



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2025) 2516 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 19 March 2025

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2516th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 26 February 2025

(morning)

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Single sitting: Wednesday 26 February 2025 (morning)

The sitting opened at 8.02 with Ms von der LEYEN, President, in the chair.

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	President
Ms RIBERA	Executive Vice-President
Ms VIRKKUNEN	Executive Vice-President
Mr SÉJOURNÉ	Executive Vice-President
Ms MÎNZATU	Executive Vice-President
Mr FITTO	Executive Vice-President
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Member
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Member
Ms ŠUICA	Member
Mr HOEKSTRA	Member
Mr KUBILIUS	Member
Ms KOS	Member
Mr SÍKELA	Member
Ms KADIS	Member
Ms ALBUQUERQUE	Member
Ms LAHBIB	Member
Mr BRUNNER	Member
Ms ROSWALL	Member
Mr SERAFIN	Member
Mr JØRGENSEN	Member
Ms ZAHARIEVA	Member
Mr McGRATH	Member
Mr TZITZIKOSTAS	Member
Mr HANSEN	Member
Mr MICALLEF	Member

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Absent:

Ms KALLAS	High Representative / Vice-President
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member

The following also sat in:

Mr SEIBERT	Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr CALLEJA CRESPO	Director-General, Legal Service	
Ms ERIKSSON WATERSCHOOT	Deputy Director-General, DG Communication	
Ms PINHO	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission	
Mr ADAM	Deputy Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT	
Mr VAN KEMSEKE	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	Items 8 and 9
Mr WHELAN	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	Items 10 to 13
Ms MICELI	Policy Coordinator in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	Items 10 to 13
Ms SEMLALI	Policy Assistant in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	
Mr TAQUET-GRAZIANI	Acting Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General	
Ms BUKA	Secretariat-General	

Secretary: Ms JUHANSONE, Secretary-General, assisted by Ms DEPREZ, Director in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2025) 2516/FINAL; SEC(2025) 2516/FINAL)

The Commission took note of that day's agenda and of the tentative agendas for forthcoming meetings.

2. WEEKLY MEETING OF HEADS OF CABINET

(RCC(2025) 2516)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet held on Tuesday 25 February 2025.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

(PV(2025) 2511; PV(2025) 2511, PART II; PV(2025) 2512; PV(2025) 2513)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2511th, 2512th and 2513th meetings of 15 and 29 January 2025 and 5 February 2025, and held over approval of the minutes of its 2514th and 2515th meetings of 11 and 19 February 2025 for a later date.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2025) 160)

The Commission took note of the outcome of the written exchange of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (GRI) for the week from 17 to 21 February 2025 (RCC(2025) 160).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Establishment of the Reform and Growth Facility for the Republic of**

Moldova (Regulation) – MIKSER & MUREŞAN report – 2024/0258 (COD)

Line set out in SI(2025) 31.

- **Recommendations addressing identified common areas for improvement resulting from the 2024 thematic Schengen evaluation ‘Bridging national gaps: towards an effective EU return system through common solutions and innovative practices’ (Council Implementing Decision)– 2024/0326 (NLE)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 28.

- **EU position for the consultations between the EU and (i) the United Kingdom to agree on fishing opportunities for sandeel in the North Sea for the period from April to August 2025, (ii) the United Kingdom to agree on fishing opportunities for sprat in the Channel for the period from July 2025 to June 2026, (iii) the United Kingdom to agree on fishing opportunities for Norway pout in the North Sea for the period from November 2025 to October 2026, (iv) the United Kingdom and Norway to agree on fishing opportunities for sprat in the North Sea, the Skagerrak and Kattegat for the period from July 2025 to June 2026, and (v) with Norway to agree on fishing opportunities for Northern prawn in the Skagerrak, Kattegat and the northern North Sea in the northern Norwegian Trench for the period from July 2025 to June 2026**

Line set out in SI(2025) 32.

- **Commission draft reply to the contribution of the LXXII plenary meeting of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC), held in Budapest (Hungary) from 27 to 29 October 2024**

Line set out in SNP(2025) 3.

- **Application of access rights requirements in indirect management for structured funds under the Financial Regulation in external action**

Line set out in SPI(2025) 2.

The Commission took note of the following point:

- **Temporary derogation from certain provisions of Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 and Regulation (EU) 2016/399 as regards a progressive start of operations of the Entry/Exit System (Regulation) – KANKO report – 2024/0315 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2025) 23.

