THE ROMANIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Cohesion, a common European value
One page of a document discussing the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union from 1 January to 30 June 2019. The page highlights events and meetings, legislative files, and council results. The main results include:

- 100 Signed legislative files
- 84 Council Conclusions
- 22 Progress reports
- 90 Finalised legislative files
- 82 Council Decisions
- 38 Files advanced in the Council
- 13 Adopted Council Declarations, Resolutions, Recommendations

The page also mentions various counts related to events and meetings:

- 300 Events
- 33,991 Delegates
- 71 Events throughout Romania
- 229 Events in Bucharest
- 18 Informal Ministerial Meetings
- 166 Conferences and Expert Meetings
- 2.156 Media Representatives

These figures indicate a substantial number of activities and participation during the Romanian Presidency period.
1 January - 30 June 2019

Meetings in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg

- 190 Trialogue Meetings
- 1463 Working Group Meetings
- 91 Meetings of Coreper (I, II, Art. 50)
  - Coreper I: 32
  - Coreper II: 41, Coreper II Art. 50: 18
- 7 European Council Meetings

Events and external meetings

- 250 Events and Meetings organised by Diplomatic Missions
- 397 Events and External Meetings
- 72 External Meetings organised during RO PRES
- 75 Other Events in Brussels
The Sibiu Declaration – 10 key commitments for the future of the Union

We will defend one Europe
We will stay united, through thick and thin
We will always look for joint solutions
We will continue to protect our way of life, democracy and the rule of law
We will deliver where it matters most

We will always uphold the principle of fairness
We will give ourselves the means to match our ambitions
We will safeguard the future for the next generations of Europeans
We will protect our citizens
Europe will be a responsible global leader.
EUROPE OF CONVERGENCE

SECTORAL MULTIYEAR FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK FILES
- **EUROPEAN DEFENCE FUND**
  - Making European defence more competitive and innovative
  - Contributing to the EU’s strategic autonomy
- **CONNECTING EUROPE FACILITY**
  - Funding key projects in the areas of transport, digital and energy
  - Emphasising synergy between the sectors and aims to mainstream climate action

ECONOMY AND FINANCE
- **BANKING UNION**
  - Fewer risks and better bank supervision
  - Safer lending to consumers and businesses
- **SUPERVISION AND REQUIREMENTS FOR INVESTMENT FUNDS**
  - Linking the rules applicable to investment firms to their risk level
- **EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF FINANCIAL SUPERVISION (ESFS) REVIEW**
  - Regulated, strong and stable EU financial markets
  - Strengthened fight against money laundering

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
- **EUROPEAN LABOUR AUTHORITY**
  - Access to information regarding rights and obligations for mobile workers
  - Support cooperation between Member States in tackling undeclared work
- **TRANSPARENT AND PREDICTABLE WORKING CONDITIONS**
  - Increased security and predictability of employment relationships
  - Minimum rights for workers

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
- **LOWER CO2 EMISSIONS FROM TRUCKS**
  - Making transport cleaner
  - Combating climate change

DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET
- **COPYRIGHT**
  - More opportunities for content creators
  - Exceptions and licences

TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY
- **EU GAS MARKET**
  - Extending EU rules to pipelines involving third countries
  - More consistency and transparency for investors and consumers
- **ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE**
  - Making roads safer
  - Reducing the number of road fatalities

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES
- **GENERAL FOOD LAW**
  - More transparent scientific studies on food safety
  - Greater trust between consumers, industry and institutions

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS
- **EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD**
  - Stronger external border protection
  - More efficient management of migration
- **INFORMATION SHARING BETWEEN EU DATABASES**
  - More efficient border controls
  - Faster exchange of information between Member States
- **SECURITY OF ID CARDS**
  - Fighting document fraud and identity theft
  - Combating terrorism and organised crime
- **VISA CODE**
  - Better conditions for legitimate travellers
  - Better cooperation for the readmission of irregular migrants

A SAFER EUROPE
The Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

The Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

RO PRES 2019 delivered for protecting the rights and wellbeing of citizens

A cohesive and strong Europe guarantees equal opportunities for all its citizens, ensures their safety, social protection and inclusion and a fair and non-discriminatory access to all the benefits of the Single Market. In addition, it is important to prevent hazards and promote safer and healthier working conditions with the aim to improve living standards for all citizens.

