

Spain Takes Over Council Presidency

Cornelia Riehle

News

On 1 July 2023, Spain took over the Presidency of the Council of the EU. Spain is the first Member State in the current new trio presidency composed of Spain, Belgium, and Hungary, with the latter two holding the presidencies in 2024 (→ separate news item and related link). “Europe, closer” is the motto of the Spanish Presidency’s [programme](#) that sets out four priorities for its six-month term:

- Reindustrialising the EU and guaranteeing its open strategic autonomy;
- Advancing in the green transition;
- Promoting greater social and economic justice;
- Strengthening European unity.

Overall, the Spanish Presidency will carry on the EU’s support for Ukraine and promote in-depth and improved institutional decision-making processes alongside the enlargement of the EU.

In the area of freedom, security and justice, the Spain will continue to promote, *inter alia*, the digitalization of the justice system, the consolidation of the rule of law, and the EU’s accession to the European Convention on Human Rights. Priorities in the field of home affairs will be given to the Pact on Migration and Asylum, the external dimension of migration, designing a migration policy, and the functioning of the Schengen area with a view to allowing Romania and Bulgaria to fully participate in the Schengen area (→ [eucri](#)m news of 26 July 2023).

Regarding criminal matters, the Spanish Council Presidency is committed to continuing the negotiations with the European Parliament on the proposals for environmental protection, confiscation and asset recovery, combating violence against women and domestic violence as well as the prevention of and fight against trafficking in human beings. It will also facilitate the negotiations on the proposal for a Directive on the transfer of criminal proceedings (→ [eucri](#)m news of 11 July 2023). Furthermore, the Presidency intends to advance negotiations on the proposals for a Regulation against child sexual abuse online (→ [eucri](#)m 2/2022, 91-92) and for a Directive on combating corruption. The role of Eurojust in the fight against cross-border organized crime and the role of the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO) in the fight against fraud to the EU’s financial interests will also be further promoted. Additional priorities in the field of criminal law will be: preventing and combating terrorism and violent radicalization, including protection of the victims of terrorism and raising social awareness about the violence they experience, the fight against terrorist financing, the use of new technologies, and the threat posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters.

AUTHOR

Cornelia Riehle

Deputy Head of Section
Academy of European Law

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