



# **Estonian Presidency Training**

## **Cooperation between the Presidency and the Council Secretariat**

**Tallinn, 18-19 January 2017**

- Mr Kari TÖLLIKKÖ
- General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- DG E – 1C (Education, Youth, Culture, Audiovisual and Sport)



## The Presidency/The Secretariat co-operation

1. Procedures and legal problems
2. Practical arrangements
3. Planning (calendar, agenda, networking, informal meetings)
4. How does the Council function in practice and what is the Secretariat doing ?
5. Contacts with the Parliament (co-decision, other meetings and hearings)
6. Contacts with the Commission (planning, drafting)



## General points regarding the Presidency/the Secretariat

- Always : first contact the Secretariat and the Permanent Representation on scheduling meetings, circulating documents, letters or any initiatives, who does what, etc.  
→ verify who does what
- Never : fail to inform the Permanent Representation (and the Secretariat)
- Do not try, from the capital, to do other people's jobs in Brussels, e.g. arranging for translations or sending out documents and communications convening meetings





## Procedures and legal problems

- Not a major preoccupation
- The Council Secretariat, especially the Legal Service, will advise you
- In the framework of the Commission : ask the Commission
- In the framework of the Council : ask the Council Secretariat

### Legal opinions

Differences of views between the two services may occasionally occur.



## Planning dates

Council : About a year before the Presidency, dates for Council meetings are scheduled.

Important to know the number of meetings needed for every Council.

Attention to the intervals between the Council meetings.

Coreper : meets every week

Working Party :

Make estimation of number of meetings needed. Remember to consult the Council Secretariat