RO PRES acted towards ensuring the protection of citizens’ social rights and employment, attaching major importance to social files and being firmly committed to complex negotiations. Through key achievements on new EU laws on the social area, such as work-life balance, transparent and predictable working conditions, the European Labour Authority and reducing exposure to carcinogens at work, we ensured that all citizens benefit from fairness and social justice: the right to quality jobs, healthcare, lifelong learning and gender equality.

- Through the Work-Life Balance Directive, the participation of women on the labour market and the equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men are encouraged. The current legislation on parental leave, paid paternity leave and flexible working arrangements for parents and carers is significantly improved.

- A TRIO Declaration on gender equality was signed by the RO PRES and the succeeding Finnish and Croatian Presidencies of the EU Council on 15 March 2019. The Declaration highlights the need for including the gender perspective in all EU policies. RO PRES also organized several events covering the topic of gender equality.

- The European Labour Authority (ELA) will support Member States in implementing EU legislation in the areas of cross-border labour mobility. ELA will also facilitate the access of mobile workers to information on their rights and obligations and will provide support in tackling undecleared work.

- The Directive on transparent and predictable working conditions responds to labour market challenges triggered by demographic developments, digitalisation and new forms of employment. The new framework provides new minimum rights for workers, as well as new rules on the substance and form in which information is provided to workers on their employment relationship and working conditions.

- RO PRES also contributed to reducing the exposure of workers to five carcinogenic chemical agents, thus protecting millions of citizens and preventing thousands of cases of ill-health at the workplace.

EU citizens demanded via the ‘Right2Water’ initiative that tap water across the EU be safe to drink. RO PRES successfully finalised the negotiations on the Drinking Water Directive that includes new rules on the quality standards of drinking water and improves access to water.

A big step was also taken towards ensuring transparency and sustainability of EU risk assessment in the food chain, through the update of the General Food Law Regulation. This will foster the access to scientific information on the fundamental issue of food safety and human health for all European citizens.

Consumer protection is a key responsibility area for the EU in relation to European citizens. RO PRES has contributed to the modernisation and reinforcement of the EU legislation in this field.
The new rules will consolidate the consumers’ rights if harmed by unfair commercial practices. At the same time, it will ensure enhanced transparency in online transactions and a higher protection in respect to ‘free’ digital services, such as cloud storage, social media and email accounts. The new rules will also clarify the way in which Member States should address the issue of misleading marketing of ‘dual quality’ products.

The comprehensive approach to migration during RO PRES also manifested through the strengthening of cooperation and coordination between liaison officers. These new rules will allow us to make the most of the work of the liaison officers on the ground, including on returns or fighting migrant smuggling. We also worked to make returns more effective by agreeing on a partial general approach on the Return Directive (recast).

RO PRES tackled the issue of “temporary arrangements” in the context of migration management, and presented a report on a series of non-binding elements on temporary arrangements for disembarkation. Taking into account that criminality knows no borders, the EU is introducing new rules on interoperability between EU information systems in the area of justice and home affairs. Easier information sharing will improve security, will allow for more efficient checks at external borders and will contribute to preventing and combating illegal migration.

In order to reduce identity fraud, thereby making it harder for terrorists and criminals to act, while facilitating free movement of genuine travellers, the EU is introducing tighter security of ID cards of EU citizens and of residence documents issued to EU citizens and their non-EU family members. The proposed rules include strong data protection safeguards.

Another important achievement of RO PRES in the field of internal security is the strengthening of EU law enforcement authorities’ capacity to fight terrorism and serious crime, by improving their access to financial information for the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of certain criminal offences. Changes to the EU visa code were also adopted, to improve conditions for legitimate travellers and to offer them more tools to respond to the challenges posed by illegal migration.

