



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

PROGRAMME OF THE SLOVENIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE EU COUNCIL – WHAT WE ACHIEVED

The future of the Union

Lisbon Treaty

After the signing of the **Lisbon Treaty** on 13 December 2007, the main task for Member States in 2008 has been the successful completion of the ratification process. The Slovenian National Assembly ratified the Lisbon Treaty on 29 January 2008. By the end of the Slovenian Presidency, the Lisbon Treaty had been ratified by 19 Member States. On 12 June 2008 Ireland rejected ratification through a referendum. In June 2008 the European Council performed the first analysis of reasons for rejection of the Lisbon Treaty, and called for a continuation of ratification procedures in Member States that had not yet confirmed the Treaty. It was agreed that in its next session, the European Council would discuss possible ways out of the current situation.

Based on the decisions of the European Council in December 2007, in January 2008 the Slovenian Presidency began urgent technical **preparations for implementation of the Lisbon Treaty**.

Accession negotiations continue

Accession negotiations between the EU and Croatia and Turkey have continued in line with the negotiation framework, the enlargement strategy and the decisions of the European Council of December 2007, and in line with the progress in meeting the conditions and criteria for membership. The major part of the negotiation process was devoted to verifying the fulfilment of political criteria in both countries, the adjustment of Croatian and Turkish legislation to the EU acquis and fulfilment of the conditions for the opening of individual negotiation chapters. Progress was recorded in all areas.

The Council confirmed the revised Accession Partnership with **Croatia**. In the accession negotiations with this country, the Slovenian Presidency opened four chapters, the European Council concluded its deliberation over two reports reviewing the conformity of legislation ("screening reports") and assessed the fulfilment of conditions for opening six chapters.

In its accession negotiations with **Turkey**, the Slovenian Presidency opened two negotiating chapters, and agreement was reached on the adoption of one report reviewing the conformity of legislation ("screening reports"). The EU Council also confirmed the revised Accession Partnership with Turkey, which defines the priority areas for the fulfilment of obligations by Turkey.



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New attention on the Western Balkans

During the Slovenian Presidency, the European perspective for the Western Balkans was confirmed. Two key achievements of the Presidency are the completion of a network of stabilisation and association agreements with all the countries of the region except Kosovo, and the start of dialogue on visa liberalisation and the presentation of guideposts for this for all countries of the region (except Kosovo). The June European Council welcomed the various sectoral initiatives that were generated on the basis of the March communication from the European Commission, "Western Balkans – Enhancing the European Perspective."

Kosovo

Following Kosovo's declaration of independence, EU foreign ministers concluded that the Member States would decide for themselves on their relations with Kosovo. Here the Council underlined that Kosovo is a case *sui generis*, but reiterated its commitment to stability in the region and a presence in Kosovo as part of the EULEX mission and through the help of the special representative of the EU. In its decisions regarding the Western Balkans, the June European Council showed the way forward in relation to Kosovo.

Schengen and managing the EU external borders

At the end of March 2008 border controls over internal air borders were successfully abolished. The Slovenian Presidency succeeded in securing the adoption of a new timetable for implementation of the SIS II information system by the end of September 2009. The preparatory phase for carrying out the final evaluation of Switzerland for inclusion in the SIS "one4all" was completed.

At a conference in Slovenia, EU home affairs ministers began a discussion on the management of the external borders of EU Member States, which was devoted to the role of the agency Frontex, to the challenges of future management of the EU's external border, and to the use of new technology for controlling the EU's external border.

Enlargement of the eurozone

On 1 January 2008 the euro was adopted by Cyprus and Malta, which now gives a total of 15 EU Member States in the eurozone. They are expected to be followed by Slovakia, since the EU Council assessed that it fulfils all the Maastricht convergence criteria for adoption of the euro on 1 January 2009. At the beginning of June 2008 a ceremony was held to mark the **10th anniversary of the third phase of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the founding of the European Central Bank.**

EU policy debates

Slovenia very successfully steered a debate on a review of the **common agricultural policy** and achieved the adoption of decisions regarding the Commission's communication. The Commission took into account the adopted decisions in drafting a package of legislative proposals, which it published in May 2008. The Slovenian Presidency has already started deliberation over the package.

At a far-reaching conference on the **future of cohesion policy**, Slovenia succeeded in structuring key issues and defining a new role and the necessary reform of cohesion policy for the future.