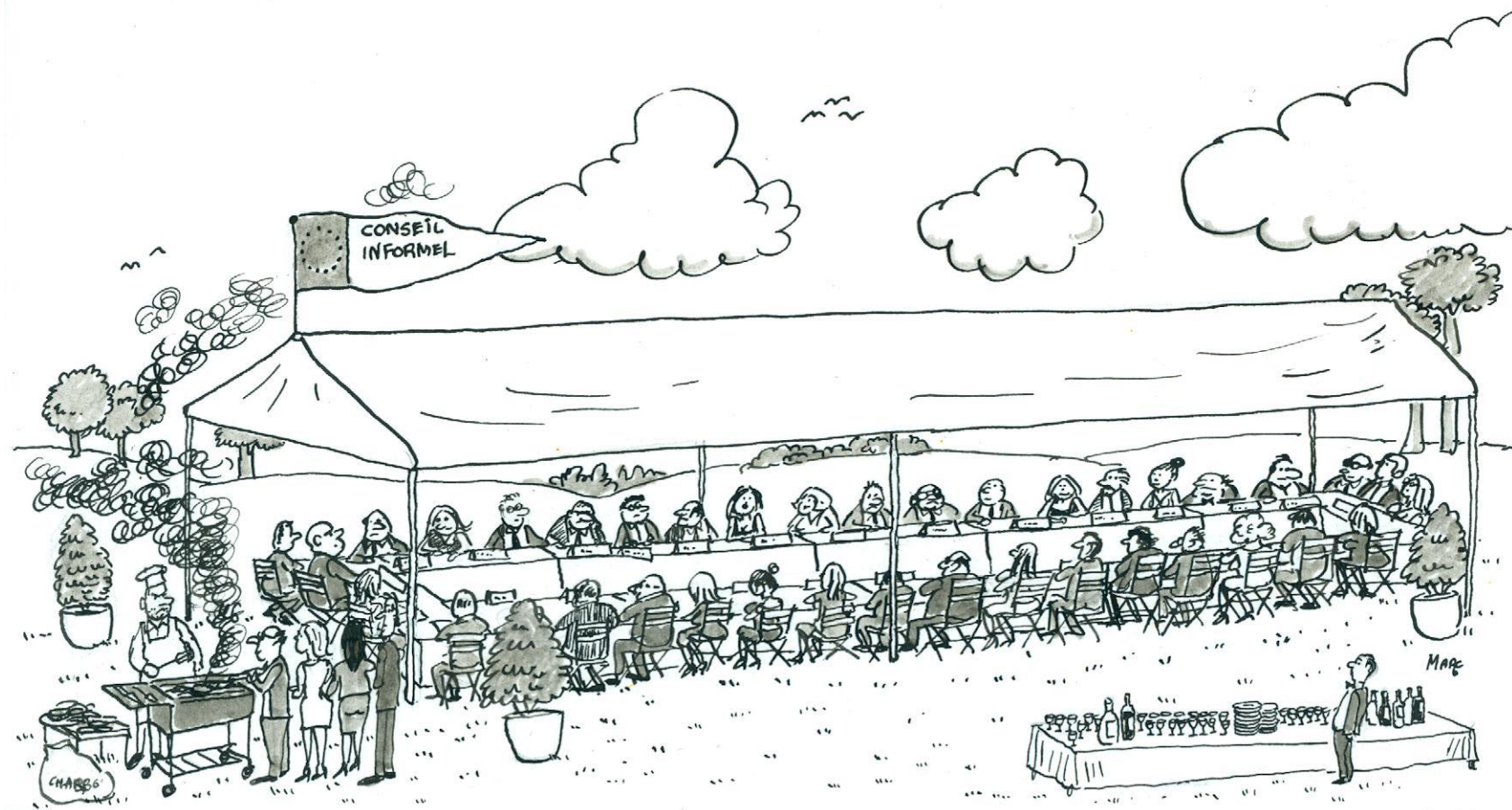


## Planning dates

In cooperation with the Secretariat and coordinator in the Permanent Representation:

Schedule meetings of WPs with intervals of at least 14 days, bearing in mind

- the date of the EYCS Council session;
- +/- a fortnight before that session Coreper prepares the items on the agenda;
- work at WP level must end at least three weeks before the Council session.







## Informal meetings

- Informal meetings of Council, Directors-General and Working Parties, as well as seminars/conferences
- Take place usually in the Presidency country.
- Ideal opportunity to discuss more strategic issues:
  - brainstorming and floating ideas
  - "test laboratory"
- No formal binding decisions
- Informal discussions can help to advance work at the formal level



## Informal meetings

- Organisation largely by the Presidency itself
  - Logistics, interpretation, documentation, timetables and convening meetings
- Presence and services of the Council Secretariat
  - presence depends on the hospitality of the Presidency,
  - no formal role but the Secretariat may help in drafting agendas and documents,
  - normal services of the Secretariat in the actual meetings



## Planning the Council Agenda

- Unofficial provisional draft Council agenda must be ready one month before the Presidency starts.
- About a year before the Presidency, start contacts with relevant Commission officials about possible items under your Presidency.
- Contacts with the Secretariat, the current and former Presidencies and other delegations.
- Not to be too ambitious about the number of items. Points can always be added and modified (even during Presidency).



## Planning - documents

- Contacts with the Secretariat in good time
- Discussions on strategy
  - how many priorities/documents:
    - legislative texts
    - discussion/background papers
    - draft texts (conclusions, resolutions)



## Planning - documents

- Draft texts
  - The Secretariat can help in drafting,
  - English editing service to verify/check language,
  - to be sent to the Secretariat about 4-5 weeks before the start of the Presidency
    - suggestions by the Secretariat
    - consultation with the Commission



## Planning - documents

- Timely preparation is needed but be prepared to show flexibility
- Have a crystal clear key issue or problem
- Address it with a clear and coherent narrative
- Keep the text short and punchy

## Long and unfocused Council conclusions



# Structure of the Council of the EU



## LEVEL 1

Decisions on matters which cannot be solved at lower level

Council of the EU

Ministers

Delegates

Proposes

## LEVEL 2

Decisions on political matters

COREPER

Ambassadors or vice Ambassadors

Delegates

Proposes

## LEVEL 3

Decisions on technical matters

Working Parties  
- Working Party on Sport  
- Cultural Affairs Cttee  
- Youth Working Party  
- Counsellors/Attachés  
- Others

Experts





## Work at the Working Party level

- **Timely preparation** required (e.g. documents).
- Presidency sets the agenda (normally standard format; sometimes more detailed).
- Before finalising agenda, contacts with Council Secretariat (and possibly with the Commission).
- A briefing (i.e. preparatory meeting) takes place before each WP (usually at the Council from 9 am to 10 am on the day of the meeting).
- Flash (use it only when needed)
  - Presidency explains how it is going to handle the WP meeting



## Work at the Working Party level

- All the main discussions and decisions should take place in the WP
- Written comments
  - could be asked prior to the WP meetings
  - could be used to support long and complicated proposals
  - should not be used systematically
    - after the first examination of the text



