Following Slovenia in the first half of the year, France takes over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from July 1 to December 31, 2008.

Climate change, the environment, immigration, food safety, health, the economy and finance are the areas in which we are facing the biggest challenges today. They are at the heart of the concerns of Europe’s citizens, who expect the European Union to respond in a strong and definite manner.

The European Union has both the assets and the ambition to meet these expectations. It is built on strong values which have inspired the European project since its inception and shaped its identity in the world.

The programme of the French Presidency aims to respond to the main concerns of Europeans, mainly with regard to energy and climate change, issues concerning immigration, agriculture and food safety, defence and security. Furthermore, the French Presidency naturally also wants to advance the EU’s action in all the main areas, particularly those pertaining to society, the economy, finance and culture, and on an international level.

In order to meet these challenges and to serve the general European interest, the French Presidency will need the support and engagement of everyone. You can count on my determination to make this presidency a presidency that is useful for Europe and for the Europeans.

Nicolas Sarkozy,
- President of the European Council

Learn more by visiting the French presidency web site and the Embassy of France in Washington, DC, web site.

You may also wish to consult the French Presidency’s Work Program: