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## Polish Presidency of the EU Council

### Shaping the New Institutional Cycle

On 1 January 2025, Poland assumed the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union for the second time, following its first tenure in 2011. This presidency marks the beginning of a new presidency trio and coincides with a fresh institutional cycle, setting the stage for renewed priorities and challenges. Poland takes on this role at a particularly complex moment, inheriting numerous unresolved issues while facing political instability in key EU member states and the upcoming presidential election at home. Moreover, the return of Donald Trump to the White House introduces fresh uncertainties in transatlantic relations, potentially reshaping Europe's strategic policies. Against this backdrop, Poland has adopted the slogan "Secure Europe" as the guiding theme of its presidency. This insight tends to analyse how Warsaw will navigate the challenges ahead and whether it can effectively advance its vision of secure and stable Europe amid a shifting geopolitical

landscape, by analysing Poland's key priorities that will shape its presidency.

### Making Europe More Secure

To make Europe more secure, Poland's EU Council presidency will work on strengthening support for Ukraine, yet maintaining the fragile unity within the bloc will be a considerable challenge. Poland currently leads in economic [contributions](#) to Ukraine, pledging 4.91% of its GDP, the highest among donor countries. Prime Minister Donald Tusk reaffirmed Poland's unwavering commitment during his [visit to Kyiv](#) on 17 December, but translating this stance into concrete EU-wide action will be difficult. One pressing issue is the need for an updated [trade agreement](#) with Ukraine, where Tusk will have to be careful with issues which could fuel the Law and Justice party (PiS) electorate such as agriculture and migration. Meanwhile, sanctions against Russia have stalled, with only a



minor package [adopted](#) under Hungary's presidency. Hungary, pursuing a Moscow-friendly policy, has consistently blocked stricter measures and leveraged its veto power to weaken sanctions. Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico has also signalled a pro-Russian shift, even threatening to [cut electricity supplies](#) to Ukraine. Further complicating matters, the rise of pro-Russian right-wing parties across Europe could deepen divisions. Poland's success in expanding sanctions and increasing aid will depend on its ability to navigate these internal tensions. Achieving tangible progress will require diplomatic finesse and strategic compromises to overcome division.

With persistent security threats facing Europe, strengthening European defence will be another key priority during the presidency. Poland currently [allocates](#) 4.12% of its GDP to defence, the highest among NATO members, and has announced a record [increase](#) to 5% in 2025. A major focus will be concluding negotiations on the draft resolution of the [European Defence Industry Programme](#) (EDIP), a crucial initiative aimed at reducing fragmentation in the EU's defence sector among EU members and enhancing cooperation. Another priority is securing EU funding for the [East Shield](#), a large-scale defence project designed to bolster security along the Polish border with Belarus. Additionally, the long-anticipated [White Paper](#) on European defence by the new Defence Commissioner Andrius Kubilius, is expected during Poland's presidency. This document will outline key initiatives for strengthening the EU's defence industry. Warsaw sees its presidency as an opportunity to push for greater defence spending among other member states. Thus, Poland's leadership in this area could make concrete steps into reshaping EU's defence approach making it more coordinated and unified but achieving consensus will require overcoming divisions over military spending and security priorities.

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## New Cycle – New Challenges

Expecting that Donald Trump's second term is going to be more assertive towards the EU than the first one, his return to the White House presents a significant challenge to the EU and, by extension, to Poland's EU Council presidency. Trump's announced [tariffs](#) of 10 to 20 percent on all imports threaten to disrupt transatlantic trade, potentially triggering a trade war that could further destabilise European economy. Furthermore, Trump has signalled a willingness to [slash US support](#) for Ukraine, a move that would weaken European security efforts at a critical moment. His controversial suggestion of taking over [Greenland](#) from Denmark further underscores his unpredictable approach to foreign policy, which could strain EU-US relations and lead to distrust. However, Poland enjoys one of the strongest bilateral relationships with the United States in Europe, providing an opportunity to engage constructively with the new administration. Warsaw will aim to leverage this position to mitigate the risks posed by Trump's policies while seeking to rally EU unity in response. Preparing the bloc for a potential trade war with Washington will be a top priority and the presidency will be defined by its ability to soften the blow and safeguard Europe's strategic interests.

