

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 7/13/2017

GAIN Report Number: E17047

EU-28

Post: Brussels USEU

Priorities of the Estonian EU Council Presidency

Report Categories:

Policy and Program Announcements

Trade Policy Monitoring

Approved By:

Mary Ellen Smith

Prepared By:

Hilde Brans and Alexandra Walker

Report Highlights:

On July 1, 2017, Estonia took over the rotating EU Council presidency. During the second half of 2017, Estonia will schedule and chair all ministerial meetings with the exception of the Foreign Affairs Council. In the field of agriculture, Estonia will mainly focus on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the sustainability and competitiveness of EU agriculture.

Priorities of the Estonian EU Council Presidency

On July 1, 2017, Estonia took over the rotating EU Council presidency for the first time ever. Following the outcome of the Brexit referendum in June 2016, the U.K. decided to renounce the Council presidency in the second half of 2017. In July 2016, the Council adopted a [decision](#) revising the order in which the Member States will hold the EU Presidency until 2030. The Council decision brings the order of the presidencies forward by six months, starting from July 1, 2017. During the second half of 2017, Estonia will schedule and chair all ministerial meetings with the exception of the Foreign Affairs Council. Reportedly, the Estonian presidency will not focus on Brexit but leave it in the hands of the EU negotiators.

The Estonian presidency initiates a [new Trio Presidency Program](#). A Trio Presidency Program is a common program developed by three consecutive presidencies to ensure continuity. On June 20, 2017, the General Affairs Council approved the [Trio Program of Estonia, Bulgaria and Austria](#) for the next 18 months. The four [priorities](#) of the Estonian presidency are: an open and innovative European economy, a safe and secure Europe, a digital Europe and the free movement of data, and an inclusive and sustainable Europe.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

In the field of agriculture, the Estonian presidency will mainly focus on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), based on the outcome of the public consultation launched by the European Commission on CAP reform. Securing an agreement with the European Parliament on the simplification and modernization of the CAP and debating the vision for the post-2020 CAP will be its top priority. It will also focus on the sustainability and competitiveness of EU agriculture and aim to strengthen the farmer's position in the food supply chain. In October, the Estonian presidency will organize a high-level conference on "Soils for sustainable food production and ecosystem services". It also invites the European Commission to inform the Agriculture and Fisheries Council regularly on the state of play international, bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations. Estonia will continue the work of previous presidencies to fight antimicrobial resistance and continue examining the Commission's proposal for a new spirit drinks regulation. Within the context of the Common Fisheries Policy, the presidency will focus on the adoption of new fishing quota regulations. The full program is available on the Estonian presidency's website: <https://www.eu2017.ee/sites/default/files/2017-07/EU2017EE%20AGRIFISH%20Programme.pdf>.

Environment Council

The Environmental Council will focus on climate change, specifically ensuring that the Paris agreement is enforced, and on the promotion of a Circular Economy. In this context, the Estonian Presidency will organize a conference "Nature-based solutions: from innovation to common-use". The presidency also hopes to adopt Council conclusions on eco-innovation. The full program is available on the Estonian Presidency's website: <https://www.eu2017.ee/sites/default/files/2017-07/EU2017EE%20ENVI%20Programme.pdf>.

Agenda

The tentative calendar of meetings under the Estonian Presidency can be downloaded from the Council's website at <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10680-2017-INIT/en/pdf>.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council Meetings:

- July 17 or 18, 2017 (Brussels): Trade-related agricultural issues, results of public consultation on modernizing and simplifying the CAP, wine grape varieties, fisheries
- October 9-10, 2017 (Luxembourg): 2018 fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea
- November 6-7, 2017 (Brussels): Trade-related agricultural issues, sustainable soil management, improving the position of farmers in the food supply chain, and tackling unfair trading practices
- December 11-12, 2017 (Brussels): Spirit drinks, fish stocks in the Black Sea, CAP post-2020: modernizing and simplifying the CAP

Environment Council Meetings:

- October 13, 2017 (Luxembourg): Greenhouse gas agreement reductions by MS from 2021-2030
- December 19, 2017 (Brussels): Animal conservation, greenhouse gas emission reduction