

Finnish Council Presidency: MEPs share their expectations



Logo of the Finnish presidency

Finland has been in charge of the presidency of the Council of the EU since 1 July. We asked Finnish MEPs what they expect.

*Finnish Prime Minister Antti Rinne will present his country's priorities to MEPs on 17 July.
[Follow the debate live from 10.00 CET.](#)*

The slogan of the Finnish presidency is “sustainable Europe, sustainable future” and during the six-month term sustainability will be key. Instead of giving traditional presidency gifts, Finland will use the budget to offset greenhouse gas emissions from flights to presidency meetings in Helsinki and Brussels, while meetings will feature tap water instead of bottled water.

Finland's priorities for the presidency are:

- to strengthen common values and the rule of law
- to make the EU more competitive and socially inclusive
- to strengthen the EU's position as a global leader in climate action
- to protect people comprehensively

MEPs want action on climate

Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP) calls for more science and fact-based policy making to help tackle major challenges and proposes that impact assessments include a scientific assessment of the sufficiency of proposed measures. She says the circular economy and resource efficiency will be key in solving climate change: "We need a circular economy roadmap including textile and building strategies, a policy for sustainable food systems and a uniform scale for monitoring progress." Pietikäinen also wants more information on the climate impact of investments included in financial legislation.

Eero Heinäluoma (S&D) said: "The EU's common values need to be taken seriously. I hope that under the Finnish presidency we will build a more humane Europe and strengthen consumer and workers' rights... I expect Finland to push for ambitious climate measures and more Arctic cooperation. It is essential to find an agreement on climate, energy and forest policies to increase investment in the circular economy. The EU needs to remain a leader in climate policy."

Renew Europe's Elsi Katainen believes Finland will be "focused and mindful" when it comes to advancing on major issues such as Brexit, budgetary negotiations or climate goals. "I hope and expect that in the negotiations on the next financial framework, Finland will help find a fair compromise between the member states to secure a sufficient level of agricultural and cohesion funding."

Ville Niinistö (Greens/EFA) notes the Finnish presidency comes at an important moment in defining the future of Europe. "We expect Finland to push for the EU to take the necessary decisions in climate policy to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. First, we need to make EU countries commit to a carbon neutral Europe by 2050 and then take measures to green the economy... Finland should also raise the importance of social responsibility, human rights and rule of law in the EU."

Laura Huhtasaari (ID) said: "I hope the net contribution level of Finland to the EU budget will be lower in the upcoming multiannual financial framework. It is time to stop income redistribution in Europe in the form of e.g. cohesion spending. Finland should make an effort to stop the EU from pressuring eastern member states and Italy to apply a migration policy that is harmful to their citizens. We should also defend European industrial jobs, especially against China which

doesn't follow the rules of international trade.”

Silvia Modig (GUE/NGL) points out Europe is divided on many major issues, such as climate change, xenophobia, populism, Brexit and the treatment of migrants coming to Europe. “Finland needs to be bold and active and keep climate goals clear in everyone’s minds. We need to be able to agree on tightening the emission reduction goals and set the target of carbon neutrality. Climate should not be disregarded because of other challenges.”

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