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Lithuania to hand over EU Council presidency to Greece

With 12 days to go until the handover between the two successive Council presidencies, Lithuanian Foreign minister Linas Linkevičius reviewed the achievements of the Lithuanian presidency and Greek minister for European affairs Dimitris Kourkoulas looked ahead at the priorities of the incoming Greek presidency at a joint press conference.

"Six months ago we took over the relay of the Council presidency from Ireland with much enthusiasm and hope. Now we stand here stronger, experienced and proud to have served Europe and succeeded. Around 130 legislative and 250 non-legislative files agreed and 50 Council conclusions have undoubtedly contributed to 'Credible, Growing and Open Europe'", said minister Linkevičius.

Minister Kourkoulas paid tribute to Lithuania's efforts in tackling European and global issues. *"The job is well done by Lithuania. We know that Europe goes through a crucial transitional period and the high level of unemployment has eroded the confidence of EU citizens. The big challenge of the EU is to reaffirm its mission to the hearts and minds of its people"* - noted minister Kourkoulas.

Greece has already done four successful presidencies and now it will work towards deepening the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), dealing with unemployment, as well as with migration issues. *"The most important message is that after the country suffered the crisis it can conduct the presidency and this shows the European institutional equality"*, - concluded minister Kourkoulas.

P R E S S

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