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Looking ahead to the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU

1 January – 30 June 2023

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Introduction

On 1 January 2023, Sweden begins its Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU). With Russia still waging war in Ukraine, the Swedish Presidency will be faced with managing geopolitical, as well as potentially worsening economic and energy crises.

At the same time, Sweden's Presidency comes at the start of the final full year before the May 2024 European elections. With the current crises, and COVID-19 before them, having shifted policymaker priorities over the past years, Sweden faces the pressure of a backlog of proposed legislation to advance before the end of the 2019-2024 mandate.

Sweden set out four priorities for its Presidency:

1. Security – unity;
2. Resilience – competitiveness;
3. Prosperity – green & energy transition;
4. Democratic values and the rule of law – our foundation.

The Swedish Presidency's work programme outlines their priority issues across the various Council configurations dealing with specific policy areas.

Leveraging Kekst CNC's expertise in both Brussels and Stockholm, this report provides an overview of the Swedish Presidency from a national perspective, before presenting and analysing its priorities in the following areas:

- » **Energy & Sustainability**
- » **Competition & Industrial Policy**
- » **Technology, Media & Telecommunications**
- » **Health**

Presidency of the Council of the EU

The Presidency is responsible for driving the Council's work on the EU's legislative agenda by setting priorities, as well as facilitating negotiations and brokering compromises between Member States.

In principle, the Presidency must act as an "honest and neutral broker". In practice, this means the Presidency must represent the Council as a collective when speaking publicly, or interacting with other EU institutions, rather than advocating its own national position.

Holding the Presidency therefore does not necessarily ensure the reflection of national priorities in political compromises. Rather, it allows for the prioritisation of legislative files as a whole, as well as aspects of which to advance negotiations.

For example, the H1 2022 French Presidency prioritised finding a provisional political agreement on the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and Digital Services Act (DSA) before the country's Presidential elections. The Presidency, therefore, can be used as a tool to advance general priorities, rather than specific positions.

The Presidency's two main competencies are:

1. Chairing meetings of different Council configurations and preparatory bodies, as well as ensuring that the Council's rules of procedure are properly adhered to;
2. Representing the Council in relations with other EU institutions, in particular with the European Commission and European Parliament, as a part of interinstitutional negotiations on legislative files, known as trilogues.

The Presidency Trio

Each Presidency operates as part of a group of three Presidencies known as a 'trio'. The trio sets longer-term goals and a common agenda for an 18-month period. Each Presidency then defines more detailed priorities as part of individual work programmes, on the basis of this overarching agenda.

Sweden is the third Presidency of the current trio, which includes France (H1 2022) and the Czech Republic (H2 2022).

Their joint programme, agreed on 14 December 2021, is divided into four areas:

1. Protecting citizens and freedoms;
2. Building economic foundations: European model for the future;
3. Building a climate-neutral, green, equitable and social Europe;
4. Promoting European interests and values in the world.

The Swedish Government

Following September's general election, Sweden elected a centre-right government. This marked a significant political change, with the Social Democrats having held power for two consecutive periods, spanning over eight years.

Ulf Kristersson of the Moderate Party was elected Prime Minister and took office in mid-October. The new government consists of the Moderate Party, the Christian Democrats and the Liberals. Prime Minister Kristersson's coalition government is supported by the right-wing populist Sweden Democrats, who secure the bloc's majority in Parliament. Although the party holds no positions in government, a special coordination unit has been installed through which the Sweden Democrats influence government policy and decision-making, including on EU matters. The four party leaders also meet on a weekly basis.

The Swedish Parliament plays a central role in the Swedish government's EU affairs. The government requires a mandate from the EU Affairs Committee for every position the Swedish government takes in the Council. During his address to Parliament in which the Presidency work programme was presented, Prime Minister Kristersson urged the parties in Parliament to discuss issues openly, including with the Sweden Democrats, to find consensus positions throughout the Presidency.

When presenting priorities ahead of the Presidency, Prime Minister Kristersson stated that Sweden will assume a constructive leadership role and act as an "honest broker" when facilitating negotiations. Focus will be on achieving compromises, promoting common European interests and leveraging the diversity of the different Member States – viewing this as a strength of the union.

