



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

PREPARE YOUR PRESIDENCY

MAY 2019

GSC SEMINARS AND BRIEFINGS FOR THE PRESIDENCY

The General Secretariat of the Council offers to future Presidencies a seminar and briefing programme which it has developed over the past years. These briefings focus on practical aspects of the task of the Presidency and are delivered by experienced officials of the GSC.



The programme is aimed to reach the main actors of the Presidency - from Working Party Chairs to the political level. It is flexible and the different modules can be adjusted to the requirements and specificities of the Presidency.

This document contains an overview on the different briefing activities and a short description of their content.



Types of Seminars and Briefings - Timeline

Product	Contact point/ Speaker	Target group	Timeline
<i>First contacts in view of preparations of the Presidency</i>	GIP.1 (Directorate for General Policy), ORG (Protocol and logistics), COMM (Communication and Press)	Team of coordinators for the preparation of the Presidency (in Brussels)	4 to 3 years before the start of the Presidency
<i>Setting-up of the briefing programme for the future Presidency</i>	GIP.1		18 months before the start of the Presidency
<u>I. Awareness raising briefings (important aspects during preparatory phase of Presidency)</u> <u>(Annex 1)</u>	GIP.1 senior officials	Key officials in ministries such as Secretaries General, Directors General, personnel managers, cabinet staff (in capital)	24-12 months before start of Presidency
<u>II. Seminars on core issues (practical aspects of conducting a Presidency)</u> <u>(Annex 2)</u>	GSC officials	Working Party Chairs and Deputy Chairs (in Brussels or in capital)	14-6 months before start of Presidency
<u>III. One-day briefing sessions on the role of the Presidency (practical aspects of conducting a Presidency)</u> <u>(Annex 3)</u>	GSC officials	Back-office officials such as coordinators, experts policy holders (in capital)	14-6 months before start of Presidency
<u>IV. Briefing sessions for specific target groups</u> <u>(Annex 4)</u>	GSC officials	Specific target groups (in Brussels or in capital)	6-3 months before start of Presidency
<u>V. Half-day briefing on horizontal and logistical issues (Protocol, Quality of Legislation, Interpretation etc.)</u> <u>(Annex 5)</u>	GIP.1	Antici and Mertens teams (in Brussels)	6-4 months before start of Presidency
<u>VI. Half-day customized briefing on GAC chairing and tasks in relations to EP</u> <u>(Annex 6)</u>	GSC senior officials	Minister for European Affairs and his staff (in Brussels or in capital)	6-4 months before start of Presidency
<u>VII. Half-day customized briefing for ministers</u> <u>(Annex 7)</u>	Secretary General	Ministers (in capital)	6-2 months before start of Presidency <i>(at request it can take place twice)</i>
<u>VIII. Briefings on policy files and handling</u> <u>(Annex 8)</u>	GSC policy departments, GSC Director Generals	WP Chairs, senior officials and Ministers (in Brussels or in capital)	6 months up to start of Presidency

I. Awareness raising briefings
(approx. 40 - 50 persons per session)

The aim is to point out the important steps during the preparatory phase of a Presidency, e.g.

- what is important to ensure a smooth preparation of a Presidency
- what are the advantages/disadvantages of a capital and/or a Brussels based Presidency
- selection of future chairs
- the internal organization and communication in the run up to the Presidency

The target group should be high senior officials in the ministries and cabinets mostly concerned with the preparation of the Council Presidency.

The programme is organized in a half day format and will be held in the capital.

II. Briefing Session For Future Working Party Chairs and Deputy Chairs

(approx. 25 - 35 persons per session)

The overall aim of the seminar is to familiarize the future chairs of working parties and their close co-operators with the manifold and complex aspects of their function. The seminar will mainly deal with the practical aspects of conducting the Presidency, by providing the participants with a comprehensive insight in the daily organisation and challenges of a presidency. The information on the cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Council before and during the Presidency, the function, the tasks and the different services supplied by the GSC to the Presidency will help future chairpersons streamline and fine-tune the preparation of their chairing task.