5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION (RCC(2025) 207)

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2025) 207 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 19 February 2025.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2025) 60 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 17 and 23 February 2025.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT
(SEC(2025) 61 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 17 and 23 February 2025.

6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2025) 62 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedures between 17 and 23 February 2025 archived in Decide.

6.4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED
(SEC(2025) 63 AND /2)

The Commission took note of the written procedures specifically identified for which the time limit expired between 24 and 28 February 2025.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2025) 64)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2025) 17)

**7.1. JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE – AUTHORISATION FOR THE
INTERNAL PUBLICATION AT GRADE AD15/16 OF THE VACANCY
NOTICE FOR A FUNCTION OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL**
(PERS(2025) 18)

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms ZAHARIEVA, the Commission decided to authorise the

internal publication, at grade AD15/16, of the vacancy notice set out in PERS(2025) 18 for the function of Director-General of the Joint Research Centre, in accordance with Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**7.2. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL / REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD –
EXTENSION OF THE TERM OF OFFICE OF THE CHAIR OF THE
REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD**

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms ZAHARIEVA, the Commission decided to extend, for one year, the term of office of Mr Rytis MARTIKONIS as Chair of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board.

This decision would take effect on 1 March 2025.

**7.3. DG BUDGET – APPOINTMENT OF AN AD14 DIRECTOR
(PERS(2025) 19 AND /2)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) and 29(1)(b) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the ‘Revenue and Multiannual Financial Framework’ Directorate in DG Budget (PERS(2025) 19).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 28 January and 20 February 2025 (PERS(2025) 19/2).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants’ qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, it then decided to appoint Ms Christiane CANENBLEY to the post.

This decision would take effect on a date to be determined.

8. **COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – THE CLEAN INDUSTRIAL DEAL: A JOINT ROADMAP FOR COMPETITIVENESS AND DECARBONISATION**
(COM(2025) 85 TO/3; RCC(2025) 12)
9. **COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – ACTION PLAN FOR AFFORDABLE ENERGY: UNLOCKING THE TRUE VALUE OF OUR ENERGY UNION TO SECURE AFFORDABLE, EFFICIENT AND CLEAN ENERGY FOR ALL EUROPEANS**
(COM(2025) 79 TO/3; RCC(2025) 12)

The PRESIDENT stressed the urgency in the current geopolitical context of speeding up decision-making within the Union and of focusing on the main priorities, namely security and defence on the one hand, and European competitiveness on the other. She pointed out that the Competitiveness Compass had identified the priority challenges and set out the competitiveness roadmap, and that it was now a matter of developing sectoral strategies. The Clean Industrial Deal presented that day focused mainly on energy-intensive industries and the clean-tech sector. It was accompanied by an action plan for affordable energy and would be followed by an industrial action plan for the automotive sector the following week. The PRESIDENT concluded by stressing that these areas also had a strong security dimension, as the EU could

ensure its stability and resilience only if it remained competitive on the international market.

Ms RIBERA welcomed the collective effort which had gone into drafting these Communications, which were inspired by the mission letters sent to the Members of the Commission by the PRESIDENT, the reports by Mr Draghi and Mr Letta, and the Competitiveness Compass. Considering decarbonisation crucial to preserving European competitiveness, she highlighted the need to modernise traditional industries by focusing on future-oriented sectors. She also stressed the importance of the circular economy and renewable energy in reducing the EU's dependence on fossil fuels.

She explained that the Clean Industrial Deal identified several key measures that were essential for European companies to succeed, which included reducing energy costs, supporting demand for sustainable products, financing the transition, promoting the circular economy and access to critical raw materials, acting internationally, and ensuring the availability of a skilled workforce. In this regard, she stressed the central role of citizens and the importance of education, training and reskilling, which were at the heart of the Union of Skills to be presented the following week.

Ms RIBERA also called for the joint mobilisation of public and private financing and for the adjustment of competition instruments to stimulate innovation and growth while guaranteeing a fair and predictable business framework in the internal market. With regard to the Action Plan for Affordable Energy, she highlighted the need for fair prices and profits, especially in the gas sector.

Mr SÉJOURNÉ reminded the meeting that, beyond its importance for the climate, decarbonisation was also an economic strategy for the EU, which involved reducing dependence on imports, stimulating demand and lowering input costs, in particular the cost of raw materials. This approach kept the EU on course while strengthening

industries in difficulty which were also essential for European defence in a complex geopolitical context. He stressed the practical and operational nature of the Clean Industrial Deal, which contained a series of measures tailored to different sectors.