With only two months in office, the Swedish government has not yet reached full political operability, and has drawn criticism due to a perceived lack of ambition on climate policy, something which may impact Sweden's approach on these issues. On topics important to Swedish industry, such as forestry, the Prime Minister stated that while he will safeguard Swedish interests, he has respect for differing views within the EU on forestry policy. Prime Minister Kristersson stated in the chamber that "the Swedish position on forestry is very well known in the EU," but also clarified that common positions must be found. Sweden, he said, will work to achieve this.

Kekst CNC Stockholm Contact



Lars Lindblad

Partner, Stockholm & Brussels

lars.lindblad@kekstcnc.com

+46 8 696 1200

Key Priorities

Energy & Sustainability

With Sweden being an ambitious country on climate neutrality, it is no surprise to see the green & energy transition as one of the Presidency's four priorities. "Sweden is taking over the Presidency at a time when the EU is facing unprecedented challenges. A greener, more secure and freer Europe is the foundation of our priorities", said Prime Minister Kristersson during the press conference outlining the country's approach to the Presidency.



Addressing the current energy crisis

As Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues to severely impact the European energy market, with energy prices high and energy supplies uncertain, energy policy will remain in the spotlight for the next six months. Sweden will have the difficult task of adopting a set of legislation aimed at making the EU independent of Russian fossil fuels and protecting the bloc from another energy crisis.

The Swedish Presidency should hold the final trilogues on the **Fit-for-55 Package**, a set of sector-specific legislation to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and reach climate neutrality by 2050. Deals are still expected on the **Energy Efficiency Directive (EED)**, the **Renewable Energy Directive (RED)**, and the **Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)**, all aiming at accelerating energy efficiency efforts and fostering the use of renewable energy sources. Trilogues are in an advanced stage for the first two files, with negotiations expected to begin on the third under the Swedish Presidency.

Sweden will also kick-off work in the Council on the long-awaited reform of **Electricity Market Design**, set to be published in March, as well as advance work on the proposals in the **Hydrogen and Decarbonised Gas Market package**, which should help reduce natural gas use by increasing the proportion of renewable and low-carbon gases, and also deal with any further emergency proposals.

Advancing implementation of the Green Deal

Environment and climate issues will be high on the Swedish agenda with a large number of EU Green Deal proposals already on the table, or to be presented in the near future. Sweden will be expected to advance work as much as possible so that negotiations can be finalised before the end of the current 2019-2024 mandate.

The Presidency committed to progress on the revision of the **Waste Shipment Regulation**, which regulates the shipment of hazardous and non-hazardous waste within and outside EU borders. With a final vote expected in the European Parliament in January and a Council position in progress, trilogues should start in Q1.

Sweden should also advance work on the **Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation**, for which negotiations are expected to be tough. The proposal, presented by the European Commission as part of the Circular Economy Package II on 30 November, requires all packaging to be made recyclable or reusable by 2030.

During its six-month Presidency, Sweden will also have to push forward key policy files impacting forestry. The challenge will be for Sweden to remain neutral while being a known defender of its sustainable forestry sector. The main focus will be to agree a Council position on the **Nature Restoration Regulation**, which sets multiple binding restoration targets and obligations across a broad range of ecosystems, including forests.

Sweden will also start initial talks on the **Carbon Removals Certification Mechanism**, which was presented by the European Commission at the end of November, and should foster the development of carbon removal technologies to help achieve climate neutrality. Sweden will also organise a first workshop among Member States on the upcoming **Regulation on forest monitoring**, to be published in Q2.

Finally, the Swedish Presidency intends to focus on trilogues on transport legislation, as the transition to a sustainable transport system is one of the biggest challenges of the green transition. This will entail making quick

progress on the **Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)**, which aims at modernising Europe's transport infrastructure. In line with the ambition of greening the transport sector, the European Commission is still expected to present a number of proposals impacting road, rail and intermodal transport in the first half of 2023, including new truck CO2 standards, a revision of the Combined Transport Directive, a revision of the rules on vehicle weights and dimensions, a package for green freight transport, and an initiative on greening corporate fleets.