The programme can be organized in a one or two day format and differs slightly depending on whether it is held in the capital or in Brussels (no Commission speaker, less GSC speakers).

Possible Topics

1. The Presidency and the Council Secretariat

An experienced official from GIP.1 (Directorate of the General and Institutional Policy Department) gives an overview of the presidency, including its context, role and challenges, as well as main steps in preparation of the presidency (network, organization and plan). He/she will also brief future chairs on the function and the tasks of the GSC and the wide range of services the GSC offers and supplies to the Council and in particular to the Presidency.

2. Impact Assessment (IA)

An official from GIP.1 will brief future chairs on the conduction of discussions at working party meetings on the Commission IA's and will present the recent agreed procedure and rules for the possible request of IA's of Council substantive amendments.

3. Effective chairing of a Working Party

This presentation is designed to familiarize the future chairs with practical details of the running of the day-to-day business, the preparation and conduct of a working party, activities between meetings, time-management, the cooperation and interaction with other actors such as the GSC and the Commission as well as good practices.

4. Case study exercise

Our case study exercise is based on real life experience and adapted to teaching purposes. The short practical exercise will take a closer look at effective chairing through reflecting on the role and responsibilities of the Chair and his/her support teams in different stages. It covers all the practical aspects of chairing e.g. strategic planning, preparatory work, team work, contacts with delegations and key partners as well as representation of the Council towards other institutions. Participants will be divided into small groups of 4-5 people who will reflect on how to deal with such case as a Chair, on the main challenges ahead and on how to deal with these challenges. The outcomes and suggestions from the individual groups will be presented to the plenary where these findings will be commented and discussed. The facilitator will then comment these findings and explain what happened on the case in reality. The case study exercise will help participants to reflect on different ways of managing various scenarios and handling different practical issues and problems. It aims at providing future chairs and deputy chairs with inspiration and ideas for their future tasks.

5. Rules of procedure of the Council

The rules of procedure of the Council govern and regulate the work of the Council and its preparatory bodies. Many of these rules directly apply to the Presidency, its obligations and its prerogatives. At the same time, the Presidency is the guardian of these rules. It is therefore of utmost importance that future chairs have a sound knowledge of these rules in order to run the day-to-day business in a smooth and efficient manner. A representative of the Council Legal Service will familiarize the future chairs with the main rules and give practical advice on their application.

6. Delegated and Implementing Acts

Since secondary legislation often constitutes a bone of contention in negotiations between the Council and the European Parliament, chairs dealing with legislative proposals should have a sound knowledge of this issue. A member of the Legal Service of the Council briefs future chairs on the definition and the political and procedural implications of delegated and implementing acts as well as on the developments in the light of the Lisbon Treaty and the 2016 Inter-Institutional Agreement on Better Law-Making.

7. Relations with the European Parliament (except Co-decision)

The increasing role and political weight of the EP and the growing impact of its activities on the work and the duties of the Presidency of the Council will be presented by an official from GIP.2. The services supplied by the GSC in this regard will be explained in detail.

8. How to prepare for and conduct a trilogue

Negotiations with representatives of the EP are a key task of a working party chair. Officials from GIP.2 will explain in detail the different steps, procedures, negotiating methods and strategies as well as the practical organisational aspects of the ordinary legislative procedure. The future chairs will be briefed on the assistance provided for by the GSC in this area.

9. Quality of Legislation - DQL (Lawyer-linguists)

Between the moment a political agreement is reached and the moment a legislative act is formally adopted, the lawyer/linguists have the task to finalise the texts in all official languages of the Union. This work is subject to cooperation with the EP and to strict timelines. In order for the Presidency to plan its work, it is indispensable to have a clear understanding of the work of the Lawyer/Linguists.

10. Digital Tools and Document Management

Information management is an important working tool of the Presidency. The GSC has set up electronic systems for the production and distribution of information necessary for the work of the Council. An official from SMART will familiarize the future chairs with the implications for the production and distribution of information for the work of a chairperson.

11. Translation (only in Brussels!)

An official from LING will familiarize the future chairs with conditions for the translation of reports and of all kinds of documents, its constraints etc.

