



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2025) 2533 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 30 September 2025

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2533rd meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 16 July 2025

(morning)

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Single sitting: Wednesday 16 July 2025 (morning)

The sitting opened at 12.53 with Ms von der LEYEN, President, in the chair.

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	President	
Ms RIBERA	Executive Vice-President	Items 8 to 33
Ms VIRKKUNEN	Executive Vice-President	
Mr SÉJOURNÉ	Executive Vice-President	
Ms KALLAS	High Representative / Vice-President	
Ms MÎNZATU	Executive Vice-President	Items 8 to 33
Mr FITTO	Executive Vice-President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Member	
Ms ŠUICA	Member	
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member	Items 8 to 33
Mr HOEKSTRA	Member	
Mr KUBILIUS	Member	
Ms KOS	Member	
Mr SÍKELA	Member	
Mr 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:

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ Member

The following also sat in:

Mr SEIBERT	Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT
Mr CALLEJA CRESPO	Director-General, Legal Service
Ms SPINANT	Director-General, DG Communication
Ms RISO	Director-General, DG Budget
Ms PINHO	Head of the Spokesperson's Service and Chief Spokesperson of the Commission
Mr ADAM	Deputy Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT
Ms PETKOVA	Director of Coordination and Administration in the PRESIDENT's cabinet
Ms HILI	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet
Ms BUKA	Secretariat-General

Secretary: Ms JUHANSONE, Secretary-General, assisted by Mr TAQUET-GRAZIANI, Acting Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General.

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2025) 2533/FINAL; SEC(2025) 2533/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) 2533)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet held on Monday 14, Tuesday 15 and Wednesday 16 July 2025.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

(PV(2025) 2529)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2529th meeting of 17 June 2025 and decided to hold over approval of the minutes of its 2530th, 2531st and 2532nd meetings of 25 June and 2 and 8 July 2025 until a later meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2025) 185)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (IRG) held on Friday 11 July 2025 (RCC(2025) 185).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Commission Work Programme 2025: withdrawal of pending proposals and publication of the list in the *Official Journal***

Line set out in SPI(2025) 39.

- **Establishment of an EU Talent Pool (Regulation) – AL-SAHLANI report – 2023/0404 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 223.

- **Improving police cooperation in relation to the prevention, detection and investigation of migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, reinforcing Europol's support to prevent and combat such crimes, and amending Regulation (EU) 2016/794 (Regulation) – LENAERS report – 2023/0438 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 227.

- **Amendment of 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 (Regulation) – SALLA & TINAGLI report – 2025/0040 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 233/2.

- **Next steps in the Excessive Deficit Procedure for Romania and macroeconomic conditionality under the Common Provisions Regulation and the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation**

Line set out in SP(2025) 269/2.

- **Letter on phasing out imports of Russian gas**

Line set out in SPI(2025) 40.

**5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION
(RCC(2025) 77)**

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2025) 77 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 9 July 2025.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

**6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED
(SEC(2025) 200 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 7 and 13 July 2025.

**6.2. EMPOWERMENT
(SEC(2025) 201 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 7 and 13 July 2025.

**6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2025) 202 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedures between 7 and 13 July 2025 archived in Decide.

**6.4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED
(SEC(2025) 203 AND /2)**

The Commission took note of the written procedures specifically identified for which the time limit expired between 14 and 18 July 2025, and of the finalisation written procedure.

**6.5. GRANTING OF AN EMPOWERMENT RELATING TO THE ADOPTION OF DECISIONS TO SEND LETTERS OF FORMAL NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 258 OF THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR FAILURE TO NOTIFY NATIONAL MEASURES TRANSPOSING A DIRECTIVE
(C(2025) 4845)**

The Commission decided to empower the Members of the Commission responsible to adopt decisions to send letters of formal notice under Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union for failure to notify national measures transposing a directive, subject to the conditions laid down in Articles 3 to 7 of the decision.

The Commission adopted the decision in C(2025) 4845.

**7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2025) 204 AND /2)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2025) 68 AND /2)**

During the meeting, Mr SERAFIN presented several additional proposals for administrative decisions, which were submitted directly to the College for approval.

It was therefore proposed to amend the organisation chart of the Reform and Investment Task Force (SG.REFORM) by creating a post of Deputy Director-General responsible for Directorates B, C and D. Mr Declan COSTELLO, currently Deputy Director-General at the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial

Affairs, would be transferred in the interest of the service to this new post.

In addition, it was proposed that Ms Salla SAASTAMOINEN, currently Deputy Director-General of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), should deputise for the post of Director-General of OLAF from 1 August 2025 and for as long as the post was vacant.