Happy



Depressed



Angry



Pensive



Excited



Suicidal



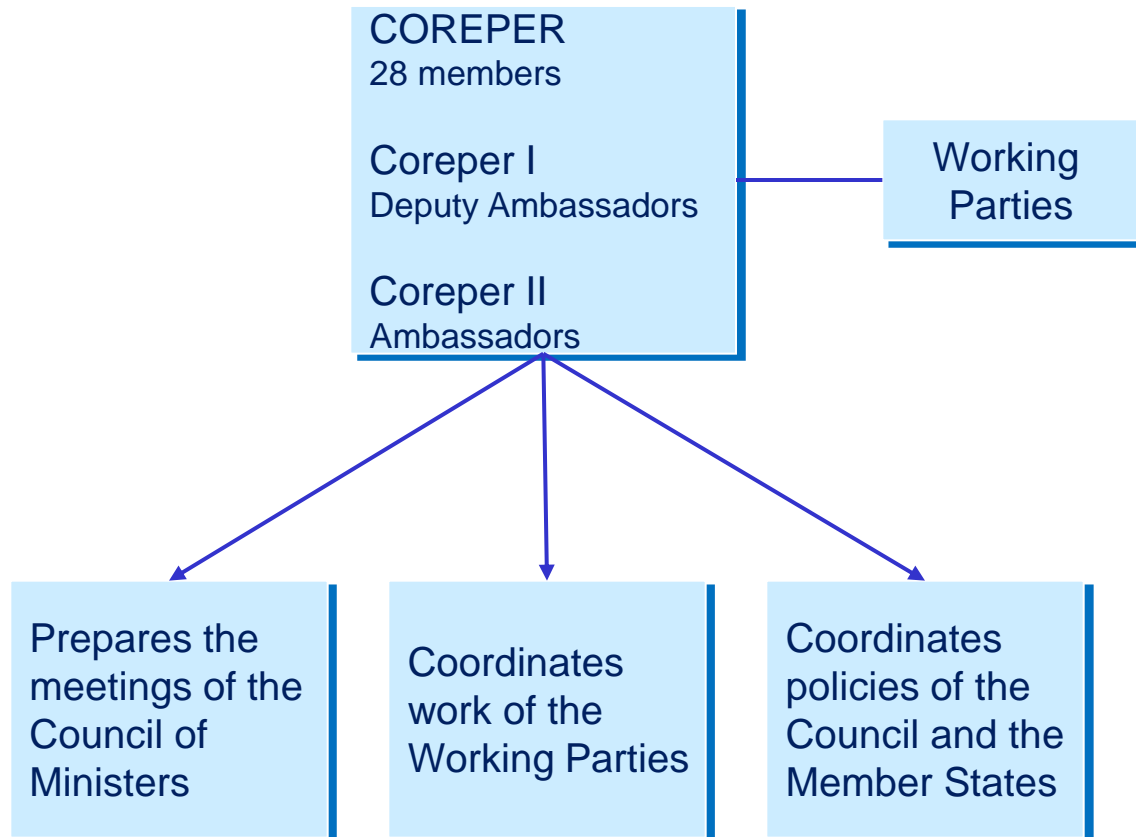
## Post-Working Party tasks (drafting work)

- Either immediately after the meeting or later (next day)
- The Chair, attaché and officials from the capital
- Strategy and the next steps
- Drafting new text with the Council Secretariat and (poss.) the Commission
- Contacts with delegations





## Committee of Permanent Representatives







## Work at COREPER level

- Introductory notes from the Council Secretariat
- Briefing notes to the Presidency
- Council Secretariat will consult the Presidency on the content/handling
- Mertens/Antici meetings
- Briefing of Coreper Chairman (Chair of the WP needs to be present)



la carrière diplomatique au CONSEIL





## Work at the Council level

- Notes from the Council Secretariat
- Briefing notes to the Presidency
  - introductory words
- Council Secretariat will consult the Presidency on the content/handling
- Briefing of Minister by the Council Secretariat. Afterwards, talks with the Commission and if appropriate with some delegations.



## Press conference and minutes

- Pre-Council press release
- Post-Council press conference with a draft press release prepared by the Council Secretariat.
- The final press release is issued by the Council Secretariat.
- The Council Secretariat produces minutes of Council meeting.
- Minutes are approved, via Coreper, by the Council.
- Social media as communication strategy



## Events in the margins of the Council

- E.g. the EYCS Council: Social partners (Education), Informal Forum (Youth) and High level SD with Sports movement
- Either breakfast or lunch (depending on the timing of the of the Council).
- High-level event (Ministers, Commissioners, EP (Deputy) Ambassadors).