The Presidency intends to initiate negotiations in the Council on a number of these proposals but could be handling most toward the end of their six-month term, leaving little time for the measures to be agreed before the 2024 European elections.

➤ Kekst CNC Energy & Sustainability Contacts



Lars Lindblad

Partner, Stockholm & Brussels
lars.lindblad@kekstcnc.com
+46 8 696 1200



Olivier Hinnekens

Managing Director, Brussels
olivier.hinneken@kekstcnc.com
+32 475 30 05 57



Laure Botella

Consultant, Brussels
laure.botella@kekstcnc.com
+32 2 737 92 18

➤ Key Swedish Presidency Contacts



Romina Pourmokhtari

Minister for Climate and the Environment
miljodepartementet.registrator@gov.se

Emma Wu Nolte

Chair of the Working Party on the Environment
emma.wu-nolte@gov.se
+32 2 289 56 48

Rasa Engstedt

Chair of the Working Party on Energy
rasa.engstedt@gov.se
+32 2 28 95767

Key Priorities

Competition & Industrial Policy

European competitiveness is one of the four key priorities of the Swedish Presidency under the header of “resilience”. With the US taking an increasingly insular approach to external relations, and existing tensions with both Russia and China, the Presidency will face continued pressure from EU Member States to focus on strengthening the EU’s strategic autonomy vis-à-vis non-EU markets. This reality was reflected in the speech of Prime Minister Kristersson in his speech to the Riksdag, introducing the government’s priorities and work programme:

“Openness must never lead to naivety, or unilateral dependence on Russian energy or Chinese minerals. The EU must therefore spread the risk by safeguarding diversified and mutually deepened trade with other countries. Facilitating digital services in new trade agreements, and in the internal market, is an important task for the Swedish Presidency. But also increased own production to secure the supply chains in strategically important areas”.



EU-US relations and the Inflation Reduction Act

The Biden administration's recent introduction of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) is set to test US-EU relations during the Swedish Presidency. The IRA is set to introduce billions of dollars' worth of subsidies into the US market as of January 2023 focusing, among other things, on energy production, manufacturing and reductions in carbon emissions. The tax credits and production subsidies foreseen by the IRA have already been dubbed as discriminatory by EU leaders and industry, and discussions have recently intensified on potential retaliatory measures.

To that end, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has delivered her four-point plan to heads of EU Member States to address what she dubbed the "dual challenge" of the IRA and rising energy prices. Proposed measures include:

1. **Continued dialogue with the Biden administration**, including through the US-EU Task Force established in October, to address (i) the discriminatory provisions in the IRA, identifying ways in which "our respective incentive programmes reinforce each other" and (ii) over-dependency on Chinese raw materials, possibly via a "raw materials club" that could focus on "diversifying primary raw material supply and boosting investments into recycling capacities to create a well-functioning secondary raw materials market".
2. **Revision of State Aid rules** to unlock greater public investment throughout the value chain "down to the production of the most strategic green-tech solutions and clean end products".
3. **Boosting public investment to accelerate the energy transition** including via the establishment of a European Sovereignty Fund to complement national funding with European financing.
4. **Increase deployment of renewables** including by speeding up permitting processes for renewables and reforming the electricity market.

Changes to the State Aid framework may arrive early during the Swedish Presidency. The European Commission has already opened consultations with EU Member States on "targeted adaptations" to the rules, focused on the provision of support to clean tech industries. Speaking in a plenary session of the European Parliament (14 December), Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager said "[i]f supported by the Member States, targeted adaptations of our [State Aid] temporary framework could serve as a bridge to real European solutions in the medium term".

Amongst the geopolitical tension, the Swedish Presidency will be required to balance its own free trading philosophy and strong transatlantic ties with increasing calls for protectionism and retaliation from larger Member States such as France and Germany.

Continued focus on strengthening EU competitiveness

Consecutive crises affecting the entire EU have exposed weaknesses in the EU's resilience, and have highlighted an over-reliance on goods and raw materials from third countries. To that end, in its [work programme](#), the European Commission announced that it would use the **30th anniversary of the Single Market** to issue a Communication "showcasing the significant benefits while identifying implementation gaps and future priorities for the single market to continue to play a key role in our Union's open strategic autonomy" (Q1).