12. Views from a former chair of a Council Working Party

A former chair from a recent Presidency will share with the future chairpersons his/her experience. The future chairs will get practical advice concerning the preparatory work, chairing, negotiating, the work behind the scenes, good practices, dos and don'ts etc. from somebody who has personally lived the experience of the presidency.

13. The European Commission and the Presidency

A representative of the General Secretariat of the Commission will explain the relationship between this Institution and the rotating Presidency before and during the Presidency (only for briefing sessions organised in Brussels).

14. Preparing for Coreper and Council

The work conducted at the level of the Working Party is closely linked with the activities of Coreper. Therefore Working Party chairs need to have an in-depth knowledge of the preparation of Coreper, its functions, competences, decisional power and working methods. A GSC official familiar with the intricacies of Coreper will give future chairs an insight in the organisation and work of Coreper.

15. Practical tips from the viewpoint of interpreters

Working party chairs act in a multilingual working environment and a good and unambiguous communication among the members of the working party is essential. Representatives of the SCIC from the Commission will explain the interpretation system put in place in Council working parties and the dos and don'ts with regard to the invaluable work of interpreters.





Example 1 to Annex 2:
2 days in capital

PREPARE YOUR PRESIDENCY

BRIEFINGS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FUTURE WORKING PARTY CHAIRS AND THEIR TEAMS

Capital

DAY 1

09.00 - 09.05	Welcome
09.05 - 10.00	Introduction to key tasks of the Presidency Cooperation between the Presidency and the Council Secretariat
10.00 - 10.45	Preparing for Coreper and Council
10.45 - 11.15	Coffee break
11.15 - 12.30	Rules of Procedure of the Council including Delegated and Implementing Acts
12.30 - 14:00	Lunch break
14.00- 15.30	How to prepare for and conduct a trilogue
15.30 - 16.00	Coffee break
16.00 - 16.45	Relations with the European Parliament

BRIEFINGS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FUTURE WORKING PARTY CHAIRS AND THEIR TEAMS

Capital

DAY 2

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|----------------------|---|
| 09.00 - 10.15 | Documents behind the Scenes and on Stage
New Working Tools (Delegates Portal, Council App) |
| 10.15 - 10.45 | Effective chairing of a Working Party |
| 10.45 - 11.15 | Coffee break / Preparation case study |
| 11.15 - 12.45 | A case study |
| 12.45 - 14.00 | Lunch break |
| 14.00- 15.30 | Views from a Former Chair |
| 15.30 - 15.45 | Coffee break |
| 15.45- 17.00 | Working with Interpreters |
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PREPARE YOUR PRESIDENCY

BRIEFINGS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FUTURE WORKING PARTY CHAIRS AND THEIR TEAMS

Permanent Representation Brussels

DAY 1

09.00 - 09.05	Welcome
09.05 - 10.15	Introduction to key tasks of the Presidency Impact Assessment Cooperation between the Presidency and the Council Secretariat
10.15 - 10.30	Coffee break
10.30 - 11.15	Preparing for Coreper and Council
11.15 - 12.00	Quality of Legislation: Achieving it during your Presidency
12.00 - 13.00	Lunch break
13.00 - 14.30	Rules of Procedure of the Council including Delegated and Implementing Acts
14.00 - 15.15	Documents behind the Scenes and on Stage New Working Tools
15.15 - 15.30	Coffee break
15.30 - 17.00	How to prepare for and conduct a Trilogue

BRIEFINGS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FUTURE WORKING PARTY CHAIRS AND THEIR TEAMS

Permanent Representation Brussels

DAY 2

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 09.00 - 10.00 | Relations with the European Parliament |
| 10.00 - 10.30 | Effective chairing of the Working Party |
| 10.30 - 11.00 | Coffee break - Preparation of Case Study exercise |
| 11.00 - 12.30 | Case Study exercise |
| 12.30 - 14.00 | Lunch break |
| 14.00 - 15.30 | Views from a Former Chair |
| 15.30 - 15.45 | Coffee break |
| 15.45 - 16.45 | Cooperation with the Commission |
| 16.45 - 17.00 | Working with Interpreters
- Introduction to the workshop |
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**III. One-Day Briefing Session on the role of the Presidency
for Experts, Coordinators and Policy holders in the Ministries**
(up to 60 persons per session)