7.1. REFORM AND INVESTMENT TASK FORCE – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART
(PERS(2025) 223)

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided:

- to create a post of Deputy Director-General responsible for Directorates B, C and D;
- to adopt the new organisation chart set out in SEC(2025) 223.

Following this reorganisation, the total number of senior management posts within the Reform and Investment Task Force (SG.REFORM) would increase from five to six.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7.2. REFORM AND INVESTMENT TASK FORCE – TRANSFER OF AN AD16 OFFICIAL UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr DOMBROVSKIS, the Commission decided to transfer in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Declan COSTELLO, currently Deputy Director-General for coordination of economic policies of the Member States, responsible for Directorates E, F and G at the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs

(16 July 2025)

(ECFIN.DDG1), to the post of Deputy Director-General responsible for Directorates B, C and D at the Reform and Investment Task Force (SG.REFORM).

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

7.3. EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE – DEPUTISING FOR THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission took note, in accordance with Article 52 of Commission Decision (EU) 2024/3080 laying down its Rules of Procedure, that Ms Salla SAASTAMOINEN, Deputy Director-General of the European Anti-Fraud Office, would deputise as Director-General of the European Anti-Fraud Office from 1 August 2025 and for as long as the post was vacant.

7.4. DG TRANSLATION – APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14 (PERS(2024) 76 TO /3)

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), Article 29(1)(b) and Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the ‘Resources’ Directorate at the Directorate-General for Translation (PERS(2024) 76 and /2).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 17 June and 3 July 2025 (PERS(2024) 76/3).

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 Mr Athanasios MARASLIS to the post.

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

**7.5. DG EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION –
APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14
(PERS(2025) 69 AND /2)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the ‘Labour Mobility and International Affairs’ Directorate at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (PERS(2025) 66).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 2 April and 26 June 2025 (PERS(2025) 66/2).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants’ qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms MÎNZATU, it then decided to appoint Mr Antoine KASEL to the post.

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

**7.6. DG EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION –
APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14
(PERS(2025) 70 AND /2)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the ‘Employment and Social Governance, Analysis’ Directorate at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (PERS(2025) 70).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 17 and 26 June 2025 (PERS(2025) 70/2).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants’ qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT,

and after consulting Ms MÎNZATU, it then decided to appoint Mr Jeroen JUTTE to the post.

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

7.7. DG HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY – SUSPENSION OF THE APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 3(2) OF COMMISSION DECISION C(2020) 997 ON THE MOBILITY OF EUROPEAN COMMISSION CONTRACT STAFF POSTED TO EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATIONS

The Commission took note of the information in point 4 of PERS(2025) 68 and, on a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, decided to suspend the application of Article 3(2) of Commission Decision C(2020) 997 as regards contract staff included in the mobility exercises for 2026 and 2027, in order to provide its services with sufficient flexibility in implementing the approach for modernising the EU Delegations network approved on 14 May 2025 by the Commissioners' 'External Action' project group. The effects of this suspension would not extend beyond 31 December 2031.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**7.8. DG MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART
(SEC(2025) 219)**

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr BRUNNER, the Commission decided:

- to suppress the post of Deputy Director-General for the Home Affairs Funds and Audit, Head of the Task Force on Migration Management (HOME.DDG3), and to modify the corresponding reporting lines;

- to change the temporary post of Head of the Task Force into a Head of Unit post;
- to adopt the new organisation chart set out in SEC(2025) 219.

Following this reorganisation, the total number of senior management posts at the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs would decrease from 11 to 10.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7.9. DG INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART AND TRANSFER OF AN AD14 OFFICIAL UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS (SEC(2025) 220)

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr SÍKELA, the Commission decided:

- to create a temporary post of Principal Adviser ‘Financing for development’, reporting directly to the Director-General; this post would be abolished on the jobholder’s departure;
- to transfer to this newly created post, in the interest of the service under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Antti KARHUNEN, currently Director of the ‘Sustainable Finance, Investment and Jobs; Economy that works for the people’ Directorate (INTPA.E);
- to adopt the new organisation chart set out in SEC(2025) 220.

These decisions would take effect on 1 September 2025.

7.10. JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE – AMENDMENT OF THE ORGANISATION CHART
(SEC(2025) 221)

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

- to suppress the post of Deputy Director-General in charge of Directorates B, C, D, E and F (JRC.DDG2), and to amend the corresponding reporting lines;
- to adopt the new organisation chart set out in SEC(2025) 221.