The Presidency has also committed to marking this anniversary, using it as a "starting point in establishing a path for how EU competitiveness can be strengthened in the long term". In parallel, the Presidency will seek to advance discussions on several key files which, in the short to medium term, can also aid in realising this objective.

The **Single Market Emergency Instrument** (SMEI) is one such file, developed in the wake of recent crises with the aim to "preserve the free movement of goods, services and persons and the availability of essential goods and services in the event of future emergencies". The proportionality of the SMEI has already been raised as a concern during a [policy debate](#) chaired by the Czech Presidency in September 2022. In addition, Member States scrutinised "the need for an adequate governance structure – striking the right balance between the role of Member States and the role of the European Commission". Indeed, during the debate, the Swedish representative stressed the need for the proposal to respect the principle of subsidiarity.

A first compromise text is not expected under the Czech Presidency and there is a general feeling that the European Commission has not been receptive to concerns about Member State oversight once emergency measures are triggered. Thus, progress on this file is expected to be slow.

There is, however, more optimism about progress under the Presidency on the **European Chips Act** – a proposal expected to boost the competitiveness of Europe's semiconductor sector by pooling EU resources to build design and production capacities. The Council [adopted](#) its position under the Czech Presidency on 1 December. Whilst there is agreement between the Council and the European Commission on the overall budget of €3.3 billion to be made available to support technological capacity building and related R&D, the Council has refused to reallocate decommitted funds from Horizon Europe. As such, there is a €400 million gap in funding that the European Commission, together with the Council and European Parliament, has been asked to fill.

The European Parliament is yet to adopt its position on the file with an indicative plenary vote scheduled for 13 February. Assuming this timeline is not delayed, rilogues should begin under the Swedish Presidency, likely in Q2. However, there is no expectation that they will be finalised, with a provisional political agreement more likely under the Spanish Presidency in H2 2023.

Similarly, the Presidency will be expected to advance discussions in the Council on the **Critical Raw Materials Act**. The initiative is meant to ensure a sustainable supply of critical raw materials and address the EU's dependency on third countries. Following the closure of a [call for evidence](#) and a [public consultation](#) on 25 November, the European Commission is expected to adopt its proposal in Q1. Consequently, the Swedish Presidency will begin negotiations towards agreeing on a general approach.

France and Germany have already issued a [joint non-paper](#) on the topic that was well-received by Member States. It argued for a three-pillar approach focused on: (i) strengthening the crisis management of critical raw materials supplies; (ii) evaluation of financing instruments to support investment in the production of raw materials and critical metals within and outside the EU; and (iii) ensuring a fair-trade and sustainable market framework.

Advancing the EU's trade agenda

Carrying over from the Czech Presidency, advancing the EU's trade agenda will remain a core priority of the Swedish Presidency, not least as a means of diversifying supply chains. Trade policy that contributes to the reconstruction of Ukraine is a priority. However, in parallel, the Swedish Presidency will be looking to build trade links with other parts of the world.

The Presidency has committed to advancing the free trade and partnership agenda with the Indo-Pacific region and Latin America. This will include attempting to advance discussions on the signing of the EU's agreement with the Mercosur countries (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay).

The success of the Presidency's trade agenda, however, will very much depend on the extent to which protectionist Member States prefer to focus on trade defence in the face of an increasingly hostile global environment for free trade.

➤ Kekst CNC Competition & Industrial Policy Contacts



Theo Birmoutsoukis

Managing Director, Brussels

theodoros.birmoutsoukis@kekstcnc.com

+32 499 92 06 49



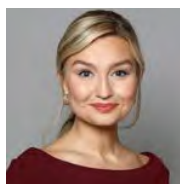
Matt Williams

Consultant, Brussels

matthew.williams@kekstcnc.com

+32 472 18 18 44

➤ Key Swedish Presidency Contacts



Ebba Busch

Minister for Energy, Business and Industry,
Deputy Prime Minister

naringsdepartementet.registrator@gov.se

+46 8 405 10 00

Kristin Olsson

Chair of the Working Party on Competitiveness
and Growth (Internal Market)

kristin.olsson@gov.se

Johan Sandberg

Chair of the Working Party on Competitiveness
and Growth (Industry)

johan.sandberg@gov.se

Eva Ljungbert

Chair of the Working Party on Competition

eva.ljungbert@regeringskansliet.se

Key Priorities

Technology, Media & Telecommunications

The complex tasks of achieving technological sovereignty, regulating big tech, and supporting Europe's digital transformation, have been key goals of EU policymakers during this mandate.