Taking the example of steel, he said that the Clean Industrial Deal facilitated the steel industry's transition from coal to electricity by extending access to guarantees and risk reduction instruments. This approach encouraged the conclusion of long-term power purchase agreements, thus providing companies with greater predictability and price stability. He added that joint purchasing of iron ore by the Member States would make it possible to secure the supply of raw materials essential to the steel industry. At the same time, several tools, including trade defence tools, would help protect companies in the sector from unfair competition and global overproduction that could jeopardise their economic viability.

Lastly, Mr SÉJOURNÉ stressed that employee training would remain a priority and that increased assistance would be provided through the measures set out in the Union for Skills to support the changing nature of occupations and the development of skills adapted to new industry requirements.

Mr HOEKSTRA then emphasised the urgent need for radical change, arguing that a gradual approach might not be sufficient to enable the EU to meet the current industrial challenges. He stressed the importance of keeping up with the roadmap drawn up by the Commission well beyond the current term of office in order to achieve concrete and lasting results.

He reminded the meeting that decarbonisation addressed climate, economic and strategic challenges, and highlighted the two types of industry primarily concerned by the Clean Industrial Deal. The first of these was heavy industry, which faced high energy costs, intense global competition and complex regulation, all of which affected its competitiveness. The second was emerging technology companies, which posted dynamic growth but required substantial investment to continue to

grow in Europe. Mr HOEKSTRA also noted the importance of a stable and predictable regulatory framework, stressing that frequent regulatory adjustments could hamper investment and penalise businesses, especially those with decades-long investment cycles.

With regard to the Clean Industrial Deal's flagship measures, he stressed the key role of the circular economy, which already accounted for a significant share of economic activity and whose development would open up new opportunities, particularly in the recycling and reuse sectors. In this context, he insisted on the importance of the swift implementation of the Critical Raw Materials Act and the establishment of a European Critical Raw Materials Centre. By facilitating joint procurement at EU level, this European centre would help ensure more competitive prices and increase security of supply. He also reminded the meeting of the objective of adopting a legislative act on the circular economy by 2026. Finally, he noted that the Commission would review the second-hand scheme in the Value Added Tax (VAT) Directive as part of a 'green VAT' initiative to better embed VAT into second-hand products.

On the question of financing, Mr HOEKSTRA felt that the priority, beyond the establishment of a genuine European Savings and Investments Union, was to mobilise more private capital. He stressed the importance of working closely with the European Investment Bank (EIB), and welcomed the EIB's upcoming launch of new financial instruments to support the Clean Industrial Deal, including a Clean Tech Guarantee Facility under the TechEU programme, financed by InvestEU. The Commission would also work with the EIB on the establishment of a dedicated mechanism for strengthening networks and interconnections, which were essential for the energy transition.

He concluded by saying that the EU would fully mobilise all the mechanisms at its disposal to accelerate investment in the industrial transition. To this end, a new Industrial Decarbonisation Bank would be set up, partly backed by the Emissions

Trading System, to raise EUR 100 billion over the next decade. Building on the experience of the Innovation Fund, the Bank could quadruple this amount by attracting private financing. This approach would make it possible to support industries in their transformation, reducing their emissions by almost 30% while strengthening their competitiveness in the long term.

As regards the Action Plan for Affordable Energy, Mr JØRGENSEN reminded the meeting that energy was central to Mr Draghi's report, which had emphasised its strategic importance well before recent geopolitical developments. He highlighted the link between energy, competitiveness and security, and the high cost of fossil fuel imports from Russia. Since the start of the conflict in Ukraine, such purchases had run up significant costs, making it all the more urgent for Europe to reduce this dependency.

Speeding up the energy transition was vital, not only for increasing the EU's autonomy, but also for lowering costs for consumers. Full delivery of the Action Plan being proposed could frontload the benefits of the clean transition by reducing the EU's fossil fuel import bill by EUR 45 billion already in 2025. These savings could gradually increase to reach EUR 130 billion per year by 2030.

The priority was to speed up the deployment of renewables and to improve energy efficiency. It was particularly important to boost the integration of the EU's energy systems. Although Europe was one of the most integrated regions in the world, more needed to be achieved. Mr JØRGENSEN stressed the need to make better use of existing infrastructure and to increase its capacity, which required targeted investment, digital modernisation and more efficient grid management.

