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The Danish Mandate: Navigating Complexity in a Shifting European Landscape

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As the European Union enters the second half of 2025, [Denmark](#) now assumes the rotating chair of the Council at a time when the Union faces a complex set of internal and external issues. Geopolitical challenges continue to test the EU's strategic coherence and unity. At the same time, the bloc needs to maintain growth in the face of fast technological development all while navigating economic headwinds such as inflation. These factors create a challenging climate for the Danish mandate, which must equally balance promoting major policy initiatives and maintaining internal cohesiveness.

In this setting, Denmark's leadership is characterized by a steady and pragmatic approach that values adaptability and resilience. The presidency aims to build on its predecessors' achievements while establishing a clear agenda centered on security, competitiveness, and the green transition. Denmark understands the interdependence of these concerns and aims to use innovation and sustainability as drivers of economic renewal and geopolitical stability. This deep understanding informs the presidency's efforts to promote member-state unity and project a consistent and credible European voice on the world arena.

Key Priorities

Denmark's presidency of the European Union Council from July to December strategically identifies and mirrors a [set of priorities](#) that serve both the Union's immediate concerns and its long-term goals. At the heart of Denmark's agenda is the need to strengthen European security and defense in an increasingly tense geopolitical environment. The ongoing crisis in Ukraine remains a defining issue, and Denmark has pledged to continue supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This support entails coordinating EU-wide efforts to supply military aid, humanitarian assistance and diplomatic support, and maintaining the EU's position as a vital actor in the European security architecture. The presidency also seeks to consolidate the EU's resistance against hybrid threats and cyberattacks, acknowledging that security now spans beyond traditional military areas.

Migration management is another key priority. Denmark takes a dual approach, emphasizing humanitarian responsibility as well as effective border control. The presidency aims to advance the implementation of the Migration and Asylum Pact, which is still problematic among member states due to different national interests and competences. Denmark's leadership highlights the importance of solidarity, mechanisms that ensure equitable distribution of asylum applicants, while also enhancing external border management to constrain irregular migration. This balancing effort remains challenging given the socio-political sensitivities surrounding migration in many of the member countries, but Denmark's pragmatic and consensus-driven [approach](#) seeks to bridge these gaps.

The Danish presidency [prioritizes](#) both economic competitiveness and the shift to a more digital and green economy. Denmark is pushing for regulatory simplification to minimize bureaucratic roadblocks that hamper business innovation and growth. Furthermore, the presidency is advocating for accelerated digital transformation, with a focus on extending digital infrastructure, improving



cybersecurity frameworks, and promoting development and research in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing. These efforts aim to establish the bloc as a global leader in innovation, capable of competing with major global economic powers while ensuring inclusive development and growth.

The green transition remains perhaps the most ambitious and defining aspect of Denmark's strategy. The president is committed to advancing the European Green Deal's objectives, with a focus on achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. Denmark is calling for intermediate climate targets for 2035 and 2040 that are more ambitious than present EU pledges, demonstrating a sense of urgency in addressing the climate crisis. The presidency also emphasizes the need for energy security, particularly considering recent disruptions in energy supply amidst geopolitical tensions. Denmark favors energy diversification, increasing investment in renewable energy infrastructure, and the advancement of green technologies.

Finally, Denmark's presidency aims to [improve](#) the EU's strategic autonomy and global significance. This involves boosting EU enlargement initiatives, particularly in Ukraine, Moldova, and the Western Balkans, as well as strengthening ties with major global powers. The presidency's external agenda is inextricably tied to its internal objectives, which aim to portray a consistent and credible European voice on security, economic, and environmental challenges. This integrated approach seeks to strengthen the EU's ability to act decisively on a global scale while maintaining unity among its members.

However, Denmark's objectives for the green transition face challenges, particularly in light of recent signals from President Ursula suggesting a rethinking of the EU's green strategy, including a relaxation of key compliance regulations. This shifting position has spurred debate within the bloc over the timing and scope of climate obligations. In this context, the Danish presidency is likely to take a proactive approach to preserving and furthering the EU's environmental goals, aiming to preserve momentum on ambitious climate targets despite changing political winds. Denmark's strategy will most likely include forming coalitions with like-minded member states, emphasizing the economic and security benefits of the green transition, and pressing for practical solutions that satisfy both regulatory concerns and the urgent need for climate action.

Major Policy Areas and Legislative Agenda

The Danish presidency's [legislative agenda](#) is particularly ambitious and comprehensive, reflecting the complexity of the bloc's current challenges as well as Denmark's commitment to make meaningful progress across a wide range of policy sectors. At the heart of this agenda is a push for regulation simplicity, with Denmark striving to reduce the operational burden for enterprises and stakeholders. This emphasis is reflected in the presidency's efforts to conclude negotiations on comprehensive measures on sustainability reporting and small and medium-sized businesses, as well as progress on InvestEU, the Common Agricultural Policy, defense, chemicals, and digital legislation. The simplification drive is designed to improve the functioning of the single market and promote the [EU's competitiveness](#) in a fast-changing global economy.