The overall aim of the seminar is to present coordinators, experts and other officials dealing with Presidency tasks in the capital with certain aspects of their function during the Presidency and in particular to set out the context within which the Presidency is run in Brussels. The seminar will mainly deal with the practical aspects of conducting the Presidency, by providing the participants with a comprehensive insight in the organisation and challenges of a presidency. The information on the cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Council before and during the Presidency, the function, the tasks and the different services supplied by the GSC to the Presidency will help coordinators and ministries streamline and fine-tune the preparation of their Presidency related tasks.

Possible Modules

1. The Presidency and the Council Secretariat

An experienced official from GIP.1 gives an overview of the presidency, including its context, role and challenges, as well as main steps in preparation of the presidency (network, organization and plan). He/she will also brief future chairs on the function and the tasks of the GSC and the wide range of services the GSC offers and supplies to the Council and in particular to the Presidency.

2 Preparation of Working Parties, Coreper and Council

Policy holders, Coordinators and Experts at the ministries need to have an idea on the preparation and constraints of the meetings conducted in Brussels, be it Working Party meetings, Coreper or Council meetings. A GSC official familiar with the intricacies of WP, Coreper and Coreper will give to key persons at the ministries an insight in the organisation and work of these preparatory bodies, including on their functions, competences, decisional power and working methods.

3. Ordinary legislative procedure (including practical aspects concerning trilogues)

Officials from the GIP.2 will explain in detail the procedures, negotiating methods and strategies as well as the practical organisational aspects of the ordinary legislative procedure. The participants will be familiarized with the assistance provided for by the GSC in this area.

4. Rules of procedure of the Council

The rules of procedure of the Council govern and regulate the work of the Council and its preparatory bodies. Many of these rules directly apply to the Presidency, its obligations and its prerogatives. At the same time, the Presidency is the guardian of these rules. It is therefore of utmost importance that capital based officials involved in the running of the Presidency have a sound knowledge of these rules and their implications for the Presidency. A representative of the Council Legal Service will brief capital based officials on the main rules and give practical advice on their application.



PREPARE YOUR PRESIDENCY

BRIEFINGS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR COORDINATORS AND EXPERTS

Capital

DATE

09.30 - 09.35	Welcome
09.35 - 11.15	The Presidency and the Council Secretariat
11.15 - 11.30	Coffee break
11.30 - 12.30	Preparation of Working Parties, Coreper and Council
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch break
13.30 - 15.00	Ordinary legislative procedure
15.00 - 15.15	Coffee break
15.15 - 16.45	Rules of Procedure of the Council

IV. Briefings for specific target groups

1. External relations

In the sphere of external relations, the rotating Presidency chairs only a limited number of working parties and committees. Most of the working parties in this policy area are chaired by a permanent chair, i.e. a representative of the High Representative for External Relations and Security. Nonetheless the rotating Presidency has specific coordinating and organizational tasks and may be closely involved in international affairs. Presidency staff attending working parties chaired by a permanent chair will be briefed on potential tasks and responsibilities.

2. Coordination of EU Positions in external relations

This briefing is designed for officials who, in their respective policy areas, will be responsible for the coordination of EU positions, be it in working parties, be it on the spot in international fora.

The briefing sets out current practices across different sectors in relation to the adoption of positions in international bodies on decisions having legal effects and to the adoption of Union positions, unilateral statements, declarations and lines to take in international fora and international negotiations.

It covers how Union "external" positions are determined for matters falling within Union competence, whatever the designation of such positions. It further provides an overview of current practices within the Council relating to the establishment of "external" Union positions and presents the underlying policies, legal principles and rules that are applicable to the establishment of such positions.

In addition participants are informed on the cooperation with the GSC on these matters and the assistance the GSC offers.