The Action Plan also called for a decoupling of gas and electricity prices on wholesale markets, using a variety of financial instruments such as power purchase agreements and contracts for difference. Coordination with the European Investment Bank (EIB) would facilitate the introduction of mechanisms to promote such

agreements and reduce their risk, thereby ensuring greater stability for businesses and consumers. Mr JØRGENSEN made the case for a more transparent and efficient market, where prices genuinely reflected supply and demand. He called for measures to boost transparency, accompanied by stricter controls and penalties if necessary. Europe should leverage its economic weight by developing joint purchasing of gas to achieve better terms.

He concluded by stressing the importance of coordinated action. While the Commission was playing its part to the full by putting forward the necessary legislative rules and supporting Member States in implementing them, the latter also had significant tools at their disposal to bring energy prices down, in particular by applying existing legislation in full. The Commission would provide targeted guidance in this connection, in particular with regard to taxation and network charges, where immediate measures could be put in place. Lastly, Mr JØRGENSEN explained that the Action Plan proposed creating tripartite contracts between the public sector, energy producers and consumers, in order to better align efforts and increase predictability for investments.

In the course of the discussion that followed, the Commission raised the following main points:

- the value of the Clean Industrial Deal and the Action Plan for Affordable Energy as key levers for boosting the EU's competitiveness and security by reducing its dependence on fossil fuels, speeding up the development of renewables and supporting strategic industries;
- the advisability for Europe of consolidating its global position by investing in clean technologies, making value chains more secure and developing strategic partnerships with third countries;

- speeding up the gradual integration of candidates for EU accession, in particular by reinforcing strategic cooperation, on the pattern of the energy agreements recently concluded with Ukraine and Moldova;
- the importance of a stable and predictable regulatory framework, in particular with respect to green and digital targets, in order to provide security for investments and avoid multiple adjustments that generated uncertainty;
- the growth and employment potential of the circular economy, and the need for targeted investments and appropriate skills to make this transition possible;
- the need for a fair transition for workers, supported by measures on training, job protection and working conditions, together with an enhanced social dialogue;
- the role of digital technologies, especially artificial intelligence, and of data-driven research and innovation in boosting industrial competitiveness and generating new economic models;
- the importance of monitoring the EU's financial commitments, paying close attention to the breakdown between the various sources of funding and the link with the next Multiannual Financial Framework;
- the strategic role of the European Investment Bank, which could usefully concentrate its efforts on correcting market failures;
- the need for closer collaboration between the Commission, the Member States, industrial players and civil society to ensure the effective implementation of the Clean Industrial Deal and existing instruments.

The PRESIDENT wound up the discussion by insisting on the importance of a collective effort to implement the priorities identified.

Following these presentations, the Commission:

- approved the Communication in COM(2025) 85/3 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and, for information, to the national parliaments;
- approved the Communication in COM(2025) 79/3 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and, for information, to the national parliaments.

- 10. PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING DIRECTIVES (EU) 2022/2464 AND (EU) 2024/1760 AS REGARDS THE DATES FROM WHICH MEMBER STATES ARE TO APPLY CERTAIN CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING AND DUE DILIGENCE REQUIREMENTS (COM(2025) 80 AND /2; SWD(2025) 80; RCC(2025) 11)**
- 11. PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING DIRECTIVES 2006/43/EC, 2013/34/EU, (EU) 2022/2464 AND (EU) 2024/1760 AS REGARDS CERTAIN CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING AND DUE DILIGENCE REQUIREMENTS (COM(2025) 81 AND /2; SWD(2025) 80; RCC(2025) 11)**
- 12. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING REGULATION (EU) 2023/956 AS REGARDS SIMPLIFYING AND STRENGTHENING THE CARBON BORDER ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM (COM(2025) 87 AND /2; SWD(2025) 58 AND /2; RCC(2025) 11)**

**13. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING REGULATIONS (EU) 2015/1017, (EU) 2021/523, (EU) 2021/695 AND (EU) 2021/1153 AS REGARDS INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE EU GUARANTEE UNDER REGULATION (EU) 2021/523 AND SIMPLIFYING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
(COM(2025) 84 AND /2; RCC(2025) 11)**

The PRESIDENT introduced the proposals to simplify the rules on sustainability and investment, recalling the importance for the EU to remain a reliable and predictable partner in an uncertain global environment, and to maintain the objectives linked to the twin green and digital transitions. At the same time, she stressed the need to step up simplification efforts to make European action more effective.