Following this reorganisation, the total number of senior management posts would decrease from 15 to 14.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

7.11. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – EUROPEAN COMMISSION DECISIONS ON POST TERM-OF-OFFICE ACTIVITIES OF FORMER MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION
(C(2025) 9020; C(2025) 9021; C(2025) 9022)

The Commission decided that the professional activities envisaged by Mr Paolo GENTILONI and Ms Jutta URPILAINEN after leaving office as Members of the Commission were compatible with Article 245(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and with the Code of Conduct for Commissioners, subject to certain conditions and obligations.

The Commission adopted the decisions set out in C(2025) 9020, C(2025) 9021 and C(2025) 9022.

8. **COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – A DYNAMIC EU BUDGET FOR THE PRIORITIES OF THE FUTURE - THE MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK 2028-2034**
(COM(2025) 570 TO /6; SWD(2025) 570 TO /5; SWD(2025) 571 TO /3)
9. **PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION LAYING DOWN THE MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE YEARS 2028-2034**
(COM(2025) 571 TO /3)
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- 15. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING A BUDGET EXPENDITURE TRACKING AND PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK AND OTHER HORIZONTAL RULES FOR THE UNION PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES**
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- 16. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION, AGRICULTURE AND RURAL, FISHERIES AND MARITIME, PROSPERITY AND SECURITY FOR THE PERIOD 2028-2034 AND AMENDING REGULATION (EU) 2023/955 AND REGULATION (EU, EURATOM) 2024/2509**
(COM(2025) 565 AND /2; SWD(2025) 565)
- 17. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING THE UNION SUPPORT FOR INTERNAL SECURITY FOR THE PERIOD FROM 2028 TO 2034**
(COM(2025) 542 TO /3)
- 18. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING THE UNION SUPPORT FOR THE SCHENGEN AREA, FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT AND FOR THE COMMON POLICY ON VISAS FOR THE**

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(COM(2025) 541 TO /3)

- 19. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING THE UNION SUPPORT FOR ASYLUM, MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION FOR THE PERIOD FROM 2028 TO 2034**

(COM(2025) 540 TO /3)

- 20. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND AS PART OF THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP PLAN SET OUT IN REGULATION (EU) [...] [NRP PLAN] ESTABLISHING CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNION SUPPORT TO QUALITY EMPLOYMENT, SKILLS AND SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR THE PERIOD FROM 2028 TO 2034**

(COM(2025) 558)

- 21. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING FOR EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION (INTERREG) AND THE COHESION FUND AS PART OF THE FUND SET OUT IN REGULATION (EU) [...] [NRP] AND ESTABLISHING CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNION SUPPORT TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FROM 2028 TO 2034**

(COM(2025) 552)

- 22. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING THE CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNION SUPPORT TO THE COMMON FISHERIES POLICY, TO THE EUROPEAN OCEAN PACT AND OF THE**

UNION'S MARITIME AND AQUACULTURE POLICY AS PART OF THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP FUND SET OUT IN REGULATION (EU) [...] [NRP FUND] FOR THE PERIOD FROM 2028 TO 2034

(COM(2025) 559)

23. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING THE CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNION SUPPORT TO THE COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY FOR THE PERIOD FROM 2028 TO 2034

(COM(2025) 560 AND /2)

24. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON ESTABLISHING THE EUROPEAN COMPETITIVENESS FUND ('ECF'), INCLUDING THE SPECIFIC PROGRAMME FOR DEFENCE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ACTIVITIES, REPEALING REGULATIONS (EU) 2021/522, (EU) 2021/694, (EU) 2021/697, (EU) 2021/783, AND AMENDING REGULATIONS (EU) 2021/696, (EU) 2023/588, (EU) [EDIP]

(COM(2025) 555 TO /4; SWD(2025) 555; SWD(2025) 556; SEC(2025) 555)

25. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING HORIZON EUROPE, THE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION, FOR THE PERIOD 2028-2034 LAYING DOWN ITS RULES FOR PARTICIPATION AND DISSEMINATION, AND REPEALING REGULATION (EU) 2021/695

(COM(2025) 543 TO /4; SWD(2025) 555; SWD(2025) 556; SEC(2025) 555)

26. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DECISION ON ESTABLISHING THE SPECIFIC PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTING HORIZON EUROPE - THE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOR

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THE PERIOD 2028-2034, LAYING DOWN THE RULES FOR PARTICIPATION AND DISSEMINATION UNDER THAT PROGRAMME, AND REPEALING DECISION (EU) 2021/764

(COM(2025) 544 TO /5; SWD(2025) 555; SWD(2025) 556; SEC(2025) 555)

27. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING GLOBAL EUROPE

(COM(2025) 551 TO /5; SWD(2025) 552 AND /2; SWD(2025) 553; SEC(2025) 548)

28. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING THE ‘AGORAEU’ PROGRAMME FOR THE PERIOD 2028-2034, AND REPEALING REGULATIONS (EU) 2021/692 AND (EU) 2021/818

(COM(2025) 550 TO /4; SWD(2025) 550; SWD(2025) 551; SEC(2025) 547)

29. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME FOR THE PERIOD 2028-2034, AND REPEALING REGULATIONS (EU) 2021/817 AND (EU) 2021/888

(COM(2025) 549 TO /4; SWD(2025) 550; SWD(2025) 551; SEC(2025) 547)

30. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE UNION CIVIL PROTECTION MECHANISM AND UNION SUPPORT FOR HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE, AND REPEALING DECISION NO 1313/2013/EU (UNION CIVIL PROTECTION MECHANISM)

(COM(2025) 548 TO /4; SWD(2025) 545; SWD(2025) 546; SEC(2025) 545)

31. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTING EUROPE FACILITY FOR THE PERIOD 2028-2034, AMENDING REGULATION (EU)

**2024/1679 AND REPEALING REGULATION (EU) 2021/1153
(COM(2025) 547 TO /5)**

The PRESIDENT presented the draft new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the period 2028-2034, which came to almost EUR 2 trillion in current prices. She described it as the most ambitious EU budget ever proposed, reflecting the EU's goal of being more independent, more prosperous, safer and more resilient in the next decade.

She explained that the new financial framework introduced a fundamental change in working methods, bringing together hitherto separate funds with similar objectives. The number of programmes was thus reduced from 52 to 16, putting an end to silo thinking, redundancy and rigidities. Almost 90% of the allocations under the current financial framework had been fixed by decisions taken already in 2018-2019, making any subsequent adjustment difficult. By contrast, the new architecture would allow the budget to be adjusted in line with changing priorities, while at the same time increasing transparency for beneficiaries.

The PRESIDENT then elaborated on the three fundamental pillars of the draft Multiannual Financial Framework.

The first pillar was based on the introduction of National and Regional Partnership Plans with a total funding allocation of EUR 865 billion. This new approach made it possible to better link the Union's priorities with the needs identified at national and regional level, within a more flexible, coherent and results-oriented framework, while ensuring that agricultural and cohesion policies remained at the heart of the European budget. The PRESIDENT welcomed the fact that each Member State would have access to slightly higher funding than under the current financial framework, a remarkable result in a context of severe budgetary constraints.

She stressed that income support for farmers had been safeguarded, with at least EUR 300 billion earmarked for this purpose under the Common Agricultural Policy,

while rural development fell under separate budget lines. A minimum guaranteed allocation of EUR 2 billion had been set aside for the fisheries sector.

Minimum allocations were also guaranteed for less developed regions, which would continue to enjoy a level of funding equivalent to the current framework, with a minimum of EUR 218 billion. At the same time, a new cross-cutting social investment target had been introduced, representing at least 14% of the budget of the National and Regional Partnership Plans, i.e. more than EUR 100 billion, with an enhanced monitoring mechanism to ensure concrete impact on the ground.

The PRESIDENT added that the Member States and regions would be able to mobilise these plans in pursuit of their specific priorities. This was the rationale behind Catalyst Europe, a new EUR 150 billion loan mechanism dedicated to priorities that had so far been difficult to finance using European instruments, including social inclusion, skills development, reducing territorial disparities and housing. The latter area, in particular, did not currently fit into any European framework. The PRESIDENT welcomed the fact that local authorities would now be able to draw up investment and reform plans adapted to the realities of their specific territory.

She also reaffirmed the EU's strong commitment to the rule of law, consolidated in the new Multiannual Financial Framework in the form of a conditionality linked to compliance with rule-of-law principles, which would now be applied to all EU funds. Resources not used in this context would no longer be returned to the general budget, but would instead be redirected towards projects supporting the rule of law and civil society, if possible within the Member State concerned.

In addition, she announced a 50% increase in Erasmus+ funding, reminding the College that it was one of the most popular programmes with European citizens.

