



Austrian presidency Jul-Dec 2018

OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT PRIORITIES

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The full programme can be downloaded [here](#) in German and English.

The presidency expects to bring into conclusion as many EU legislative proposals as possible, because the European elections are held in May 2019 (bear this in mind regarding the whistleblower protection proposal).

Two crucial issues: Brexit completion & future of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), so new programmes can start on schedule on 1 January 2021.

Digitalisation is a dominating theme throughout the presidency priorities: Completing the **Digital Single Market**, modernising public administration on a broad scale and renewing industrial policy will improve framework conditions for digital business models and services.

Digitalisation in the workplace will be one major theme of the Austrian Presidency. New modes of work that arise due to digitalisation require a shared understanding and common rules within the Single Market to avoid distortion of competition.

The Austrian Presidency will direct its focus on **platform-based working**, in particular on work and employment conditions as well as social and labour law. Challenges, experiences and best-practice models relating to labour market effects, working conditions and social protection will be discussed together with **European social partners** and (socio-political) NGOs in an informal setting. The key results of this debate will be considered in the Council's

deliberations.

Moreover, the Austrian Presidency will continue the negotiations on the **Directive on transparent and predictable working conditions** in the European Union and on **the new Employment Guidelines**.

The Council will also continue work on the existing initiatives on **equal treatment and non-discrimination**, and the initiative for **work-life balance**.

The Austrian Presidency will continue the negotiations on the revision of the Regulation on the coordination of **social security systems**. The proposals submitted by the Commission, such as on better access to **social protection** for the **self-employed** and people in **atypical employment forms**, will also be negotiated. Changes in modes of work, employment structures and the organisation of work lead to **new health risks** for workers. Cancer is the most common work-related reason of death in the EU. The Austrian Presidency aims to complete the negotiations on the amendment of the **Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive** (second and third batches).

Initiatives to develop **innovation** and **professional skills** will be further promoted.

The Austrian Presidency intends to promote **artificial intelligence** as a field with the potential for a reindustrialisation of Europe, and plans to stimulate developments in this respect in close cooperation with the relevant stakeholders.

The Austrian Presidency will continue the **Better Regulation Agenda** using the existing tools and initiatives as a basis.

The Presidency will continue the reforms of **copyright** and company law, not least to also meet the increasing challenges of digitalisation in these areas of legislation. The aim is to complete the work on the Directive on copyright in the Digital Single Market.

Targeted promotion of **innovation**, such as with respect to Industry 4.0, through **RTI funding** and demand-side measures will be another priority contributing to strengthening Europe's international competitiveness.

This includes first and foremost the negotiations on **Horizon Europe** – the ninth edition of the programme will continue well-established funding instruments but will also provide new impetus, be it with respect to the European Innovation Council or developments towards stronger mission orientation of **research and innovation**.

The Austrian Presidency aims for Council conclusions on the **European Research Area**, which is to give prominence above all to activities that hold out the promise of major progress towards a **Single Market for Knowledge**, such as the **European Open Science Cloud**. The Austrian Presidency sees research and innovation as a generic policy area that has to be put to work for all sectoral policies.

The central theme in **education** and **higher education** will be the future of the EU cooperation on education. Apart from discussions on what will come after the Strategic Framework – Education & Training 2020 (ET 2020), a key role will be accorded to the conclusions of the European Council of 14 December 2017, and the Commission's Communication "Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture", which defines the target of creating a **European Education Area**. A key dossier under the Austrian Presidency will be the successor programme to **Erasmus+**. The Austrian Presidency will start negotiations within Council and work towards reaching an agreement on key parts of the programme. The Presidency will strive to achieve a consensus on the proposal for a **Council Recommendation on the mutual recognition of higher education and school leaving diplomas/ study periods abroad**, and to start negotiations on the proposal for a Council Recommendation on boosting language learning.