3. Presidency and the European Council

Preparations for and follow-up to the European Council, planning, preparing and running European Council meetings is the responsibility of the permanent President of the European Council and his team. That said, the rotating Presidency has an important role to play, given the necessary synergies between the work of the Council and the European Council, and the fact that the formal preparations for each European Council meeting are dealt with in Coreper and the General Affairs Council, both chaired by the rotating Presidency.

A close collaboration between the President of the European Council and his Cabinet and the rotating Presidency concerns many respects, from meeting planning and priority setting to follow-up and implementation. In the day-to-day running of the Presidency, the Coreper II chair is responsible for close collaboration between the two institutions. The brief by the GSC presents the different aspects of this cooperation and is addressed to officials who will be concerned by this cooperation.

4. Relations with the European Parliament

The increased role and political weight of the EP and the growing impact of its activities on the work and the duties of the Presidency of the Council will be presented by an official of the Directorate for Inter-Institutional Relations. The brief describes the different tasks and obligations which the Presidency has to fulfil, for example appearances of ministers in the EP committees and the representation of the Council during the plenaries. It also gives an overview of the services and assistance offered by the GSC in this regard.

5. The Council's Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangements

The Presidency has a leading role in managing cross border and cross sectoral crisis in the Council. The mechanism at its disposal for this is the Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements (IPCR). In the event of a complex crisis, whether internal or external to the EU, and from a natural or man-made origin, the Presidency may activate the IPCR or be invited by an affected Member State to do so. Should any Member State invoke the solidarity clause (Art 222 TFEU), the IPCR will have to be activated immediately. This mechanism which is organised around COREPER to ensure Member States' strategic control over the response is flexible and facilitates rapid coordination, both within the EU and with external parties. It brings together Council, Commission, and EEAS, and provides a number of tools specifically designed to support the Presidency, COREPER and Council's action.

The brief addresses the incoming COREPER Chair, as well as key officials who have responsibilities in this area, both in the Permanent Representation in Brussels and capital.

6. GSC IT tools

The aim of this briefing is to present to future chairs and vice-chairs of Working Parties as well as coordinators the various IT-tools that the General Secretariat of the Council puts at disposal of the Presidency. The IT tools to be presented are both those specifically developed for the needs of the Presidency, and also general IT tools that are designed for delegates. In case of general usage IT tools, aspects relevant for the Presidency will be highlighted.

The participants will receive a deep insight into the functioning of the presented tools and also practical exercises for using the tools.

7. Half-day tailor-made briefs (Study visits)

At request, the GSC organises study visits. This specific training is designed for chairs and co-chairs who are based in the capital but will be chairing working parties in Brussels. Study visits include half-day specific briefs on practical aspects of chairing, on the role of the Council legal service in working parties, on IT tools such as the delegates portal and the Council app as well as on translation and quality of legislation. During the study visits participants will also have an opportunity to meet with relevant desk officers in the GSC,

8. Training for assistants at Perm Reps

At request a specific training for assistants and other backroom staff at the Permanent Representation can be organised. The aim of this training is to raise awareness of the services of the Council which are of relevance for this group of officials.. The training will include a guided tour through the Council buildings and relevant services. Assistants will also be briefed on the functioning of the Council, protocol issues (organisation of meeting rooms, interpretation, Ministerial visits and official meals), translation and document management (delegates portal, Council app and production of documents).





PREPARE YOUR PRESIDENCY

BRIEFINGS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR COORDINATORS AND WORKING PARTY CHAIRS

Permanent Representation Brussels or capital

DATE

09.30 - 09.35	Welcome address
09.35 - 10.05	Delegates Portal. General presentation and tips and tricks for the Presidency
10.05 - 10.50	Presidency Portal for Informal Events (PPI). Introduction and practical training
10.50 - 11.05	Coffee break
11.05 - 11.50	Trilogue Tables Editor (TTE). Introduction and practical training
11.50 - 12.35	EdIT. Introduction and practical training
12.35 - 13.30	Lunch break
13.30 - 14.15	E-Agenda. Introduction (and practical training)
14.15 - 15:00	EU Council App, other initiatives in the making

V. Briefing for Antici/Mertens + teams

The Antici and Mertens teams of a Presidency have a key role in the organisation and running of the Presidency. Their coordinating tasks require an in-depth knowledge of the different logistical and organisational services of the GSC they have to deal with during their Presidency. The GSC offers a half day briefing for these teams to familiarize them with the main horizontal GSC services.