To confront the challenges posed by Trump's return, as well as other global threats, Poland will focus on strengthening the EU's long-term resilience. [Mario Draghi's competitiveness report](#) highlighted the EU's economic stagnation compared to the US and China, underscoring the need for urgent reforms. One key area for improvement is foreign direct investment screening, where different national approaches have weakened Europe's economic security. Poland will likely push for greater harmonisation to prevent economic vulnerabilities. Another priority is advancing discussions on an [EU Space Law](#), which could play a crucial role in setting some basic rules in the area lacking a clear set of regulations. Energy security is also central to Poland's [programme](#), with a strong emphasis on achieving full decoupling from Russian energy by 2027. Ensuring a stable and diversified energy supply will be critical for reducing external dependencies and strengthening Europe's geopolitical position. In the next six months, Poland is expected to introduce and support various initiatives aimed at reinforcing Europe's economic and strategic security. By addressing these structural weaknesses, the presidency will seek to build a more resilient EU capable of withstanding both external economic pressures and emerging geopolitical risks.

As new EU institutions settle into place, Poland's EU presidency will play a crucial role in shaping the next legislative cycle. One of its key tasks will be initiating discussions on the post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), with the first conference [scheduled](#) for 17 February. These early negotiations will set the stage for future budgetary priorities, influencing the EU's long-term financial strategy. Another major focus will be advancing the [Union Customs Code](#), an effort to streamline customs procedures across member states. Moreover, Poland aims to secure a Council compromise by April or May in order for the triad to start in the Summer. Additionally, the presidency will seek to finalise the [Green Claims Directive](#), a key element of the European Green Deal, ensuring that environmental claims made by businesses are transparent and verifiable as well as not misleading. Balancing these ongoing legislative efforts with the need to open new policy discussions will require careful coordination. Poland faces a demanding six months ahead, with a packed legislative agenda that will shape the EU's overall policies for the next five years. Poland's ability to navigate progress on these files will be a defining feature of its presidency.

## Keeping up with Enlargement Momentum

Although Poland appears to have prioritised Ukraine and Moldova in the context of EU accession, it remains equally committed to advancing the Western Balkans' integration. Namely, Deputy Foreign Minister [Prawda](#) has affirmed Poland's intention to act swiftly on Ukraine and Moldova's accession. Moreover, Poland was among the 12 EU member states that [urged](#) the Belgian presidency to accelerate talks with Kyiv and Chişinău. However, Poland's support extends beyond its eastern neighbours. The presidency [programme](#) explicitly underscores enlargement as the EU's most effective instrument to strengthen the EU. Foreign Minister [Sikorski](#) has repeatedly emphasised that Poland will maintain momentum on EU expansion both to the East and the South, ensuring balanced progress for Ukraine, Moldova, and the Western Balkans. Prime Minister Tusk's visit to Serbia in 2024 reinforced this stance, declaring that the EU remains incomplete without Serbia's accession. Furthermore, Poland is [committed](#) to sustaining technical assistance for the Western Balkans through initiatives like the Enlargement Academy within its foreign ministry. Thus, Poland now represents a crucial bridge between the West, East,

North, and South. Warsaw has the potential to parallelly push enlargement on both fronts, the Western Balkans and East Europe.

With enlargement high on Warsaw's agenda and enlargement moving gear up, Poland has a vital opportunity in the next six months to demonstrate its commitment to the Western Balkans' EU accession. Montenegro is set to continue closing negotiating chapters, and Albania is expected to continue opening its remaining clusters. Moreover, the European Commission recommended the opening of Cluster 3 with Serbia, which is now pending the Council's approval. Therefore, Poland can play a crucial role in fostering consensus within the Council—provided the necessary criteria are fulfilled. As the New Growth Plan became fully operational, Poland can work to ensure that its implementation remains a genuinely merit-based process, particularly in the allocation of funds from the Reform and Growth Facility. Given the increasing references to 2026 as a potential year for Montenegro to conclude negotiations and 2027 for Albania, progress achieved during Poland's presidency could set the stage for meaningful advancements. By laying the groundwork for the Trio and the new EU institutions to drive enlargement forward, Poland can help deliver significant results in strengthening the European perspective of the Western Balkans.





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