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Intercultural dialogue

Slovenia began its Presidency both symbolically and in practice with an opening event marking the **European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in Ljubljana**. Following this there were numerous discussions and conferences featuring the participation of religious leaders, experts and representatives of the civil society, who by exchanging views highlighted

coexistence and interaction between different cultures and religions. Slovenia made a special contribution to strengthening partnership and dialogue with the **founding of the Euro-Mediterranean University of Piran** in June 2008.

European success in the age of globalisation

General economic framework

The period of the Slovenian Presidency of the EU has been marked in the economic area by upheavals in **financial markets**, which began in the summer of 2007. In response to the upheavals in international financial markets, the spring European Council adopted guidelines for further action in the EU and on the international level. Three comprehensive and detailed timeframes for measures in various fields of regulation and supervision of financial markets were updated, while we also saw the signing and entry into force of a Memorandum on cooperation in transboundary financial stability between ministries of finance, central banks and supervisors of financial markets in the Member States.

As part of the **coordination and supervision of economic policy**, the procedures for managing the stability programmes and convergence programmes of Member States were rationalised. In the EU great progress was achieved in the area of the **consolidation of public finances**. Further effective implementation of the **Stability and Growth Pact** led to the abandoning of procedures owing to excessive budget deficits against four Member States, so now there are only two countries in this procedure.

In the area of the **effectiveness of public finances**, ministers began a debate and implementation of the work programme regarding the effectiveness of social transfers. They also focused their attention especially on addressing the effectiveness of education spending.

Ministers also adopted a commitment on establishing an **integrated mechanism of financing the Western Balkans**.

The Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs

The successful start-up of the second cycle of the revived Lisbon Strategy was one of the priority tasks of the Slovenian Presidency. At the spring European Council, the heads of state and government agreed that the revived strategy was producing results, which have been evident in increased growth and employment, so no radical changes to priority areas of operation and the process were necessary. The new cycle 2008-2010 will therefore be focused on implementing national reform programmes.



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The European Council also resolved to continue work in the priority areas defined in 2006. Individual areas were updated and revived, while certain major measures for the coming period were highlighted:

- the area of knowledge and innovation was given new impetus through the introduction of the **“fifth freedom”, that is, the free flow of knowledge;**
- in the area of strengthening the **competitiveness of companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises**, the European Council especially highlighted measures relating to the principles of better legislation, which will facilitate for companies easier operation and more rapid development in the single market, easier access to sources of financing and incentives for innovation;
- considerable attention was also paid to the **social dimension of the Lisbon Strategy**, specifically through a commitment to the gradual implementation of the agreed common principles regarding flexible security and the continuous enhancement of political measures to increase social cohesion.

A particular success is the agreement of Member States on the need for a **continuation of the reform process after 2010.**

Investment in knowledge and creativity

During the Slovenian Presidency, the procedure of joint decision-making by the Council and the European Parliament led to the adoption of a regulation establishing the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology**, and ministers in charge of research in the EU were able to agree that the institute should be based in Budapest. Work continued on **establishing common technological initiatives and initiatives under Article 169.** An initiative of the Slovenian Presidency led to the confirmation of decisions **promoting innovativeness and creativity through education and training.**

Since the role of women in science was one of the priorities of the Presidency in the area of research, EU Council decisions were adopted on the topic of **family-friendly science careers.**

Furthermore the Slovenian Presidency established the **Ljubljana Process**, which signifies the commitment of Member States to partnership in enhancing the European research arena.

As part of the priority **inclusion of Western Balkan countries in the European research area** the Presidency organised a meeting of the steering research platform of Western Balkan countries, while Slovenia introduced a project of donations for modernising their research infrastructure.

During the Slovenian Presidency there was also the **first meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council on Research.**

In the area of **higher education** the Slovenian Presidency paid special attention to the modernising of universities and fulfilment of the Bologna reforms. Through a thematic conference on the **role of higher education in lifelong learning**, the Presidency sought to promote a debate on this important aspect of the Lisbon Strategy and the Bologna Process.



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Promoting a competitive and dynamic economy

One of the priority tasks of the Slovenian Presidency has been support for the growth of **small and medium-sized enterprises**. The Slovenian Presidency devoted special attention to the group of **rapidly growing innovative companies**. The European Commission will therefore soon present two new initiatives for small and medium-sized enterprises.

