

IE, LT, EL Started New Trio Council Presidencies



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News

On 1 July 2026, a new trio of Presidencies of the Council of the EU began its 18-month programme, with Ireland assuming the Presidency for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2026. Lithuania and Greece will follow in the first and second half of 2027, respectively.

The trio's programme focuses on the following three main themes:

- A Free and Democratic Europe: upholding EU values, the rule of law and democracy, and protecting fundamental rights;
- A Strong and Secure Europe: strengthening security and defence, migration and border management, enlargement, preparedness and resilience;
- A Prosperous and Competitive Europe: promoting the EU's competitiveness and the Single Market, advancing the green and digital transitions, and economic and social resilience.

In the area of criminal justice, the trio aims to strengthen cross-border cooperation between law enforcement and judicial authorities, while also enhancing cooperation with third countries. It intends to support the work of relevant EU agencies and bodies and step up efforts in the fight against serious and organised crime, including drug trafficking, migrant smuggling and other forms of cross-border crime. The programme also emphasises the more effective use of modern IT tools and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, to detect criminal activities, gather information and dismantle criminal networks.

Other priorities of the trio include protecting minors, in particular from online child sexual abuse, and safeguarding judicial independence and access to justice. The trio also reiterated its commitment to ensuring accountability for war crimes and other serious crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

During the Irish Presidency, particular attention is being paid to fighting serious and organised crime and responding to new and emerging threats. It also focuses on the challenges surrounding access to data for criminal investigations. At an informal meeting of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers in Dublin in July 2026, Justice Ministers discussed data retention, while Home Affairs Ministers focused on the fight against organised crime. Digital criminal justice is another important focus of the Irish Presidency, particularly following the application of the EU e-Evidence Regulation from 18 August 2026, which introduces a new framework for cross-border access to electronic evidence.

Through the General Affairs Council, the Irish Presidency aims to advance the necessary decisions for the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the period 2028 to 2034. At the informal meeting of EU ministers in Dublin on 3–4 September 2026, a discussion took place on the MFF with EU Budget Commissioner

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Piotr Serafin and representatives of the European Parliament. The focus was, in particular, on the future expenditure structure of the MFF. *Thomas Byrne*, Irish Minister of State for European Affairs and Defence, held bilateral talks with his EU counterparts to progress the MFF negotiations.

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