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Upcoming European Presidency Central in Presentation of Foreign Affairs Policy Note Foreign Affairs

Minister Hadja Lahbib presented her policy note today in the Chamber Committee on Foreign Affairs. There was significant focus on Belgium's role during the first half of the year of 2024 when it takes the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Hadja Lahbib, Minister of Foreign Affairs: "2024 will be a significant year for our country both in Europe and internationally with the European presidency of the European Union. Working towards a stronger and more efficient Europe that protects both our people and our values is one of our missions. Our presidency comes at a crucial moment."

Six Priorities

The priorities of the Belgian Presidency, refined with all competent federal and federated entities, comprise six clusters:

1. Foreign and security policy
2. Rule of law and democracy
3. Economy, internal market, industry, and foreign trade
4. A social Europe
5. Climate and energy transition
6. The future of Europe

Minister Lahbib emphasized the importance of European unity. "Despite Brexit and since the war in Ukraine, the European Union has remained united. This has allowed us to face a polycrisis including a pandemic, a war, an energy crisis, and high inflation."

Middle East Peace Process

The peace process in the Middle East also received significant attention. "I have placed the peace process in the Middle East on the agenda of the Foreign Affairs Council several times. It was also a priority for our Presidency even before the terrorist attacks of October 7th. Brussels was to become the host city of a first peace initiative in a long time. Our commitment to peace is stronger than ever."

During her presentation, the minister also focused on the relationship between Africa and Europe, a strong transatlantic relationship, and relations with China.

[Click here to read the policy note \(French and Dutch only\)](#)

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