In the area of **further strengthening of the internal market**, the spring European Council highlighted the main political points for conducting future policy in the internal market, orientated towards achieving the Lisbon Strategy objectives. One exceptional success of the Slovenian Presidency has been the adoption of the “**products package**”. The joint decision-making procedure also led to adoption of a **postal services directive** and a **decision on mobile satellite services**. Progress was achieved in introducing the **Community patent**.

In the area of **customs union**, an **updated customs code** was adopted, along with amendments to the regulation on administrative cooperation between the customs authorities of Member States, also in the joint decision-making procedure.

In the area of **consumer protection**, the Slovenian Presidency succeeded in January in reaching an agreement with the European Parliament on a **consumer credit contracts directive**.

In its efforts for intensive implementation of the principles of **better drafting of regulations**, the Council adopted decisions stressing the importance of continuing the project to reduce administrative costs, fast-track adoption of rapid measures to simplify legislation and continued development of using assessments of the effects of regulations.

As for the further development of **telecommunications and the information society**, an intensified debate was conducted on **legislative proposals for the field of electronic communications**. The Slovenian Presidency adopted decisions regarding the Commission communication “**Preparing Europe’s digital future – i2010 mid-term review**”.

During the Presidency we hosted the concluding event of the international two-year project **eGOVERNMENT**, which contributes towards strengthening research of e-government in the wider European area.

Strengthening the social dimension of the Lisbon Strategy

The Slovenian Presidency paid special attention to the transposition of common principles of **flexible security** into national reform programmes. The commitment to gradual implementation of the agreed common principles on flexible security and the constant enhancing of political measures intended to increase social cohesion were also confirmed by the European Council.

One of the biggest achievements of the Slovenian Presidency in the area of employment and social affairs is the political agreement on a **Directive on working hours** and a **Directive on the working conditions of temporary workers**, which were adopted following several years of negotiation and a long search for compromises.



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The Presidency also achieved progress in the area of **coordinating social security systems**. On the initiative of the Slovenian Presidency, the EU Council adopted a resolution on the status of **disabled persons** in the EU.

In **equal opportunities** policy the Slovenian Presidency focused on the topic of **eliminating gender stereotypes**, and this has been reflected in the conclusions of the Council. The spring European Council adopted a commitment to further efforts towards coordinating occupational, family and private life, markedly reducing the gender differences in wages and fulfilling the **European Pact for Gender Equality**.

The Slovenian Presidency contributed its share to the **European debate on demographic challenges** at the conference on Intergenerational solidarity for societies of coexistence and social cohesion.

As for **young people**, Slovenia promoted a discussion of flexible forms of employment, mobility, education and training and coordination of working and family life. The EU Council formulated guidelines to reduce the burning issue of youth unemployment in the EU. Special attention was paid to implementing the **European Youth Pact**.

With regard to the **European Year of Intercultural Dialogue**, special concern was shown for **youth and intercultural dialogue** and **developing intercultural competence**. Another major contribution to intercultural dialogue was the **decisions on multilingualism** drawn up on the basis of the extremely successful conference on multilingualism.

As a result of the efforts of the Slovenian Presidency, **culture** and creativity gained a place in the Lisbon Strategy and the decisions of the European Council.

Environmental and energy issues

In connection with the climate and energy package, the spring European Council adopted key political decisions that are the condition for its timely adoption.

The European Council:

- agreed that the European Commission's proposal is a good starting point and basis for an agreement;
- undertook to achieve a political agreement among Member States by the end of 2008;
- agreed on the fundamental principles that must be accommodated in allocating burdens among Member States, without which the debate could not be continued on lower levels.

Extensive and intensive discussion in the EU Council yielded important progress in the understanding of the proposed solutions and in unifying the positions of Member States, since only through timely adoption of this package will the EU play a leading role and engage credibly in international negotiations to secure agreement regarding the **integrated global agreement on climate change for the period after 2012**, which will be in December 2009 in Copenhagen. Efforts for the timely conclusion of an appropriate international agreement were also the subject of discussion at all **meetings and summits between the EU and third countries**.



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At the spring European Council a joint report from the high representative for common foreign and security policy and the European Commission was presented regarding the **impact of climate change on international security**.

The Slovenian Presidency succeeded in achieving important progress in numerous other files in the **area of environmental protection** (directive on including emissions from air transport in the emissions trading scheme, wastes directive, regulation on mercury and a directive on environmental standards of quality in the area of water policy).