As part of the fight against terrorism, RO PRES paid particular attention to the prevention and countering of radicalisation, in particular radicalisation in prison. In this sense, a set of good practices was settled in addressing this challenge and in dealing with terrorist and violent extremist offenders after release.

In our common efforts of countering the new emergent threats, significant progress was achieved during RO PRES regarding efforts to counter hybrid threats. Given the importance of a more coordinated approach between Member States, as well as between EU institutions, RO PRES had the initiative to create a guide of best practices as a way of improving and consolidating the common understanding on hybrid threats. Thanks to RO PRES, the Council of the EU set up a framework that would allow for the first time the EU to impose sanctions on individuals or entities responsible for cyber-attacks.
At the beginning of RO PRES, the Regulation on the Financing of European political parties and foundations was adopted. In February 2019, the Council adopted Conclusions on ensuring free and fair European elections, identifying actions to be taken and which were implemented:

- holding regular meetings of the European election cooperation network in which Member States share expertise and good practices while jointly identifying threats;
- setting up and launching the Rapid Alert System where national contact points in Member States share information rapidly on disinformation campaigns;
- enhancing strategic communication dedicated to European values and policies;
- strengthening the European media ecosystem, by facilitating networks of independent fact-checkers;
- promoting media and digital literacy, with awareness-raising activities to protect the integrity of the electoral process, in partnership with the private sector and civil society;
- assessing cyber threats in the electoral context and the measures to address them, so to preserve the integrity of the electoral system;
- calling on social media platforms to invest in resources for dealing in a responsible and accountable manner with election-related online activities;
- cooperating with relevant international actors.

Multiple events were organized, both in Bucharest and Brussels, with the participation of representatives of governments, civil society and online platforms, to raise awareness regarding the phenomenon of disinformation and to exchange ideas on how to better cooperate in tackling these challenges.

RO PRES prepared, in cooperation with the European Commission and the High Representative, a report on countering disinformation and the lesson learnt from the European elections, in order to inform the leaders on the way forward in enhancing resilience and countering hybrid threats, including disinformation.

The Common Understanding reached by RO PRES on the future Digital Europe programme will bring substantial benefits to all EU citizens and companies by boosting investments in crucial areas for competitiveness and innovation such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, advanced digital skills and ensuring a wide use of digital technologies across the economy and society. Digital Europe will help European businesses benefit from the vast opportunities of digital transformation, scale up and gain a competitive edge, while also contributing to bridging the digital divide.

RO PRES also brought a significant contribution to increasing the availability and the reuse of publicly funded data. The new framework extends the scope of the rules on the reuse of public sector information to include public undertakings in the transport and utilities sectors.

The legal framework on copyright was updated to unlock the opportunities of the digital environment, for the creators whose rights must be fully respected, as well as for the European citizens, who should benefit from the opportunities of the Digital Single Market.

RO PRES also contributed to the development of high-performing, sustainable and efficiently interconnected trans-European networks in the field of transport, digital and energy through the Connecting Europe Facility. The future programme will continue to fund key infrastructure projects in the areas of transport, digital and energy, emphasising synergies between these sectors in order to enhance the effectiveness of EU action and optimise implementation costs.

The Single Market has a decisive contribution to enhancing European Union competitiveness through facilitating free movement of goods, services, persons and capital. RO PRES granted high importance on enhancing a well-functioning Single Market to the benefit of EU citizens, companies and economies. These measures will boost Europe’s competitiveness and generate growth and jobs.
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Enhancing the Single Market
RO PRES actions created a substantive basis for further advancing the actions at European level contributing to ensuring a long-term vision regarding Single Market, as well as a long-term strategy for the European Union’s industrial policy. Rules having a direct impact on the single market and, in particular, on European citizens were adopted, promoting equity and transparency for enterprises using on line platforms or modernizing the legislative framework in the sectors linked to Single Market.