The second pillar of the Multiannual Financial Framework was the European Competitiveness Fund totalling around EUR 410 billion. The Fund was designed to support the whole value chain, from basic research to industrialisation and support

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for start-ups and growing companies. It aimed to address the Union's key strategic priorities and strengthen its technological sovereignty. In particular, the Fund would leverage investments in defence, space and the digital sphere fivefold, investments in clean technologies and life sciences sixfold, and investments in biotechnology and the bioeconomy more than fourfold. It would also act as a powerful lever for creating sustainable jobs within the internal market.

The PRESIDENT then highlighted the continuation of Horizon Europe as an autonomous entity closely linked to the Competitiveness Fund, with a doubled budget and two complementary strands covering basic and applied research. She said that this programme would provide support at every stage of the innovation cycle, from the laboratory to production, with a focus on future technologies, skills and employment.

Furthermore, 35% of the total multiannual budget would contribute to the green transition objectives, confirming the mainstreaming of climate action and clean technologies in all EU policies.

The third pillar of the new financial framework was the Global Europe instrument, which had been increased to over EUR 200 billion. It brought together all EU external funding – including humanitarian aid, development aid and macro-financial support – within a single framework which would be more responsive to crises and more flexible in the allocation of resources. The PRESIDENT stressed that this approach would make it possible to mobilise the funds needed in the event of a crisis more quickly, avoiding complex transfers between instruments.

She also reminded the College that enlargement was a major geopolitical priority. As such, support to candidate countries had been boosted by a 40% increase in pre-accession resources, accompanied by a toolbox tailored to candidate countries and wider access to EU instruments. A budgetary revision clause had been included to allow adjustments in the light of future enlargements of the Union.

With regard to Ukraine, the PRESIDENT pointed out that the proposal provided for an additional EUR 100 billion to cope with the decrease in the available funding and support reconstruction efforts over the long term.

She also stressed the need to provide the Union with a specific crisis mechanism allowing for a rapid and coordinated response to unforeseen events, which could only be triggered by the European Council unanimously. As a mechanism separate from the emergency procedures provided for in the Treaties, it would ensure the Union's capacity to react while respecting the institutional balance. It would thus remove the need for repeated use of flexibility margins or exceptional arrangements, which did not allow the European Parliament to fulfil its institutional role.

With regard to the financing of the Multiannual Financial Framework, the PRESIDENT noted that, while Member States' contributions remained stable, new resources were needed to modernise the EU budget and repay the borrowing contracted under NextGenerationEU.

In conclusion, she said that the Multiannual Financial Framework presented that day laid the foundations for the EU's future economic and investment model, and clearly demonstrated that Europe had learned the lessons of recent years and was determined to reinvent itself to serve its citizens and businesses. Lastly, she reminded the College that the proposals tabled that day marked the beginning of a negotiation process which would take one to two years.

The PRESIDENT then asked the Members of the Commission to present the specific proposals for which they were responsible.

Mr SERAFIN first presented the Regulation on the Multiannual Financial Framework. He noted that, although the 7-year lifespan was unchanged, the proposed framework incorporated additional flexibilities and reflected a major structural change. The current seven headings had been reduced to four, one of which was dedicated to administration. Ceilings had been set for commitment and payment appropriations, with an adjustment based on a deflator closer to the rate of

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inflation, in order to avoid the loss in value experienced under the current financial framework. Mr SERAFIN added that all special flexibility instruments were covered by the Regulation, including the Ukraine Reserve, the Flexibility Instrument and the Single Margin Instrument.

He then introduced the Own Resources Decision, stressing the need to generate new resources to stabilise national contributions. Against this background, he noted that five new own resources were proposed. Two of these had already been proposed before, namely revenues from the Emissions Trading System (ETS I) and from the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). The three new own resources included a contribution based on uncollected electronic waste, an excise duty on tobacco – to support the EU’s public health objectives – and a contribution from large companies.

Mr SERAFIN added that adjustments to existing own resources were also being proposed that day, particularly as regards own resources from plastics, as well as the abolition of special rebates or mechanisms granted to certain Member States. This package of proposals represented a balanced approach, which could generate up to EUR 58 billion in annual revenue. In parallel, the Commission would continue to explore other potential revenue options, including an increase in the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) fee for third-country nationals.

Lastly, he drew attention to the other two elements of the package: on the one hand, the Interinstitutional Agreement on budgetary discipline, necessitated by the extension of flexibility margins, and, on the other hand, the Regulation establishing a budget expenditure tracking and performance framework, which replaced provisions previously scattered across various pieces of legislation and thus contributed to the simplification of the general framework. This Regulation set a 35% climate target and came with an annex explaining how the main programmes would contribute to its achievement. It also provided for enhanced monitoring in

relation to certain issues, including social and gender equality, and introduced a common monitoring methodology.

Mr SERAFIN concluded by presenting the long-term payment forecasts up to 2034, which introduced greater predictability as regards national contributions.

Mr HOEKSTRA then set out the proposals for the creation of new own resources based on increased taxation of tobacco. The proposed reform was needed to replace a now obsolete legal framework; it was widely supported by European citizens and did not eat into Member States' tax revenues. Moreover, the tax in question would be easy to collect and would make a welcome contribution to tax revenue in order to address future budgetary challenges.

These proposals, which were part of a balanced set of measures to generate new resources, were designed to take account of specific situations at national level, including specific tax-related contexts. Many Member States had long been calling for the minimum tax rate to be increased, in particular to include new products such as electronic cigarettes, and 16 Member States had recently sent a letter to that effect to the Commission.

Mr HOEKSTRA concluded by referring to other avenues that could be explored in the future to complement the system of own resources. This could be in areas such as the circular economy or the digital field, or could include taxes on consumer products high in salt or sugar, though he pointed out that in-depth technical and political analysis was still needed for some of these options.

On the question of the National and Regional Partnership Plans, Mr FITTO stated that they represented a major effort to simplify and modernise the EU budget, as they brought together all funds under shared management and introduced a performance-based approach.

He set out the structure of the plans, explaining that they combined certain features of funds under shared management with aspects of the Recovery and Resilience

Facility. As was the case with NextGenerationEU, disbursements would therefore be conditional on the achievement of pre-defined milestones and targets rather than on the submission of evidence of incurred costs. Moreover, the plans would include both investments and reforms, which would allow for a more effective response to the challenges faced by the Member States. However, as with funds under shared management, implementation would be carried out in partnership between the Commission and national and regional authorities, with the involvement of stakeholders at all levels of governance. The plans would include national, sectoral and, where applicable, regional and territorial chapters, designed to reflect the national set-up in each Member State.

Mr FITTO then gave assurances that the objective of ensuring cohesion, as enshrined in the EU Treaties, remained fully in place. A major structural simplification had been achieved by reviewing the model based on specific funds coupled with fixed allocations, as was the case for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+). He felt that this reform was particularly beneficial for three main reasons.

First, all the resources provided for in the plans could be used to support cohesion-related objectives, with the exception of direct support for farmers and specific migration-related instruments. This made economic, social and territorial cohesion a fully embedded and cross-cutting priority.

Second, the plans would have to set out how resources would be allocated across the three categories of regions recognised by the EU: less developed regions, regions in transition and more developed regions. The Member States would also have to specify how much had been allocated to certain specific areas, such as the outermost regions, sparsely populated northern areas, islands, urban and rural areas, and eastern border regions.

Lastly, less developed regions would be guaranteed a minimum allocation that was at least equivalent to the amount they had received under the ERDF and ESF+ for

2021-2027. Mr FITTO explained that this envelope would be complemented by a safety net at national level to ensure that the amounts allocated to the less developed regions stood at between 90% and 110% of those allocated under the current programming period.

For her part, Ms MÎNZATU felt that the proposed National and Regional Partnership Plans should allow the lessons learnt from NextGenerationEU and cohesion funds to be put fully into effect. An integrated, more joined-up and more effective framework was needed to meet the expectations of citizens and regions. She stressed the importance of far-reaching simplification in order to bolster the impact of cohesion policy, speed up convergence between regions and provide targeted support for the less developed regions.

The social dimension was at the heart of the European project and had to be fully reflected in the proposed budgetary framework. She pointed out that at least 14% of investments, i.e. around EUR 100 billion, would have to be spent on social priorities, with a high level of ambition. These investments would be monitored closely, while allowing for some flexibility to take account of specific national situations.

In conclusion, Ms MÎNZATU stressed the importance of having a joined-up approach to ensure that an effective contribution was made to delivering on the European Semester priorities. In her view, governance of the new Fund would be a key factor in terms of ensuring effective implementation with regard to those objectives.

Mr HANSEN began by pointing out that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), one of the oldest EU policies, had already been reformed many times. Nevertheless, its fundamental Treaty-based objectives of ensuring food security, guaranteeing a fair income for farmers and giving all citizens access to affordable food were still entirely relevant today.

He noted that, although the structure of the Common Agricultural Policy was evolving, its key instruments remained in place in the proposed reform. In his view, this continuity, made possible through joined-up governance and better alignment with other sources of funding, allowed safeguarding of the *acquis* to be combined with innovation. Agricultural policy could thus be made more effective by simplifying the rules and ensuring better targeting of aid granted. In particular, he welcomed the measures to help young and new farmers, as well as the focus on rural areas, forests and the resilience of the agricultural sector *vis-à-vis* external dependencies.

