

Towards the Next Strategic Agenda: TEPSA & Egmont hold Belgian Pre-Presidency Conference

The 23-24 November conference will bring experts, policy-makers, civil society and the wider public together to discuss the priorities of the upcoming Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

BRUSSELS, 15/11/2023: On 1 January, Belgium will take over the Rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union from Spain. To discuss the aims and priorities of the incoming Belgian Presidency, TEPSA and the Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations will host policy-makers to meet with key stakeholders and the wider public in a Pre-Presidency Conference (PPC) taking place on 23-24 November.

To scrutinise the Presidency's programme and exchange on the challenges and opportunities facing it, several key figures from the Belgian authorities will be speaking, including: **Willem van de Voorde**, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the EU; **Henrik van de Velde**, Coordinator for the Belgian EU Presidency 2024; and **Theodora Gentzis**, Director-General of the Belgian DG "Coordination and European Affairs"; among others.

Before every Council Presidency, the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) joins with its Member Institute in the relevant country to organise the Pre-Presidency Conference. PPCs have become a staple of the European political year ever since the first one, hosted to preview the Irish presidency of January-June 1975. Ahead of the conference, TEPSA will also present its recommendations for the Belgian Presidency, which have been drafted by TEPSA researchers.

TEPSA Secretary-General **Jim Cloos** describes the value of Pre-Presidency Conferences as **"a perfect opportunity to bring together representatives of the TEPSA network and political decision-makers. This cross-fertilization is essential for a vibrant debate about Europe in the run-up to each Presidency. It allows our TEPSA members to make a difference"**.

For his part, **Jean-Louis De Brouwer**, Director of the European Affairs Program at the Egmont Institute, points out that **"this conference will have an exceptional significance: it is taking place on the eve of a presidency which will mark the end of a particularly busy legislature and during which a fundamental debate on the future of the European Union will begin; it is therefore particularly appropriate that TEPSA has chosen this time to focus its recommendations on the priorities of the next strategic agenda"**.

The discussions in Brussels will concern key policy issues of our times, including *inter alia* the state of play of the EU enlargement file, the future of European migration and asylum policy, and the impact of post-truth politics on the EU.

The event will take place in **Brussels** at the **Egmont Palace** on **23-24 November**.

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