Two ‘omnibus’ legislative packages were proposed that day to radically simplify sustainable finance reporting, sustainability due diligence, the taxonomy of sustainable activities, the carbon border adjustment mechanism and European investment programmes. This was a major step forward in creating a more favourable business environment to help EU companies grow, innovate and create quality jobs. The PRESIDENT stressed that the adoption of these proposals by the co-legislators would be a strong signal of the EU’s ability to combine ambition and pragmatism.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS noted that that day’s proposals represented an ambitious legislative effort and marked a significant step forward in the Commission’s simplification agenda. He briefly outlined the key points of the proposals.

Regarding the first ‘omnibus’ package on sustainability, it was proposed to exempt around 80% of companies from the scope of the Sustainability Reporting Directive. The aim was to refocus these reporting requirements on larger companies, while

allowing SMEs to use voluntary reporting standards. He also referred to simplifying the carbon border adjustment mechanism, which would make it possible to exempt 90% of importers, mainly SMEs and occasional importers, while still covering 99% of the emissions initially targeted.

As regards the second ‘omnibus’ package on investment, Mr DOMBROVSKIS explained that the Commission was proposing not only simplified management of the InvestEU instrument, but also an increase in its investment capacity, through which approximately EUR 50 billion of additional public and private investments could be mobilised. This was crucial given the limited investment capacity of the current Multiannual Financial Framework.

In concluding, he thanked all the Commissioners who had contributed to the proposals and stressed the importance of continued effort to ensure swift adoption by the co-legislators.

Mr SÉJOURNÉ welcomed the fact that the College had held an in-depth debate on simplification, thus making it possible to put forward sound legislative proposals. He also pointed out that the EU’s political credibility would depend on its ability to provide businesses with a stable regulatory framework, which was essential for boosting European competitiveness.

As regards the ‘omnibus’ investment package more specifically, he explained that its main aim was to optimise the use of financial resources. By simplifying the administrative requirements related to the management of the InvestEU instrument, substantial savings could be achieved, while also ensuring the necessary flexibility to respond to emerging EU priorities, including defence. Mr SÉJOURNÉ therefore felt that the proposal served as a model for all future simplification initiatives.

Referring to the concerns linked to reporting obligations, Ms ALBUQUERQUE explained that the heavy administrative and regulatory burden was due to several factors, including the complexity of the legislative framework. She also pointed out

that sustainability reporting requirements had been a response to market and investor expectations and calls for more transparency on corporate practices well before the adoption of a regulatory framework. The Commission was now working to simplify those requirements while maintaining their objectives, in order to ensure a more consistent and proportionate approach.

The proposal for a Directive on the dates for applying reporting obligations therefore postponed to 2028 and 2029 reporting obligations under the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, under which companies had been initially required to report in 2026 and 2027. Ms ALBUQUERQUE stressed the urgent need for the co-legislators to adopt this Directive quickly so that companies knew they had another two years before having to report and therefore avoided unnecessary investment in processes that were likely to change.

With regard to the proposal for a Directive on sustainability reporting, she noted that almost 80% of firms would be exempt, while specifying that many would continue to report on a voluntary basis. In addition, a simplified framework would be offered to companies wishing to continue reporting, which should be recognised by large companies in the value chain and accepted by auditors as a standard providing sufficient evidence of compliance. She noted that the simplification proposal introduced an exemption threshold of 1 000 employees, thus aligning this Directive with the Directive on due diligence. Lastly, the Commission would not formulate specific sectoral standards, thereby simplifying requirements and limiting the administrative burden.

As regards the EU Taxonomy Regulation, Ms ALBUQUERQUE announced the launch of a four-week public consultation on possible amendments to the Taxonomy Delegated Acts, in order to gather stakeholders' views. Unlike legislative proposals, these delegated acts could be adopted quickly, thus providing companies with a more tailored response to their needs.

The proposed amendments aimed to ease and clarify the requirements, in particular by simplifying reporting templates and introducing a materiality threshold exempting companies with less than 10% of eligible activities from reporting on their taxonomy alignment. In addition, companies whose eligible activities accounted for less than 25% of turnover would be exempt from reporting requirements on operational expenditure. Some ‘do-no-significant-harm’ criteria were also simplified to facilitate application. Lastly, she mentioned that non-reporting entities were excluded from the calculation of key performance indicators, in particular the green asset ratio, and that the application of certain measures was postponed to 2027, thus giving companies additional time to adapt.

Ms ALBUQUERQUE confirmed that this reform kept the ambition of the European Green Deal while introducing pragmatism into the legislative framework. By refocusing obligations on the largest emitters, the reform avoided an unnecessary administrative burden while ensuring access to essential information. The proposed exemptions would give companies greater flexibility, allowing them to tailor their reporting to their specific needs and make it a strategic tool rather than a mere compliance requirement.