Although not a core focus of Prime Minister Kristersson's intervention, the work programme sets out that the Swedish Presidency will prioritise progress on the AI Act, European Digital Identity, the Data Act, and the transparency and targeting of political advertising Regulation, for which they intend to advance negotiations with the European Parliament "as far as possible".

Work on the Cyber Resilience Act is also expected to continue, while discussions on the Connectivity Infrastructure Act are set to begin, with the European Commission expected to publish the proposal before the end of 2022.



Developing Europe's data economy

The **Artificial Intelligence Act (AIA)** seeks to establish a regulatory framework which protects citizens' rights, e.g., by banning social scoring, while fostering trust, innovation and uptake, by regulating AI applications deemed "high-risk". This framework should support companies in the EU to make use of data in line with European values. With Member States having adopted a common position, the Swedish Presidency will have to wait for the European Parliament's vote, toward the end of Q1, before entering trilogues.

However, following competency disagreements and drawn-out negotiations in the European Parliament, it is unclear where the potential areas of common agreement might be. Whereas the Council narrows the scope of AI to exclude simpler software systems, the European Parliament is still debating how AI should be defined. In addition, where Member States support exemptions for national security and subject policing to safeguards, the European Parliament is likely to take more pro-civil liberty positions by removing such exemptions or and supporting broad application. This makes a final agreement during the Swedish Presidency seem unlikely.

The current Czech Presidency also found a common Member State position on European Digital Identity. The file sets out a framework for how citizens can identify themselves digitally in a safe and secure manner. Electronic identification will be done through a European digital identity wallet on a mobile phone, with the general approach including additional 'level of assurance' measures. Sweden should begin trilogues following the European Parliament's vote in March. However, again, a final agreement may have to wait, as the file is technically complex and deals with sensitive issues such as personal data.

The **Data Act** proposes measures to facilitate B2G, B2B, and B2C sharing of data generated by interconnected devices, currently often controlled by manufacturers, including to support data-driven aftermarket services and create supply for AI applications to be trained by and analyse. There are also measures obliging cloud switching, and to prevent third country access to data. Policymakers see the proposal as a tool to further digitise European manufacturing and bolster industrial data sovereignty, thereby strengthening the EU's competitive advantage vis-a-vis third countries, as well as competition in the cloud market.

Current compromise text grants additional safeguards against third country data access requests which could impinge on national security, extends cloud switching deadlines from 30 to days to two months, and clarifies the scope of the contentious term - "functional equivalence". The European Parliament should have its position adopted in March before trilogues can begin. However, competencies are shared across the industry, internal market, legal, and civil liberties committees, meaning the planned vote could be delayed, and progress in trilogues complicated further.

Supporting future connectivity

The delayed **Connectivity Infrastructure Act (CIA)**, which should be published before Christmas, is set to include a review of the Broadband Cost Reduction Directive (BCRD). It was understood the European Commission would also include a proposal for online platforms to pay a so-called 'fair contribution' to network costs as part of this publication, as a means to achieve Digital Decade 2030 connectivity goals.

However, following pushback from Member States, including Sweden, the European Commission will now hold a broad public debate and consultation starting early next year, before any legislative proposal. This will coincide with a Q2 initiative on the metaverse, announced as part of the European Commission's work programme. Swe-

den's work programme signalled their commitment to progressing the CIA. When it comes 'fair contribution', they will, however, have to remain neutral despite any potential concerns or reservations, and navigate a contentious issue in the Council.

