Programme of activities of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council

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The Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, outlined the priorities of Hungary's six-month presidency of the EU Council to MEPs.

He stated that the fight against public deficits would be at the top of his agenda and called for boosting employment and prudent management of the economy. He also stressed the need to revise the Treaty of Lisbon to establish a permanent mechanism for crisis response.

Whilst regretting the fact that the EU faces fears about further enlargement, he considered that Croatia's accession treaty should be signed by the end of the Hungarian presidency. He also reiterated support for Bulgaria and Romania to join Schengen as soon as possible.

The President of the EPP group stated that the main priority this year should be the stability of the euro. He welcomed the fact that the two countries taking over the presidency in 2011 (Hungary and Poland) are thinking of adopting the single currency as soon as possible. It is in the interest of these two countries that the euro remains a stable currency.

A representative from the GUE/NGL group also welcomed the fact that the presidency was being held by an Eastern-European country.

Responding to MEP criticisms as regards the Hungarian Media Act, Viktor Orbán reiterated his government's readiness to modify the Media Act, if the European Commission requires it to do so to ensure its conformity with European law.

In response to these comments, the leader of the EPP expressed his support for the Hungarian government and expressed confidence in the fact that European law would be respected. In contrast, the President of the Socialists considered that the Media Act contravenes EU law. The Liberal leader agreed with this opinion and emphasised the need to uphold pluralism. The loudest criticism came from the Greens, strongly protesting that freedom of expression is a fundamental principle of democracy.