Lastly, she stressed that the option of declaring partial alignment with the taxonomy would facilitate the green transition, in line with the objective of developing sustainable finance, and that the principle of double materiality, at the heart of the European Green Deal, would be maintained.

In concluding, Ms ALBUQUERQUE pointed out that these adjustments not only concerned the private sector but benefited society as a whole. A more stable and less burdensome economic framework for business translated into better jobs, higher wages and improved living conditions for citizens.

Mr McGRATH stressed that these proposals were fully in line with the EU’s competitiveness agenda, as they simplified the regulatory framework and

reduced the administrative burden, while still remaining faithful to fundamental European values. The revision of the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive thus sought to reconcile the reduction of obligations on the companies concerned and their smaller business partners with the need to promote responsible and sustainable business practices globally.

Mr McGRATH highlighted several modifications introduced to this end. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as mid-cap companies would benefit from specific safeguards, while the minimum monitoring frequency would be reduced from that of an annual exercise to an evaluation every five years. Due diligence obligations would be refocused on direct business partners. Furthermore, the EU-wide civil liability regime would be removed and replaced by national legal frameworks, while key safeguards for access to justice would be maintained. These developments would reduce average annual costs and prevent an excessive administrative burden for SMEs.

He finished by stressing the need to provide companies with sufficient predictability and adequate time to prepare. The application of the Directive would therefore be delayed by one year, to July 2028, while the adoption of the guidelines would be brought forward, leaving companies two years after their publication to prepare under the best possible conditions.

Mr HOEKSTRA pointed out that, since the 1960s, Member States had gradually increased reporting obligations not only on businesses, but also on citizens and other stakeholders in society. He therefore believed that, after this first set of ‘omnibus’ proposals, the Commission should continue its simplification efforts in other areas and encourage the Member States to take similar initiatives, as the majority of administrative formalities were set at national level.

As regards the carbon border adjustment mechanism, he stressed that it was an essential complement to the EU Emissions Trading System. He explained that this

mechanism prevented carbon leakage outside the European market and ensured that the emissions trading system would not jeopardise business competitiveness or climate action. The proposal aimed to simplify the application of the mechanism and the Commission would continue work in this area in the months ahead, in particular by reviewing the scope of the mechanism and developing initiatives to support European exports.

Lastly, Mr HOEKSTRA noted that 10% of importers were responsible for more than 99% of the emissions covered by the mechanism, which made it possible to exempt a large majority of companies while safeguarding the environmental efficiency of the scheme.

In the course of the discussion that followed, the Commission raised the following main points:

- overall support for this first set of legislative proposals of the Commission's term of office, which responded to the urgent need to support industries facing economic pressure;
- the delicate balance represented by this set of proposals, reconciling simplification, legal certainty and predictability for businesses, while safeguarding the integrity of the regulatory framework and its underlying objectives;
- the challenges faced by European exporting industries, in particular the rise in energy prices and the cost of emission certificates, which affected their competitiveness in international markets;
- the advisability of considering a more ambitious approach to aligning thresholds in order to increase the number of beneficiary companies within the scope and better support exporting industries;

- the relevance of these proposals in the context of the EU's dialogue with its trading partners as an illustration of its willingness to address their concerns;
- the call for simplification of the EU's external instruments, including those related to trade and international cooperation, in order to maximise their impact and ensure a level playing field for European businesses;
- the importance of assessing the impacts of major adjustments introduced by the co-legislators during the legislative process.

The PRESIDENT closed the discussion by thanking the Members of the Commission for the quality of the exchanges. She felt that the Commission should lead by example and continue its simplification efforts, so that Member States would then be able to draw on these to reduce the administrative burden imposed at national level. In this context, she also stressed the importance of strengthening the single market, including by rigorously monitoring the application of EU law.

Following these presentations, the Commission:

- adopted the proposal for a Directive in COM(2025) 80/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the national parliaments, and, for information, to the Committee of the Regions, together with the staff working document SWD(2025) 80, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Directive in COM(2025) 81/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the national parliaments, and, for information, to the Committee of the Regions, together with the staff working document SWD(2025) 80, the contents of which were noted;

- adopted the proposal for a Regulation set out in COM(2025) 87/2, for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the staff working document SWD(2025) 58/2, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 84/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments.

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The meeting closed at 9.55.