Enhancing cybersecurity & data sovereignty

The **Cyber Resilience Act (CRA)** would oblige manufacturers of 'critical' interconnected devices to conduct conformity assessments that demonstrate compliance with essential cybersecurity requirements. Manufacturers would be obliged to handle vulnerabilities for five years, including by providing security updates, and report exploited vulnerabilities and security incidents within 24 hours of awareness. Sweden aims to advance these negotiations in the Council. Work is still at an early stage in the European Parliament, where the S&D have a new Shadow Rapporteur, MEP Beatrice Covassi (IT), who joined the European Parliament this month, as a replacement for MEP Eva Kaili (GR) following the Qatar corruption investigations.

Although not mentioned in the work programme, the **European Cybersecurity Certification Scheme for Cloud Services (EUCS)** could also be on the agenda. The draft scheme, currently being developed by ENISA (the EU Agency for Cybersecurity), could include sovereignty requirements for its highest level of assurance. These moves are supported by Member States such as France and Spain. Sweden previously shared a joint non-paper, along with Ireland and the Netherlands, calling for data sovereignty to be strengthened through horizontal requirements (such as the Data Act) rather than technical requirements. Several other Member States have called for an economic impact assessment. Sweden therefore could use their Presidency to elevate this technical work to debate at political level, also considering this may be less likely under the subsequent Spanish Presidency.

Promoting platform and media safety and fairness

Not specifically mentioned in the work programme (although the ambition to prevent and combat sexual offences against children is), a key priority of Swedish European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson, is the **Regulation to combat child sexual abuse online (CSAM)**. New rules would oblige big tech companies detect, report and remove child sexual abuse materials on their platforms. These rules, intended to replace an interim derogation from the ePrivacy Directive, could include platforms scanning users' messages.

Member States, MEPs, tech companies, and data protection supervisors alike, have all expressed serious concerns about the proposal's potential impact on encryption and surveillance. Other Member States have supported the need for such child protection measures. Sweden will be tasked with navigating this debate, including around their committed Commissioner.

A key priority of the Swedish Presidency is democratic values and the rule of law, with the May 2024 European elections set to potentially test electoral integrity and free opinion. The Presidency will work to advance negotiations on the **transparency and targeting of political advertising Regulation**. In the Council's general approach, the Regulation would apply 12 months after entry into force. Sweden will advance work following the European Parliament's February vote, but will need to secure a speedy final agreement, or negotiate a closer deadline, for the law to be in place for the run up to May 2024.

The **European Media Freedom Act**, published in September, seeks to protect editorial independence, stop the use of spyware against journalists (a hot topic with a special committee in the European Parliament investigating the

Pegasus scandal), and put in place transparency rules around public service media. Member States will also have to assess media market concentrations on media pluralism and independence, and outlets are granted additional safeguards from unjustified takedowns on social media. However, challenges will likely come in the Council in particular from Member States with governments under criticism for impacting press freedom, such as Hungary and Poland, which Sweden will have to manage.

There is no national minimum wage in Sweden. Although not all other Member States have one either, Sweden was the only country to oppose the **Platform Work Directive**. The Member State sees the issue as a national competency, and prefers social negotiations and collective agreements, whereas this proposal would potentially reclassify millions of platform workers as employees. The key issue of contention is the criteria by which this would be determined. The Czech Presidency were not able to secure a majority for their proposed compromise. With the European Parliament having adopted its position, this leaves Sweden to get the file over the line in the Council before entering trilogues.

➤ Kekst CNC Technology, Media & Telecommunication Contacts



Callum Laidlaw

Director, London

callum.laidlaw@kekstcnc.com

+44 7725 485 778



Adam Waters

Senior Consultant, Brussels

adam.waters@kekstcnc.com

+32 472 188 716



Eda Aygen

Consultant, Brussels

eda.aygen@kekstcnc.com

+32 470 108 265

➤ Key Swedish Presidency Contacts



Erik Slottner

Minister for Public Administration

finansdepartementet.registrator@gov.se

+46 8 405 10 00

Nina Björesten

Chair of the Working Party on Telecommunications
and Information Society

nina.bjoresten@gov.se

+32 2 289 57 23

David Källström

Chair of the Working Party on Telecommunications
and Information Society

david.kallstrom@gov.se

Anders Lindell

Chair of the Horizontal Working Party on Cyber Issues

anders.lindell@gov.se

Key Priorities

Health

The priorities of the Swedish Presidency will continue to build on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, and on the implementation of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, as the EU health budget starts to roll out.

