

Chastel presents priorities for the Belgian Presidency programme to the COSAC

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On 5 July, State Secretary Olivier Chastel presented the programme for the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union to the Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees. The COSAC is a cooperation that brings committees of the national parliaments dealing with European affairs together with the European Parliament representatives. These meetings are mostly held in the capital city of the country that is fulfilling the role of the EU presidency.

“We will concentrate on 6 main priorities for Europe,” declared Olivier Chastel to the attendees. The first concerns the way out of the crisis and the return to economic growth. The Belgian Presidency will pay particular attention to the legislative initiatives that aim to strengthen the supervision of the financial sector. Next to this, for Olivier Chastel, “the establishment of the European Systemic Risk Board and the European System of Financial Supervisors, that must control the banking sector, the insurance sector and the financial sector via three supervisors, is very urgent.” The proposal for a directive regarding investment fund managers, to regulate the so-called hedge funds, is also urgent.

The second priority of the programme concerns the promotion of social progress and combating poverty and social exclusion. “The Belgian Presidency will be the first presidency to implement the revamped European employment strategy in the framework of the objectives set by the EU 2020 strategy for employment and growth,” said Olivier Chastel.

The third priority concerns the re-opening of negotiations concerning the climate and environment, and so also the preparation for the Conferences in Cancun and Nagoya.

The fourth Belgian priority is the deepening of the area of freedom, security and justice. More specifically, priority will be given, in the field of judicial cooperation in criminal matters, to the recognition of judicial decisions taken by the member states. Regarding this, Olivier Chastel said, “we will also advance the activities concerning the protection of victims and the directive on trafficking in human beings”.

The fifth priority concerns the global influence of the Union and the efficiency of its external actions, also with regard to the expansion. “Our objective is the improvement of the efficiency of the Union’s external actions. In this respect, the Treaty of Lisbon forms a breaking point in the organisation of foreign involvements,” stated Olivier Chastel.

The further implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon, which came into effect on 1 December 2009, is also a priority for the Belgian Presidency. Together with the “magic square” of the Parliament, the European Council and its Permanent President, the High Representative and the European Commission, the Belgian Presidency will devote itself to a flexible, positive, constructive and harmonious collaboration.

The Belgian Presidency hopes to satisfy the expectations that have been set, concluded State Secretary Olivier Chastel.