PREPARE YOUR PRESIDENCY

GSC BRIEFING FOR ANTICI AND MERTENS TEAMS

General Secretariat of the Council

DATE

PROGRAMME

14.00	Translation and production of documents
14.40	Delegates expenses
15.00	Relation with the European Parliament
15.30	Official meals/Protocol issues
15.50	Programming of meeting rooms/Interpretation
16.20	Quality of Legislation/Planning

VI. Briefing for the Minister for European Affairs and his/her staff

The Minister for European Affairs has a key function in the Presidency and his commitment to this role can be decisive for the success of the Presidency. On the one hand, he/she traditionally chairs the General Affairs Council and thus has a coordinating and monitoring role over the activities in the different policy sectors, and on the other hand, he/she is the main interlocutor of the Presidency vis-à-vis the European Parliament. For these reasons the GSC offers specialised briefings for the Minister for European Affairs and his team on the organisation and tasks of the General Affairs Council and on the Presidency's relationship with the European Parliament.





PREPARE YOUR PRESIDENCY

BRIEFING FOR THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WITHIN THE MINISTRY FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Capital

DATE

PROGRAMME

1. The General Affairs Council

- Role and current main tasks of the GAC (preparation of the European Council, Commission annual working programme, rule of law etc.)
- Preparation of GAC meetings
- Support by the General Secretariat, written and oral briefings
- Cooperation between the services of the GSC and the Presidency
- Preparation and coordination re informal GAC and informal GAC Cohesion
- Interpretation and translation services before and during Council Meetings

2. Unforeseen Circumstances

- How does GSC intervene in case of last minute changes or cases of a tragedy in a MS – unforeseen circumstances
- Examples of past experiences that could help Malta pre-empt and prepare for unforeseen circumstances

3. The Presidency and the European Parliament

- The role of the Minister for European Affairs and the Parliamentary Secretary for 2017 Presidency
- Coordination of Council positions
- Participation in plenary sessions of the EP
- Appearances in EP committees
- Appearance in the Conference of Committee Chairs
- Support by the General Secretariat, cooperation between the services of the GSC and the Presidency

VII. Briefings for Ministers

This is designed to meet requirements. Briefings for Ministers can be provided for in different formats. Traditionally the Secretary General of the Council meets with the cabinet in whatever format or location is suitable. The timing is usually about 6 - 2 months before the start of the Presidency. Ministers are also invited to meet the relevant Directors General of the GSC in the capital or in the margins of Council meetings.

Upon request, the SG can visit the cabinet twice before the start of the presidency, for awareness raising of the cabinet of the tasks ahead of the presidency.





PREPARE YOUR PRESIDENCY

GSC SG BRIEFING FOR MINISTERS AND STATE SECRETARIES

Capital

DATE

PROGRAMME

1. Meeting with the Secretary-General of the Council

Topics:

"What it means for a Minister to chair the Council"

- the general political context for the EU during the Presidency
- expectations of other players
- managing the meeting
- working outside and between meetings
- defining and communicating success

2. Briefing by the Deputy Director-General of General and Institutional Policy

Topics:

"Overview briefing - "how policy and laws are made in the EU"

- the policy-making process from European Council to Commission to the co-legislators (Council and European Parliament)
 - relations with Commission
 - relations with EP
 - internal dynamics of the Council and its preparatory bodies
 - what the GSC does to support the Presidency
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VIII. Briefings on policy files and handling

6 months up to the start of the Presidency, the GSC policy departments and Director Generals will organise customised briefings on policy files. These briefings can be provided at several different levels. The GSC officials offer political, procedural and strategic advice and guidance to Ministers, senior officials or experts (chairs and co-chairs). These practical briefings can take place either in Brussels or in the capital).