One of the important priority tasks of the Slovenian Presidency was the **preservation of biodiversity on the global level**. The Slovenian Presidency successfully coordinated and represented the EU mandate for negotiation at the conference of parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 9) in Bonn and at the meeting of parties to the Cartagena Protocol on **Biosafety** to the Convention on Biological Diversity (MOP 4).

After the Member States adopted a commitment at the European Council to achieve by June an agreement on the third **legislative package for liberalising the internal market for electricity and natural gas**, following the submission of a compromise proposal the Slovenian Presidency succeeded in securing an agreement on key components in all five legislative proposals, which is a good basis for finalising the entire third energy package.

During the Slovenian Presidency the ministerial decisions on the **Strategic Energy Technology Plan** were adopted unanimously, and this was also welcomed by the spring European Council.

In the area of developing **foreign policy energy dialogue**, energy issues were also highlighted at troika meetings and in talks with third countries on the highest level.

Other important areas of economic and social development

Health

In the area of health, an important contribution from the Slovenian Presidency was the adoption of decisions concerning a **reduction in the burden of cancer**. By the end of this year we anticipate an action plan from the Commission on this subject. European health ministers also addressed the problem of **antimicrobial resistance**. On the initiative of the Slovenian Presidency, the EU Council and the European Commission reached an agreement on **enhanced and structural cooperation for implementing the EU health strategy**. In the area of **medicines**, political orientations were adopted in relation to further legislative initiatives on information for patients about medicines.

Agriculture and fisheries

In the area of **agriculture** the Slovenian Presidency achieved some important successes. The main achievement has been the adoption of EU Council decisions on a **review of the common agricultural policy. Reform of the common market arrangement for wine** was adopted. The Presidency succeeded in coordinating the positions of Member States and achieving political agreement regarding the **simplification of the rules of cross-compliance** and in adopting an agreement on **raising national milk quotas**. The Presidency also opened up a debate among Member States over the **high prices of agricultural products and food** and on possible additional measures to stabilise agricultural



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markets. The Slovenian Presidency also successfully coordinated activities and represented the position of the EU within the framework of the 16th meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation on a high level regarding world security in food supply.

In the area of **fisheries** the priority file related to **illicit, unregistered and unregulated fishing**, regarding which the Presidency achieved a political agreement. In **phytosanitary affairs** the Presidency succeeded on the basis of a compromise proposal in achieving an agreement on a proposed **regulation on placing phytopharmaceutical agents on the market**. The Council also adopted a common position regarding the proposed **directive on sustainable use of pesticides**.

Transport

An exceptionally important achievement in the area of transport is the agreement regarding a regulation on further implementation of the European satellite navigation **programme Galileo**. Europe is thus still committed to offering all its citizens and companies high-quality satellite navigation services by 2013.

The Slovenian Presidency focused especially on measures to **increase transport safety**. The Presidency thus succeeded in securing a political agreement regarding a directive on the **safety of road infrastructure** and an agreement regarding a directive on the **protection of pedestrians on the roads**. **Decisions on the rail network** and **decisions on multi-year contracts for the quality of rail infrastructure** were also adopted, and in the **road-transport package** the Presidency achieved political consensus regarding all three legislative proposals. Progress was achieved in addressing the files of the **third package of seven legislative measures on maritime safety**. In the area of aviation, adoption of a **directive on airport taxes** was achieved.

As part of the enhancement of a European perspective for the Western Balkans, during the Slovenian Presidency the European Commission was given a mandate to begin negotiations to sign a **Transport Agreement with the Western Balkans**.

Territorial cohesion and urban policy

The Slovenian Presidency continued the work of previous Presidencies in the area of **territorial cohesion and urban policy**. The Territorial Dialogue 2008, which took place in Slovenia, was devoted to the roles of local and regional communities in fulfilling the Lisbon Strategy.

Strengthening the area of freedom, security and justice

Home affairs

In the area of **police cooperation**, following intensive negotiations the Slovenian Presidency secured political agreement on the **transformation of Europol into an EU agency**, signifying an achievement of the entire trio. Within the framework of the trio's priority tasks, we secured the adoption of the entire package of legislation that transposes the **Treaty of Prüm** into the EU acquis.