The Swedish Presidency will also continue the EU's outward look toward health, namely by promoting the EU's role in negotiations for the World Health Organisation International Pandemic Treaty, as well as advancing efforts to renew the EU Global Health Strategy.

The Pharmaceutical legislation, expected to be published during Sweden's Presidency, will be a priority, as they will set the tone for the first attempt to review this legislation in 20 years.



Kickstarting the Pharmaceuticals Legislation Revision

As part of the mission letter received by Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides, the **Revision of the General Pharmaceutical Legislation** is part of the ongoing effort to build a stronger **European Health Union** by preparing EU Member States and EU agencies to effectively respond to future health crises, by enhancing the security of supply and addressing shortages through specific measures.

This revision, the first in 20 years to update EU Pharmaceutical rules, is poised to create long discussions amongst Member States, with 14 nations having already come out against an unpublished proposal by the European Commission to introduce market exclusivity vouchers to incentivise the development of treatments against drug-resistant microbes. The European Commission is expected to present the legislative proposal in Q1, after a delay caused by the Regulatory Scrutiny Board. Negotiations on this file are likely to continue into the next mandate (2024 – 2029).

Despite entering into force in 2017, the implementation of the **Medical Devices Regulation** and the **In Vitro Medical Devices Regulation** remain a political concern for the majority of the EU Member States. In several meetings of health ministers throughout 2021/22, Member States have called for challenges regarding the Medical Devices Regulation to be addressed, in relation to the insufficient capacity of notified bodies to certify medical devices. Member States have now agreed to extend the transition period of the Medical Devices Regulation until 2027 for high-risk devices and until 2028 for medium and low-risk devices. However, the delay has triggered concern from stakeholders and policymakers alike about the capacity of notified bodies to assess the devices.

The Swedish Presidency will also have to negotiate the recent proposal on the **Fees and Charges payable to the European Medicines Agency** (EMA). The proposal for a Regulation intends to guarantee that the fees payable by pharmaceutical companies are better aligned with the costs of conducting the evaluation for EU marketing approval, and allow the funding of pharmacovigilance activities conducted by the EMA for nationally authorised pharmaceutical products.

Similar to the extension of EMA's competences under the EU Health Union package, interinstitutional negotiations under this proposal are likely to be relatively consensual, with adoption foreseen in 2023.

Enhancing the EU Public Health Sphere

The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated the importance of access to health data in responding to emergencies. To facilitate increased health data access and sharing, the **European Health Data Space (EHDS)** creates health specific rules and standards for both individuals' control over health data, as well as its use in research and innovation.

Trilogues during the Swedish Presidency are unlikely as the file is moving slowly in European Parliament. Rapporteurship in the co-leading civil liberties committee has been allocated to MEP Annalisa Tardino – an Italian member of the far-right Identity and Democracy Group. This means that reaching a compromise on sensitive issues such as the sharing of personal health data will be challenging. Similar sensitivities will need to be addressed by the Swedish Presidency, with the European Data Protection Board (EDPS) and European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) having already issued a joint report urging that such data be stored in Europe.

The revision of the **EU legislation on blood and tissues and cells (Substances of Human Origin)** will also be a priority of the Swedish Presidency. Since the adoption of the European Commission proposal in July, the discussions at the Council have focused to a large extent on definitions, as reflected in the progress report published by

the Czech Presidency. Thus, by the end of December it is expected that the Working Party on Public Health will only have progressed through Chapter 1 of 14 by the end of December. The Swedish Presidency will then continue work on achieving a compromise amongst Member States, with the ambition to obtain a general approach. The European Parliament is expected to vote its position during the plenary session of June.

As antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the rise of infectious disease becomes increasingly recognised as a major health concern, the European Commission is planning to adopt a proposal for a **Council Recommendation on AMR**. This is expected to include objectives and activities to strengthen Member States' actions against AMR. Building on the [EU One Health Action Plan against AMR](#) and the [Council Conclusions on the fight against antimicrobial resistance](#), the Swedish Presidency is likely to encounter few minor Member State concerns regarding approving the Council Recommendation.