## Events in the margins of the Council

- Council standing instructions
  - Practical arrangements by **Council protocol service**
  - Agenda, topics and conduct of the meeting are the Presidency's responsibility (with the help of the Secretariat)
  - Presidency to report on the outcome of the discussions to the Council



COUNCIL POLICY DEBATE



## Working with the EP

- Relations with the EP
  - Contacts with the MEPs/Rapporteurs
  - Contacts with the EP Secretariat
  - Meetings on legislative dossiers
  - Meetings on non-legislative dossiers
- The Council Secretariat provides assistance



## Ministerial hearing before the EP

- Takes place during the first month of the Presidency
- Information notes from the Council Secretariat
  - Key messages and background
  - Planned action during the Presidency
  - Defensive points

Council Secretariat will consult Presidency on the content
- Oral briefing of Ministers before the hearing



## Working with the Commission

- In practice the Presidency, the Council Secretariat and the Commission services often work as a team
- Routine questions are resolved consensually
- Commission has its own political agenda
- In the event of disagreement between the Commission and the Member States, the Presidency should defend the interests of the Member States
- Council Secretariat can help the Presidency to "decode" discussions





## Sport - Events

- Sport Directors' meeting: 13-14 July, Tallinn
- WADA ExCo+FB: 15-16 November, Pyeongchang, Korea)
- EYCS Council: 21-22 November, Brussels
  - HL SD with sports movement



## Sport - Events

- Seminar on the role and status of coaches in society, promoting sports and physical activity: 12-13 July, Tallinn
- Conference –Universities as contributors to athlete, coach and dual careers: 21-22 September, Tartu
- Opening of the EWoS: 23 September, Tartu



## Sport – Provisional WPS dates

3 July

4 September

26 September

10 October

30 October

(poss.) 5-6 December



## Sport – Sport Directors' Meeting

### Topics:

- Status of coaches in society
  - Erasmus+ (sport) future priorities
- Working method:
  - Plenary + work shops
  - "Tour de table"
- Role of the sports movement or external guest speakers



## Sport – EE Presidency Priorities

- Role and status of coaches in society
  - Promotion of sports and physical activity
  - Role of coaches that goes beyond sporting role "educator"
    - skills
    - values
    - attitudes
    - link to New Skills Agenda for Europe ?
    - link to Bratislava Roadmap ?



## Sport – EE Presidency Priorities

- (poss.) Sport and media rights
  - Relationship between popular and not so popular sports
  - Price/outreach for consumers
  - Re-investment in sport (elite and grassroots level)
  - (poss.) DGs, HL SD or policy debate at the EYCS Council



## Sport – EE Presidency Priorities

- WADA
  - Preparation of EU coordination for the WADA meetings in November
    - brainstorming and drafting in small group prior to producing a draft text
  - Preparation also for Council of Europe (CAHAMA) meetings in November
    - Presidency to present and defend the EU common position
  - Nomination of EU representatives in the WADA FB
    - (poss.) EE Minister for Sport to replace the UK Minister



## Sport – EE Presidency Priorities

- Match-fixing
  - Council of Europe Convention against the manipulation of sport competitions
    - Negotiations on the Cion proposal on EU signature blocked in November 2015. The Cion has not yet adopted a proposal regarding the conclusion of the convention (ratification)
    - Common accord (unanimity) required for both signature and conclusion
    - 30 countries (17 EU MS) have signed the Convention
    - 2 countries (Norway and Portugal) have ratified the Convention
      - Convention will come into force following 5 ratifications





## Youth – Events

- EU Youth Conference: 23-26 October, Tallinn
- DG for Youth: 26-27 October, Tallinn
- EYCS Council: 20-21 November, Brussels
  - Informal Forum (structured dialogue with youth people)  
→ breakfast ?



## Youth – Provisional YWP dates

7 July

7 September

29 September

12 October

31 October

(poss.) 7 December



## Youth – DG for Youth Meeting

- Topics: ?
- Working method:
  - Plenary + work shops
  - "Tour de table"
- Role of national projects or external guest speakers



## Youth – EE Presidency Priorities

- European Solidarity Corps (ESC)
  - Reaction to 1st phase: EYCS Council 17 February
  - 2nd phase: legislative proposal (poss.) regulation in May/June 2017
  - Top political priority at EU level
    - need to devote sufficient resources to this file



## Youth – EE Presidency Priorities

- Smart youth work
  - Context of youth work is changing
  - A major part of young people's lives take place on-line
    - need to develop "smart youth work" which uses digital tools
    - need to maximise the outreach towards young people
    - need to develop digital competences of youth workers



## Youth – EE Presidency Priorities

- Expert Group on Digitisation
  - Final report expected May/June 2017
- Study on the impact of the internet and social media
  - Foreseen in June/July 2017
- Presidency aims to draw up a set of Council conclusions



