

2011: THE HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

– *Reflections* –
(Abstract)

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It is a welcome sign that, contrary to certain views one would hear earlier from time to time, by now the vision has become unequivocal and dominant that the rotating presidency of the European Union starting now means for us essentially an endeavour serving a work programme which is not national but pursues an agenda aimed at the whole community of the European Union, and which also encompasses themes that concern us more directly. This is precisely the line of action to be followed and it is here that we can prove: we can be good managers, efficient servants of the European political project. The EU presidency also provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate to our own citizens that Hungary is not in a vacuum, rather, it is part of Europe and that, continuing this logical chain of thought, the old continent, too, is merely one of the elements constituting the world. Therefore, we ought to see this outside world and open wide the windows through which we can contemplate all the dimensions of our planet.

At the UN, the presidency of the European Union does not entail any particular advantages for a given country in case it decides in the meantime to present its candidature to a seat in the Security Council, just as Hungary had done it for the period of 2012-13. Which does not mean that, in the course of our lobbying efforts launched somewhat belatedly, the Hungarian diplomacy cannot draw its partners' attention to the importance of the position it holds at the EU and that it should shy away from presenting to the world organisation the results of its work in the office of the EU presidency, demonstrating by the same token the ability of our representatives to take their share, actively and efficiently, in the discussions at multilateral fora on questions of intergovernmental relations. However, ensuring the rotating presidency can also bring disadvantages in case the given country does not have the required energy to meet the dual challenges stemming from activities deployed in Brussels and campaigning for election in New York.

We know by experience how important it is, in carrying out international tasks, to enjoy a positive country image in the outside world. In the position of an EU presidency, it can make considerably easier not only an effective search for compromises and a successful coordination of the various positions, but also the promotion of interests and ambitions deriving from the geopolitical situation of a country. In the coming six months, in the context of the ideas and proposals meant to condition Europe's future, among the issues figuring on the EU's common plate, there are items which have special importance for us, where – not only because of our presidential functions – we can act with a sense of special responsibility and, what is not of minor relevance, possessing a sufficient level of information. We shall also have to make use of these advantages in order to preserve for a long time to come, well beyond the first half of 2011, the memory at the European Union of a correct, well-managed and efficient Hungarian presidency.

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