30 November, the European Commission adopted the **EU Global Health Strategy** to improve global health security and deliver better health for all. The Strategy is also designed as the external dimension of the European Health Union, guiding the EU's action towards better preparedness and response to health threats, to strengthen health systems, and advance universal health coverage. To build on this, the Swedish Presidency signalled it intends to keep "advancing efforts to renew" the EU Global Health Strategy. This is likely to be translated into draft Council Conclusions, to build on the efforts made by the [Finnish Presidency in 2010](#) and [Slovenian Presidency in 2021](#).

One of the proposals presented by the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#), a platform for European citizens to debate on Europe's challenges and priorities, was for the establishment of an EU action plan on mental health, which would include research funding and measures to tackle the lack of availability of professionals. Based on this, the European Commission announced that it would present **A Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health**. This initiative, planned for Q2, would follow the steps of the Hungarian Presidency of 2011, which [pushed Council Conclusions in the same area](#).

➤ Kekst CNC Health Contacts



Dr. Thomas Möller
Partner, Frankfurt
thomas.moeller@kekstcnc.com
+49 69 5060 375 60



André Mendes
Associate, Brussels
andre.mendes@kekstcnc.com
+32 493 257 284

➤ Key Swedish Presidency Contacts



Acko Ankarberg Johansson
Minister for Health Care
+46 8 405 10 00

Joakim Svensson
Chair of the Council Working Party on Pharmaceuticals
and Medical Devices
joakim.svensson@gov.se

Andreas Johansson
Chair of the Council Working Party for Public Health
andreas.johansson@gov.se

Annex I

Highlights from the Presidency's Calendar

The Presidency also sets out, ahead of its term, a calendar with official meetings and cultural events.

Institutional Meetings

January 24	»	<u>General Affairs Council</u>
February 6-8	»	Informal Competitiveness Council
February 21	»	<u>General Affairs Council</u>
February 21-22	»	Informal Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council
March 2	»	<u>Competitiveness Council (Internal Market/Industry)</u>
March 16	»	<u>Environment Council</u>
March 21	»	<u>General Affairs Council</u>
March 23-24	»	<u>European Council</u>
March 28	»	<u>Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Energy)</u> (poss.)
April 18-19	»	Informal Environment Council
April 25	»	<u>General Affairs Council</u>
May 22	»	<u>Competitiveness Council (Internal Market/Industry)</u>
May 30	»	<u>General Affairs Council</u>
June 2	»	<u>Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Telecom)</u>
June 19	»	<u>Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Energy)</u>
June 20	»	<u>Environment Council</u>
June 21-22	»	Informal General Affairs Council
June 27	»	<u>General Affairs Council</u>
June 29-30	»	<u>European Council</u>

Annex II

Swedish Presidency Contact Information

Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU [website](#)

Twitter: [@SwedeninEU](#)

Government Offices of Sweden:
Herkulesgatan 17, SE 103 33 Stockholm, Sweden

Permanent Representation of Sweden to the European Union:
Sq. De Meeus 30, 1000, Brussels, Belgium



» **Ulf Kristersson**
Prime Minister of Sweden

statsradsberedningen.registrator@gov.se
+46 8 405 10 00



» **Jessika Roswall**
Minister for EU Affairs

statsradsberedningen.registrator@gov.se
+46 8 405 10 00



» **Lars Danielsson**
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the EU (COREPER II)

agneta.bergendahl@gov.se
+32 2 289 56 43



» **Torbjörn Haak**
Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the EU (COREPER I)

ellinor.haglof@gov.se
+32 2 289 56 44



» **Mikael Lindvall**
Head of Foreign and Security Policy (Political and Security Committee)

mikael.lindvall@gov.se
+32 2 289 56 07



» **Eva Sjögren**
Director General for EU Affairs

eva.sjogren@gov.se
+46 8 405 11 46

**KEKST
CNC**



Kekst CNC

Square de Meeûs 23
1000 Brussels
Belgium

Theodoros Birmpoutsoukis

Managing Director
theodoros.birmpoutsoukis@kekstcnc.com
+32 499 92 06 49

Olivier Hinnekens

Managing Director
olivier.hinneken@kesktcnc.com
+32 475 30 05 57