## Youth – EE Presidency Priorities

- Volunteering
  - Recommendation on European Voluntary Service (EVS)
  - European Solidarity Corps (ESC)
  - The Commission is carrying out a study on volunteering (by external evaluator)
    - foreseen in April/May 2017
  - Presidency action: discussion at the DG for Youth or (poss.) a brief set of Council conclusions or (poss.) a policy debate



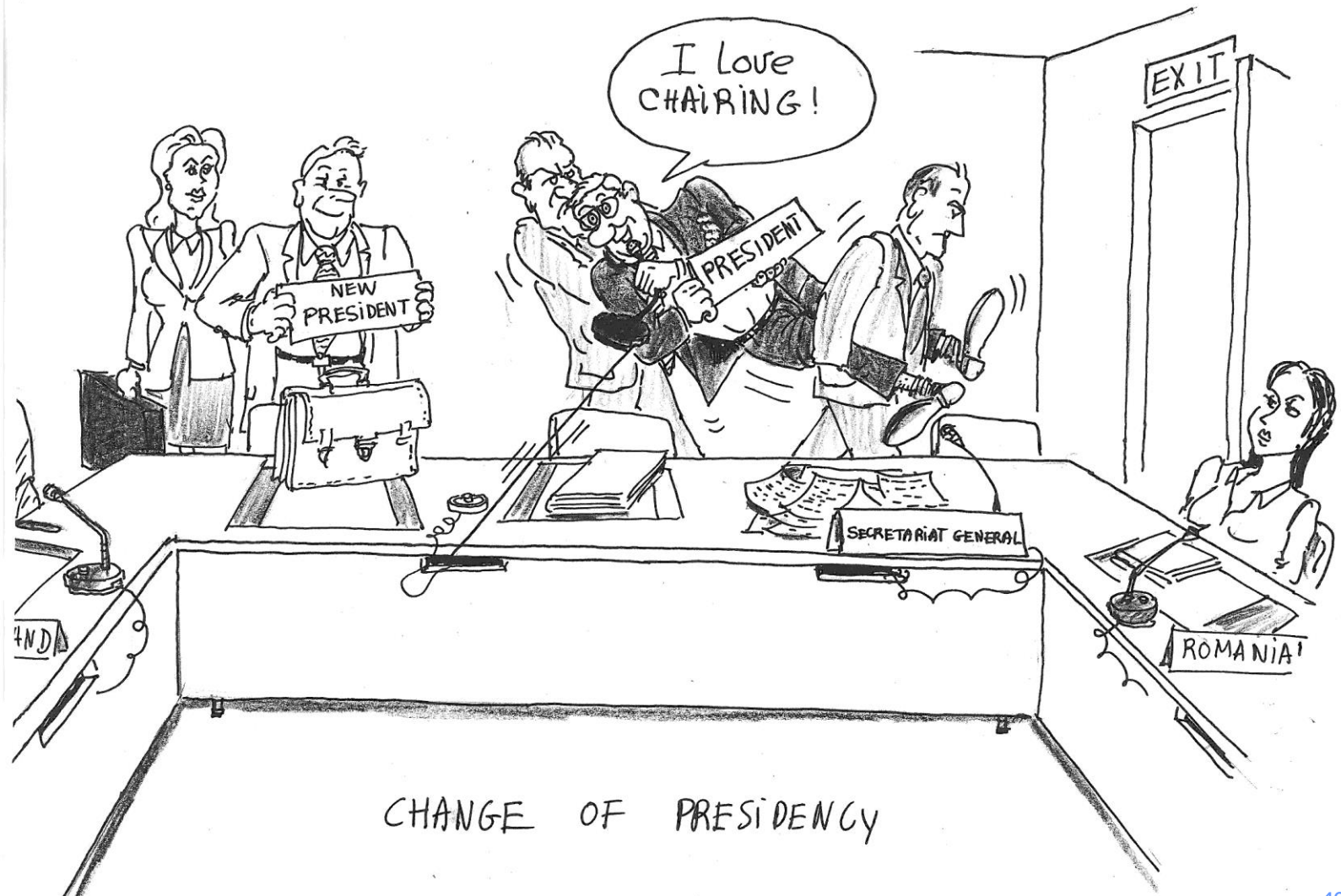
## Youth – EE Presidency Priorities

- The EU Youth Strategy and the situation of young people in Europe
  - Mid-term evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy
  - Implementation of the Bratislava Roadmap
- (poss.) link to the future of EU discussions





# Thank you !



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