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The Slovenian Presidency successfully ensured a continuation of **action against terrorism** by implementing various strategies and action plans, while major progress was also made in the area of **increasing control over explosives** through the adoption of an action plan.

As part of the **foreign dimension of home affairs**, the Presidency was very active in **measures for South Eastern Europe**. In particular the Presidency initiated the project to formulate common assessments of the threat of organised crime in South Eastern Europe (SEE OCTA).

Noteworthy achievements elsewhere include the political **agreement on twin-track negotiations** between the European Commission and Member States and the USA for **entry into the visa-free programme with the USA**.

In the area of **migrations and visa policies** the Slovenian Presidency succeeded in securing an agreement on the so-called **returns directive**. In addition to this the Council adopted decisions on practical cooperation in the area of asylum. The Presidency enhanced the implementation of what is termed the **global approach to migrations**, and also successfully continued the work on files in the area of legal migrations, managing the EU external border and the **visa code**.

Protection of Europe's critical infrastructure and civil protection

The Slovenian Presidency succeeded in harmonising the wording of the **directive identifying and defining Europe's critical infrastructure**.

Justice

In the area of **justice**, the main priority task of the Slovenian Presidency was intensive work in relation to **e-justice**, where the Presidency focused on building up the e-justice portal.

Within the framework of the fight against terrorism, a general approach **for a framework decision on the fight against terrorism** was adopted.

On the initiative of the Slovenian Presidency, and supported by six other Member States, the EU Council formulated in an exceptionally short time a general approach to a **framework decision on carrying out sentences in absentia**. Also on the initiative of the Slovenian Presidency, European justice ministers were able to secure a general approach to issues that are the most important part of the amendments to the **decision strengthening Eurojust**.

The Slovenian Presidency succeeded in achieving a number of agreements in the process of joint decision-making with the European Parliament, including on a **directive on environmental protection in criminal law**. Equally, under the leadership of the Slovenian Presidency, the **regulation on the law applicable to contractual obligations (Rome I)** was adopted in the first reading, while an agreement regarding the **directive on certain aspects of mediation in civil and economic matters** was secured in the second reading. Another major success of the Presidency was the adoption of political guidelines and compromise solutions regarding the key components of the **regulation on maintenance matters**.



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In addition to this the Presidency also recorded progress in the area of the **foreign dimension of justice cooperation**, where major success was achieved at the Hague conference for international private law.

Other important achievements of the Slovenian Presidency in this area include the adoption of a multi-year programme for the **Fundamental Rights Agency**, the agreement of the EU Council on the appointment of the Agency director and the signing of an agreement between the European Community and the Council of Europe on cooperation in the work of the Agency.

Enhancing the role of the EU in the area of ensuring security, development and foreign relations

European neighbourhood policy

The Slovenian Presidency made efforts to enhance the **European neighbourhood policy**. General agreement was reached among the Member States that the principle of differentiation and an individual approach and raising awareness of common ownership should remain the main principles of this policy. A major achievement within the European neighbourhood policy has been the official start of implementation of the common initiative of countries in the wider region of the Black Sea and the EU – the **Black Sea Synergy initiative**.

Euro-Mediterranean partnership

In its role of presiding country, Slovenia implemented the programme framework of activities for 2008 in all three dimensions – security/political, economic and socio-cultural. In addition to this, several unplanned activities were carried out. These were associated primarily with conditions in the Middle East and the initiative to transform the Barcelona process. In March 2008 the European Council welcomed the initiative on the “Barcelona process: a Union for the Mediterranean”, and in June called on all Euro-Mediterranean partners to cooperate in drafting a joint declaration.

Central Asia

The Slovenian Presidency successfully continued and provided major impetus for implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia, adopted at the European Council in June 2007. The European Council of June 2008 also adopted the first report on implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia.

Dialogue with strategic partners and regions

During the Slovenian Presidency four **EU summits with third countries** were held:

- The main messages from the **EU-Japan summit**, which was held on 23 April in Tokyo, were that the EU and Japan take full responsibility in resolving open global issues, and that they are jointly committed to promoting international peace and security.
- The **EU-Latin America and Caribbean summit (EU/LAC)**, held on 16 and 17 June in Lima, served especially to highlight the commitment to multilateralism and cooperation in key areas of regional partnership, a commitment to eradicating poverty and inequality, a determination to attain the criteria of millennium development targets, to protect the



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environment and biodiversity and to combat climate change and its consequences. Leaders also affirmed the importance of vocational education as an important means in the fight against poverty.

- **The EU-USA summit**, which was held on 10 June at Brdo pri Kranju, confirmed the importance of the strategic trans-Atlantic partnership. Great attention was devoted to bilateral relations, especially to economic cooperation between the EU and USA, and in this context a report from the Transatlantic Economic Council was presented. A joint declaration was adopted.
- The Slovenian Presidency achieved confirmation of the negotiating mandate to begin negotiations on a new comprehensive agreement between the EU and Russia, which will replace the existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. This was also the topic of the **EU-Russia summit**.

Regional challenges

The Presidency actively supported efforts for progress in the **Middle East peace process**. It supported a reinforced role of the EU in **Iraq** and at bilateral meetings and meetings with third countries it called upon those countries to support Iraq in achieving the reform targets. The Presidency supported the EU's twin-track approach in relations with **Iran**.

The Slovenian Presidency also regularly monitored and responded to events in **Africa** (the crisis in Kenya, elections in Zimbabwe).

In relation to **China**, the EU played a constructive role in developing relations across the Strait of Taiwan. The EU also actively promoted a continuation of dialogue between the Chinese government and representatives of the Dalai Lama after the violent protests that engulfed Tibet and neighbouring Chinese provinces. The EU also closely monitored the political processes and humanitarian conditions after Cyclone Nargis in **Burma/Myanmar** and renewed the common position of the EU towards Burma/Myanmar.

Strengthening the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)

The Presidency continued the planning, upgrading and heading of operations and missions within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy. A positive shift was also achieved in the development of civilian and military capacities.

The Slovenian Presidency continued the **enhanced implementation of the foreign dimension of EU strategies and action plans** in this area. Special emphasis was placed on cooperation with the UN and on strengthening partnership with key countries and international organisations. The Presidency succeeded in promoting a discussion of key obstacles in **cooperation between the EU and NATO**. Furthermore the Slovenian Presidency successfully built on the **cooperation between the EU and non-governmental organisations**, and continued strengthening the dimension of human rights in EU crisis management operations.

Defence ministers paid special attention to ensuring stability and security in the **Western Balkans**. An important specific initiative of the Slovenian Presidency has been the involvement of the EU in the SEEC process (Clearinghouse for South-East Europe) in the area of defence reform and reform of the security sector.



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Promoting human rights in EU foreign policy

At the forefront of the Slovenian Presidency were efforts to **strengthen the effectiveness of mechanisms to promote human rights in the EU common foreign and security policy**. Three of the existing five EU guidelines on human rights (guidelines against torture, against the death penalty and on the rights of children in armed conflicts) were updated, and new guidelines on the rights of children were implemented. The biggest achievement of the Slovenian Presidency was the **integrated approach to the issue of human rights, which links up development policy, security and human rights**.

International development cooperation and humanitarian assistance

At the forefront of the Slovenian Presidency were efforts to achieve the **millennium development goals**. The European Council confirmed the decisions on the topic of fulfilling the millennium development goals and proposed to its development partners that they confirm the programme of EU action regarding the millennium development goals. The Presidency paid special attention to **fulfilling the rights of children and the status of women in armed conflicts**.

The Slovenian Presidency coordinated the appearance of the EU at the **12th Ministerial Meeting of UNCTAD** in Accra.

The EU also responded to the issue of the **dramatic rise in food prices** and the associated threat to food supply around the world. The European Council undertook to carry out short-, medium- and long-term measures in response to the crisis.

Common trade policy

Successful conclusion of the round of negotiations on the **Doha development agenda within the World Trade Organisation** in 2008 was the main priority task of the Slovenian Presidency in the area of the EU common trade policy. The EU Council adopted decisions and stressed the importance of all-embracing, far-reaching and balanced results in all areas of negotiation.

During the Slovenian Presidency a compromise agreement was reached on the proposed **Regulation on the general system of preferences for 2009-2011**, and efforts continued for the conclusion of **free trade agreements with numerous third countries**. Following successful conclusion of negotiations for the accession of **Ukraine** to the World Trade Organisation in February, negotiations started for the conclusion of a free trade agreement between the EU and Ukraine.

During the Slovenian Presidency, efforts also continued for the conclusion of negotiations to conclude developmentally orientated **economic partner agreements** with the other five regions of Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific.