitical tensions by deepening the Single Market and removing barriers to cross-border activity, especially in the services sector. Measures to improve access to private capital for growing businesses will also be key. By reducing bureaucratic burdens, the presidency aims to shift European policies toward incentives and rewards rather than penalties.

Efforts will also focus on ensuring fair competition for EU industries on the global stage by improving trade policies, enforcing rules for goods entering the EU, and leveraging public

procurement. Cohesion policies will be discussed to complement Single Market improvements and enhance economic competitiveness while promoting stability across Member States.

5. Energy Transition

Energy security will be a central focus, with measures to ensure reliable energy supplies for citizens and businesses at affordable prices. The presidency will promote a complete withdrawal from Russian energy imports and take steps to enhance the EU's energy security framework, including the physical and cybersecurity of energy infrastructure.

Poland will also advocate for the development of clean energy sources and reduced dependence on imported technologies and raw materials. These efforts will contribute to a more resilient energy sector, ensuring the EU's transition toward sustainable and secure energy systems while maintaining a level playing field for all Member States.

6. Competitive and Resilient Agriculture

The Polish presidency seeks to strengthen the position of farmers in value chains and ensure their income stability while safeguarding food security for all Europeans. Support for a resilient and competitive agricultural sector will be a priority, with policies that encourage sustainable practices and address environmental challenges like floods and droughts.

The presidency will also work to ensure that EU standards for food quality, safety, and sustainability are upheld in global trade. As the EU prepares for potential enlargement, addressing the implications for agriculture and supporting rural development will remain key areas of focus, ensuring a robust and adaptable agricultural framework.

7. Health Security

Improving health security will involve accelerating the digital transformation of healthcare and ensuring secure medicine supply chains. The presidency will emphasize the importance of EU-based production to reduce dependence on external suppliers and safeguard patients' needs.

Mental health will also be a major focus, particularly for children and adolescents in the digital age. Preventive healthcare and health promotion initiatives will aim to enhance the wellbeing of EU citizens, creating a healthier and more resilient society in the face of future challenges.