Financial regulation and economic governance are key components of the legislative agenda. Denmark is attempting to create Council negotiation positions on the securitization framework, the Capital Requirements Regulation, and the implementation of a digital euro. These efforts aim to deepen the Capital Markets Union and boost financial stability and innovation in the EU. The administration is also pursuing intellectual property reforms, including supplemental protection certificates for medicinal and plant products, as well as advancing trilateral discussions on financial data sharing and retail investor protection frameworks. These initiatives are complemented by current negotiations on the digital declarations for posted workers, payment services, and Union Customs Code, all of which aim to modernize the EU's economic infrastructure.

Social and employment policy are also in the spotlight, with the Danish mandate ready to negotiate the traineeship directive and, if possible, reach an agreement on the long-stalled Equal Treatment Directive. Health policy is prominent as Denmark works to resolve supply concerns in the internal market for critical medicinal products and to finalize the pharmaceutical package. The presidency is also prepared to begin working on a new Tobacco Taxation Directive, showing a broader commitment to public health and consumer protection.

Transportation, energy, and environmental policy are key areas of legislative activity. Denmark prioritizes agreements on air passenger rights and enforcement of passenger rights. The president will also push forward discussions on the Roadworthiness package, the single European railway area, and greenhouse gas emissions accounting for transportation services. Energy policy is inextricably linked to climate objectives, with Denmark working to advance the energy taxation directive and preparing to begin work on the EU Space Act. In the environmental scope, the presidency is conducting trilogues on end-of-life vehicles, forest monitoring, and marine biodiversity, as well as taking the first steps toward revising the REACH Regulation and the Industrial Decarbonization Accelerator Act.

Agriculture and fisheries are also high on the agenda, with Denmark preparing to begin negotiations on the post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy, the EU Biotech Act, and new genomic techniques. The presidency will begin negotiations on forest reproductive materials, unfair cross-border trade practices, and Common Market Organization modifications. Additional key topics that reflect a comprehensive approach to rural development and food security include animal welfare, plant reproductive materials, and farmers' roles in the supply chain.

Another much debated topic is digital policy. Aside from legislative simplification, Denmark is prepared to work on the Digital Networks Act, a revision of the Cybersecurity Act, and other aspects of the digital package, which are expected later this year. These measures aim to reinforce Europe's digital infrastructure, improve cybersecurity, and ensure that digital transformation promotes both economic growth and societal resilience.

Finally, the Danish presidency oversees coordinating continuing trilogues [inherited](#) from the Polish presidency, such as files on cohesion fund reviews, social security system coordination, and substances in surface waters. The presidency will also play an important role in developing the Joint Declaration on Legislative Priorities for 2026, ensuring alignment among the Council, Commission, and Parliament as the EU prepares for the next stage of its policy cycle. Denmark's



extensive and thorough legislative program positions its presidency as one of pragmatic development and strategic adaptation, attempting to reconcile the need for immediate results with the long-term transformation of the Union's economic, social, and environmental situation.

EU-GCC Relations under the Danish Presidency

The Danish presidency's approach to EU-GCC relations is influenced by the broader backdrop of a changing geopolitical landscape and the EU's shifting priorities. As Denmark assumes leadership, it is acutely aware that the GCC is both a strategic partner and a region of growing importance to the bloc's external action. The presidency's agenda, which focuses on enhancing European security, economic competitiveness, and the green transition, inevitably informs its engagement with the GCC.

Green transition and energy security are central to the EU-GCC cooperation. The Gulf region continues to be a significant energy supplier to Europe, and the persistent volatility in global energy markets has emphasized the necessity of strong and diverse energy alliances. Denmark, a leader in renewable energy and green innovation, is anticipated to use its presidency to encourage further collaboration with GCC governments on clean energy technology, energy efficiency, and the development of sustainable infrastructures. This coincides with Denmark's stated [objective](#) to bring competitiveness and climate on equal footing, as well as enhance access to green energy both within the bloc and in its external partnerships.

Trade and economic connections are another important aspect of EU-GCC collaboration. The GCC is an important export market and investment partner for the EU, and there is a mutual desire to strengthen these connections, particularly in digitalization, advanced manufacturing, and biotechnology. Denmark's emphasis on regulatory simplification and digital transformation within the EU is likely to influence its approach to external trade, such as measures to decrease barriers, improve standards collaboration, and enable the transfer of technology and experience.

Moreover, while economic and security considerations take precedence, Denmark's heritage of balancing pragmatism with principled diplomacy will guide its attempts to guarantee that the EU-GCC alliance represents larger European values and goals. Under Danish leadership, EU-GCC partnership is projected to be defined by a pragmatic mix of economic, energy, and security cooperation, with a strong emphasis on green transition and digital innovation. The presidency's integrated approach, which combines internal EU aims with foreign engagement, presents the GCC as a critical partner in Europe's pursuit of resilience, sustainability, and strategic autonomy.

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