Analyses OSW

CENTRE FOR EASTERN STUDIES 24.11.2010 www.osw.waw.pl

Hungary is giving details of its priorities in the Hungarian presidency of the EU

The Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, during the meetings of the government delegation in Brussels and Paris (17 and 19 November) presented the agenda of the Hungarian presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2011. The Hungarian government is seeking support for the completion of accession negotiations with Croatia – this being a priority for Hungary – and the extension of the Schengen zone to Romania and Bulgaria. During its presidency Hungary intends to focus on issues of energy security and the adoption of an EU Strategy for the Danube Region and EU economic and budgetary questions.

During the visit in Brussels, apart from Orban's meeting with President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy (held on 17 November), sessions with the participation of the Hungarian government and representatives of the European Commission were organised where Hungary presented its proposals for the agenda of the Hungarian presidency in the Council of the EU.

The modification of the Treaty of Lisbon, launching negotiations about the EU's financial prospects for 2014-2020 and work on the economic strategy until 2020 are what Hungary considers the most important tasks for the EU in the first half of 2011. The development of the EU's energy policy that includes measures to be taken in order to increase energy security – *inter alia*, through EU support for the extension of inter-system connections – is placed high on Hungary's list of priorities. Hungary has also announced measures to be undertaken in its presidency to promote the social inclusion of Roma people and the development of the Eastern Partnership (among other tasks Hungary will organise a Partnership summit in May 2011).

The Hungarian government has not abandoned support for the concept of enlarging the EU to the Balkan states and the extension of the Schengen zone, which it advocated both in Brussels and Paris in talks with President Nicolas Sarkozy. Hungary would like to complete accession negotiations with Croatia during the Hungarian presidency. The chances for this are however slim as according to the formal requirements it would require the completion of complex reforms (so far 25 out of 35 negotiation chapters have been closed). Hungary is also determined to meet the deadline set for March 2011 for Romania and Bulgaria to enter the Schengen zone. France, however, is opposed to this. <boc>