Supporting SMEs & Enterprises
RO PRES contributed to the revision of EU company law rules, ensuring they remain fit to the digital age and create the conditions for EU businesses to grasp the opportunities of digital technologies. The new EU rules facilitate the cross-border mobility of companies and create a greater efficiency, transparency and legal certainty for them. They will also eliminate unjustified barriers to EU companies’ freedom of establishment within the Single Market.

Harmonised quality standards
RO PRES completed the negotiations on EU law that ensures the compliance and enforcement of EU legislation on products. The new rules will lead to an increased confidence of consumers and other end-users in products placed on the EU market. Another success in harmonising EU legislation to the benefits of citizens is the update of the EU rules that introduce enhanced safety standards for car manufacturers. This measure will significantly reduce the number of fatalities and severe injuries on EU roads and will provide an opportunity for EU car manufacturers to consolidate their leadership in innovative vehicle safety systems.

Helping complete the Energy Union
RO PRES successfully finalised negotiations on the Gas Directive and ensured that the rules governing the EU’s internal gas market will also apply in the future to gas pipelines to and from third countries. This reform fills the existing gap in the EU’s legislative framework in the energy field and ensures that the rules of the Energy Union are applied consistently across the EU.

A climate neutral economy
RO PRES contributed to advancing the EU agenda on decarbonisation and implementation of the Paris Agreement as well as on the promotion of sustainability and sustainable growth. RO PRES facilitated debates on the long-term strategic vision for a climate-neutral economy. A key focus was to safeguard the competitiveness of EU economy whilst enabling the transition to a low-carbon economy.

RO PRES was committed to helping decarbonise the transport sector and the new rules on clean vehicles are an essential step in this direction. They stimulate the market for zero- and low-emission vehicles, strengthening also the competitiveness of European industry on global markets.

RO PRES also concluded Europe’s first-ever CO2 emissions reduction targets for trucks framework. The new rules will ensure that between 2025 and 2029, new trucks will emit on average 15% less CO2 compared to 2019 emission levels and 30% less CO2 from 2030 onwards.

RO PRES 2019 delivered for a stronger Economic and Monetary Union
The economic and monetary architecture of the Union is now stronger, an undeniable proof of cohesive action at European level, and the additional measures adopted contribute to achieving this objective.

Consolidating EU’s economic growth and competitiveness through measures aimed at strengthening the Economic and Monetary Union was a priority of the RO PRES mandate. Negotiations were concluded for a considerable number of legislative files aimed at strengthening the Banking Union and the Capital Markets Union.

An important achievement of RO PRES is the revision of the European System of Financial Supervision (ESFS Review), which plays an essential role in the efficient management of European finances. Thus, the European Banking Authority will have the necessary tools to manage possible shocks and to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

Also, after more than two years of negotiations, the EU will have in place a more robust legal framework to regulate and supervise banks, through the implementation of revised risk-reduction measures. In concrete terms, these measures will ensure that the banking sector holds enough capital to lend safely, guaranteeing, at the same time, the protection of taxpayers.

A new set of harmonized rules regarding the development of secondary markets for non-performing loans (NPLs) was agreed on, which will allow banks to manage and sell non-performing loans. Reducing and preventing the accumulation of bad loans in the banking sector is essential for ensuring the stability of the financial system.

RO PRES 2019 delivered for cohesion policy
Cohesion policy is of particular relevance in the context of the general objective of promoting the principle of cohesion in all its dimensions. RO PRES set ambitious targets for advancing negotiations on the 2021-2027 cohesion package, contributing to the creation of an investment framework able to generate economic and social development for all Member States and European regions. RO PRES efforts resulted in partial mandates for trilogues with the European Parliament on four regulations from the Cohesion package.
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agreements enabling the timely start of the new operational programs.

role of the cohesion policy. These results brokered by PRES RO will enable the rapid start of negotiations with the EP in order to reach agreements enabling the timely start of the new operational programs.

Ensuring the relevance of the Union on the global scene by strengthening its role in the multilateral global architecture and in safeguarding the rules-based international order remains a major objective, with profound, multiple long-term implications for the EU as a whole and for the Member States.

RO PRES helped strengthening the EU’s profile of an active and efficient global player, strongly involved in its neighborhood and credible through honoring its international commitments, fully conscious that the EU’s external action starts at its borders and is accomplished in the broader framework of the multilateral dimension.

RO PRES contributed to a positive dynamic towards progresses in relevant fields and geographical areas of interest such as the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership, the Black Sea region and Central Asia, the implementation of the Global Strategy, the security agenda and the commitment to multilateralism. EU relations with global partners and developments in Middle East, Asia and Africa, were also followed by RO PRES.

RO PRES 2019 delivered for strengthening the EU’s role as a global actor

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objective of the 2020 Agenda. We supported the launch of a structured and inclusive process of reflection regarding the long-term objectives and the agenda of the post-2020 Partnership and we were actively involved in high-level events dedicated to Eastern Partnership’s ten-year anniversary.

RO PRES encouraged an invigorated interest on the European Union agenda for the importance of the Black Sea by adopting the Common Maritime Agenda, the Strategic Agenda of Research and Innovation, as well as by drawing the European institutions’ support for the events dedicated to the Black Sea. In the light of these favourable developments, the reinforced support of the EU for the regional cooperation at the Black Sea was confirmed by the Council Conclusions adopted in June. The high-level Conference regarding the cooperation between BSEC and the EU was another important milestone.

EU-Central Asia relations have also been of interest on the regional agenda of RO PRES, enhanced through the EU-Central Asia Connectivity Strategy and the adoption of the new EU Strategy for Central Asia.

The implementation of the EU Global Strategy was stimulated during RO PRES in what regards the security and defence agenda, the integrated perspective on the instruments included in the Strategy, as well as the support for multilateralism. The Council Conclusions adopted in June regarding the Security and Defence Agenda reflect the progresses achieved on the civilian and military components and the coherence of instruments, ensuring a proper balance while reaffirming the relevance of EU-NATO cooperation agenda. The Conference in Bucharest organised in the context of celebrating 70 years since NATO creation and 20 years since the launch of CSDF, underlined the importance of transparency and good communication between allies and partners.

The efforts of RO PRES in the area of cooperation for development were focused on promoting subjects such as: children and youth, education, as well as the new challenges of the development policy - the partnership with the private sector, implementing the external dimension of the 2030 Agenda, Europe-Africa relations.

RO PRES 2019 managed to simplify the rules and ensure the necessary legal clarity. The position of the Council now includes measures supporting beneficiaries, so as to preserve the strategic role of the cohesion policy. These results brokered by PRES RO will enable the rapid start of negotiations with the EP in order to reach agreements enabling the timely start of the new operational programs.

a positive agenda on the Enlargement Policy at EU level.

- The Council conclusions on enlargement and stabilization and association process adopted in June 2019 reconfirmed this approach and ensured the means to continue the process, according to the previously assumed European commitment. RO PRES managed to secure the remarkable and even historical developments registered in 2018 and to maintain the strategic opportunities created for the partners in the region.

- RO PRES organized and chaired the EU-Montenegro Stabilization and Association Council (Brussels, 27 June 2019) and the EU-Serbia Intergovernmental Conference on Accession (Brussels, 27 June 2019), marking the opening of a new negotiation chapter – Chapter 9/Financial Services.

- RO PRES succeeded in resuming, after 4 years, the meetings of the Association Council with Turkey (Brussels, March 15, 2019).

RO PRES made a tangible contribution to discussions on the efficiency of the regional cooperation mechanisms through a first-time event organized in cooperation with the Acting Presidency of the South-East European Cooperation Process. What is more, a conference for the young generation in the Western Balkans was organized, addressing topical issues such as entrepreneurship, innovation, digitization, youngsters’ role in reconciliation, strategic communication, democratic participation.

We contributed to ensuring visibility of the Eastern Partnership and of the benefits achieved within it, by organising a series of sectoral events in the areas of digitalisation, transport, energy, business and youth as well as through our contribution in implementing the sectoral...