

EHMA Briefing - Slovak EU Presidency

19 July 2016

General Information

The 1st of July saw Slovakia take over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from the Netherlands. Over the next six months, Slovakia will chair the meetings of the Council, steering the direction of EU policy while acting as mediator between the Council and the European Parliament.

Slovakia is the second country in the current Trio of countries (January 2016 – June 2017) to lead the Council. The Trio defined a common [18 month programme](#) to follow, that will be completed by Malta, taking over from Slovakia from January 2017.

The overarching aims of the Trio are increasing jobs growth and competitiveness, empowering and protecting citizens, advancing the energy union and sustainable climate policy, enhancing freedom, security and justice, and strengthening the position of the EU as a global actor. Newly emerged challenges, such as the outcome of the UK referendum, will also need to be addressed in the coming months.

Focusing on the Slovak Presidency own priorities, they are driven by three interconnected principles aimed at achieving tangible results, overcoming EU fragmentation and restore citizens' confidence in the European project. Driven by these principles, the Slovak presidency presented a [programme](#) based on a positive agenda and on sustainable solutions focused on four key areas: deepening the economic Union, modernizing the single market towards digital solutions, developing a sustainable migration and asylum policy and enhancing the EU global role.

Slovak Presidency's EU Health Priorities

In terms of health policy the Slovak Presidency will build on the Dutch Presidency work within the EPSCO Council, which brings together ministers responsible for employment, social affairs, health and consumer policy from all EU member states. Ministerial chair for Health will be the Slovak Minister for Health Tomáš Drucker.

The Presidency will thus continue and possibly finalise negotiations on the revision of the [Medical Devices Directive](#), the [In Vitro Diagnostic Medical Devices Directive](#), and on Community procedures for the authorization of medicinal products for human and veterinary use. Particular attention will be given to the availability of medical products in the context of high prices of innovative medicines, cuts in production and parallel exports of medicinal products.

The Slovak Presidency also intends to carry on the political debate on both antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and chronic non-communicable diseases, underlining the importance of prevention through the promotion of healthy lifestyles. The Presidency will work on defining an EU joint position for the 7th Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, to be held in India in November 2016.

The work of the Presidency on the newly launched European Commission's [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#), will then possibly influence the development on new schemes regarding new skills requirement for the Health workforce, with a focus on digital skills.

More details on the Slovak Presidency are available on the [official website](#) and through the Twitter account [@eu2016sk](#).

For more information on this topic, please contact [Michele Calabrò](#) at EHMA.