Mr HANSEN also welcomed the creation of transition payments, as well as a range of measures to support farmers and prepare them for future challenges. He called for continued strategic dialogue with farmers and foresters to strike the right balance between requirements and incentives. In that connection, he referred to the strategies the Commission would present in the autumn, which would focus in particular on the digital transition, developing skills and cutting red tape.

He concluded by highlighting the social dimension of the Common Agricultural Policy, something he deemed essential as a means of improving living conditions in rural areas; in particular, this included social rights such as farmers' entitlement to annual or parental leave.

Mr SÉJOURNÉ began by referring to the complexity of the budgetary exercise linked to the proposal for a Multiannual Financial Framework. In that regard, he welcomed the fact that the structure clearly reflected the Commission's political priorities, in line with the guidelines set out at the College's seminar held on 31 January 2025.

The structure of the budget itself was a response to the major challenges for the years ahead, particularly in terms of competitiveness, research, innovation and industrial sovereignty. In that connection, he presented the European Competitiveness Fund, referring to it as the 'Draghi Fund', which would power up

investment in strategic sectors, covering the whole development cycle, from research to production, and taking a consistent approach based on strategic autonomy.

In his view, the Competitiveness Fund made manifest the EU's ability to balance economic competitiveness with climate objectives. The many criteria were both demanding and fully aligned with the Commission's ambitions on the rule of law, sustainability and resilience. They provided a solid framework for bolstering the competitiveness of EU industry and delivering concrete results.

On that point, Mr SÉJOURNÉ noted that a high level of ambition on green issues required resources that were commensurate with expected outcomes. Given that private companies had had to adhere to European regulatory requirements, he felt that it was up to the EU to support them in their efforts, particularly when it came to decarbonising industrial sites. While he was broadly in favour of the private sector now taking the lead on this specific issue, he felt that strong public-sector commitment was vital.

With that in mind, he stressed the need to create a leverage effect to maximise the impact of the Competitiveness Fund. The InvestEU programme remained fully operational and would become a central element supporting the Fund, with an indicative allocation of EUR 11 billion. Boosting this allocation would not jeopardise the overall balance of the budget, but rather would make it more ambitious, as each euro of guarantee provided could mobilise up to EUR 20 in private investment. He therefore called for greater use to be made of guarantees, which he considered to be more effective than subsidies as a means of optimising the use of EU resources.

On own resources, Mr SÉJOURNÉ anticipated that there would be in-depth discussions with the co-legislators. These discussions would need to allow the parameters and signalling effects of the Corporate Resource for Europe (CORE) to be carefully fine-tuned to prevent any ambiguity. In his view, particular attention

should be paid to how large tech companies were targeted, ensuring European industrial players were not penalised.

He welcomed the level of ambition set out on security and defence and urged Commission departments to improve coordination in order to better exploit synergies. He called for resources mobilised in the field of defence to be made available to civilian industries. In his view, the additional resources for research should have a lasting impact in terms of shaping all industrial ecosystems.

In conclusion, Mr SÉJOURNÉ welcomed the structure of the proposed financial framework. Whereas competitiveness policy had accounted for only 15% of the previous Multiannual Financial Framework, it now accounted for almost 30%, signalling a clear policy direction.

Ms ZAHARIEVA then took the floor to welcome the proposal for a future Multiannual Financial Framework. In the current context, she saw this as an expected and coherent response, stressing the importance of safeguarding Horizon Europe as an autonomous, globally recognised programme and one of the EU's most visible and attractive instruments.

She argued that putting research and innovation at the heart of the EU's economic and investment strategy was no longer a choice, but a necessity, as confirmed by the Draghi, Letta and Heitor reports. In an uncertain geopolitical context, she therefore considered it essential to strengthen the EU's technological sovereignty and invest in its excellence, so that the best talents and the most innovative companies would choose Europe.

With this in mind, she reminded the College that Horizon Europe remained the flagship instrument of the European research and innovation strategy. Because of its scale, it had a pull effect well beyond the borders of the EU: many third countries were already participating, and others were actively considering joining. It thus contributed to strengthening the international dimension of the EU's research policy.

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Ms ZAHARIEVA pointed out that doubling its budget was a major step forward, and one which came with collective responsibility. This ambition resulted in a thorough reform of the programme, starting with a new, clearer structure, organised into four pillars, to increase the clarity, impact and coherence of European action in this area.

