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Lord Ricketts GCMG GCVO
Chair, European Affairs Committee
House of Lords
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By email: hleuroaffairs@parliament.uk

21 July 2025

Dear Lord Ricketts,

Priorities of the Danish EU Council Presidency, July 2025 - December 2025

I am writing to inform you of the priorities of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) as agreed under the recently refreshed arrangements for parliamentary scrutiny of EU business by your Committee.

Denmark assumed the six-month rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU on 1 July – the first Presidency to begin after the inaugural UK-EU Summit held on 19 May. Denmark welcomed the Summit and has stated in its official programme that it “*will support the continued positive development of the EU’s relationship with the UK with a focus on achieving concrete results*”. We look forward to working with the Danish Presidency to implement the outcomes of the Summit.

Denmark announced its priorities and programme for the Presidency on 19 June with a message from Prime Minister Frederiksen and a press conference from Minister of European Affairs Marie Bjerre. Under the headline “A strong Europe in a changing world”, the Danish Government has been clear it has two overarching priorities: i) a secure Europe and ii) a competitive and green Europe. Other key themes include progressing EU enlargement (especially Ukraine) and managing global trade tensions. Beginning negotiations on the EU’s next Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2035, which will set the budget for that period, will also be a priority.

The Presidency will aim to advance policy initiatives on competitiveness, security and defence, agriculture, promoting and preserving democracy, and enlargement, as outlined in the Explanatory Memorandum on the European Commission’s 2025 Work Programme, which I provided to your Committee on 12 March.

A Secure Europe

The Danish Presidency will maintain its predecessor's focus on reinforcing European defence to contend with the threat posed by Russia. Central pillars of the Danish approach include strengthening the EU defence industrial base, supporting Ukraine militarily, politically and economically, and ensuring EU complementarity with NATO. Denmark will make a particular effort to finalise the Joint White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030 (to which it has already heavily contributed).

The Presidency is taking an expansive view of security and will make a forceful case for the need to harden the EU's migration and economic policies. On the former, the focus will be on reducing the number of irregular arrivals into the EU and bolstering the EU's external borders. Beyond implementing the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, these will notably include stricter approaches to returns and rules defining safe third countries. On the latter, Denmark will encourage EU Member States to identify and reduce risks to critical national infrastructure, supply chains and technology to lessen outside dependencies.

This Government pledged to pursue a new security relationship with the EU and agreed a new UK-EU Security and Defence Partnership at the Summit. We are now focussed on implementation of this Partnership to reinforce NATO which remains the cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security. This includes working towards UK participation in the EU's Security Action for Europe (SAFE) instrument. This Government is also committed to working with the EU on practical and innovative approaches to reducing irregular migration, including cooperating on returns, preventing Channel crossings, and sharing expertise between UK and EU border agencies.

A competitive and green Europe

The Danes will give their full backing to the Commission's competitiveness agenda, with Prime Minister Frederiksen calling for Europe to compete globally through removing burdens on business and strategic investment. Denmark will push for greater regulatory simplification, the development of the EU's Savings and Investment Union, and a commitment to openness to global trade, including through the conclusion of the symbolically important EU-MERCOSUR Free Trade Agreement.

They will also prioritise the green transition, which it views as a driver for growth, jobs and economic independence and a way to bring down high European energy costs. In addition to prioritising the expansion of clean energy throughout the EU – its production capacity and storage infrastructure, alongside more efficient financing and legal frameworks – they will work towards an ambitious updated EU Nationally Determined Contribution well in advance of Brazil's COP30 in November 2025.

The package announced by this Government at the Summit promotes prosperity by removing market access barriers and supporting greater energy efficiency and a cheaper transition to net zero. The Government will now work with the EU to proceed with technical negotiations and implement our commitments. This will include working towards a UK-EU

Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement, linking our respective Emissions Trading Systems, and exploring UK participation in EU electricity trading markets, in addition to the continued implementation of the Energy title in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

I look forward to my continued engagement with you and your Committee.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee for information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'N. Thomas-Symonds', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

**RT HON NICK THOMAS-SYMONDS MP
MINISTER FOR THE CABINET OFFICE
HIS MAJESTY'S PAYMASTER GENERAL**