Pillar I, dedicated to scientific excellence, would double the budget of the European Research Council. The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions would also be reinforced, in particular to support the Choose Europe initiative.

Pillar II, dedicated to competitiveness and society, would be closely linked to the four components of the new Competitiveness Fund. It would promote enhanced cooperation with the private sector and more targeted and simpler partnerships, and would support 11 ambitious and forward-looking projects ('moonshots').

Pillar III, focused on innovation, would make it possible to increase support for disruptive innovation via a European Innovation Council whose resources would be more than tripled. It would incorporate a model inspired by the American Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) in order to provide more agile funding for high-risk projects with high technological potential, including for those with dual civil-defence uses.

Finally, Pillar IV, dedicated to the European Research Area, would aim to expand access to major research infrastructure and to better tailor the support provided to countries concerned by the broadening of participation in Horizon Europe, taking into account the level of development and the specific needs of these countries.

Ms ZAHARIEVA said that this ambition was accompanied by sustained simplification efforts, with less prescriptive calls, shorter decision-making times and more accessible procedures for researchers, businesses and innovators. She felt that this requirement for operational clarity was inextricably linked to the increase in resources, and concluded by reaffirming that the success of Horizon Europe was

based on this dynamic, so that Europe would remain one of the most attractive environments for research and innovation.

Ms KALLAS then stressed that a European Union that wanted to be a global player needed to equip itself with the means to act in a world undergoing significant changes. The ‘Global Europe’ instrument was not just a budgetary programme, but a strategic lever to affirm the EU’s priorities, strengthen its partnerships and defend its values in an increasingly competitive international environment. She felt that this sent a strong signal to international partners, who were expecting more from Europe. The EU had a wide range of tools at its disposal in terms of foreign policy, which it had to make full use of in a coordinated manner.

Ms KALLAS reminded the College that the challenges were considerable, in particular the war in Ukraine, the growing influence of China and Russia, persistent tensions in the Middle East, and the weakening of the rules-based multilateral order. In this context, she felt that the EU had to fully take on its responsibilities, particularly at a time when other players, such as the United States, were reducing their development aid.

She also stressed the need for a structured response to cross-cutting threats such as climate change, migration flows, cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns. In this regard, she welcomed the fact that the new architecture of the ‘Global Europe’ instrument combined geographical pillars adapted to regional specificities and a thematic pillar dedicated to global challenges.

Ms KALLAS also highlighted the importance of raising awareness among citizens and partners of the concrete scope of the EU’s external action, including its internal policies with international resonance, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism. Finally, she called for the capacities of the EU delegations to be strengthened, in particular in terms of communication, so that they could embody a strong, reliable and committed EU on the international stage.

Mr SÍKELA began by pointing out that the European Union was facing many external challenges, but that with the reform of its external financing instrument it now had a stronger capacity to act. He saw this as a real opportunity to forge strategic partnerships with the rest of the world.

He stressed that the new financial instrument had been designed to provide the EU with modern, flexible and coherent tools. This instrument aimed to create truly mutually beneficial partnerships adapted to local contexts, while enabling a rapid response to the emergence of new priorities.

The current instrument for financing external action had already made it possible to unify 11 former programmes into a single more coherent framework. On this basis, the proposed new instrument managed to go even further, integrating components such as support for Ukraine, Moldova and the Western Balkans, and humanitarian aid, while maintaining the specific characteristics of each of these policies.

He added that the proposed instrument covered enlargement, neighbourhood policy, international relations, the Mediterranean, peace and stability, and that it was based on five geographical pillars and one global thematic pillar. Each pillar had specific objectives, with simplified arrangements for implementing it, in order to increase efficiency and transparency.

Mr SÍKELA stressed that this new instrument reflected the EU's values and priorities, while allowing for greater consistency between the internal and external dimensions of European policies. He welcomed the fact that the so-called 'Team Europe' approach, bringing together institutions, Member States and their agencies, was now formalised within the instrument.

He also referred to a strong interest from the private sector in the proposed partnerships, in particular because of their structuring nature and concrete impact. He highlighted the increased flexibility of the new instrument, which included an unallocated reserve allowing for simpler budgetary reallocations between priorities, regions or types of expenditure, whether they were programmable or not.

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Mr SÍKELA felt that this new instrument would enable more comprehensive cooperation, with coherent sets of actions covering governance, sustainable development, stability and efforts to address the root causes of the vulnerabilities identified. He concluded by stressing that the objective was clear: to strengthen the EU's impact in the world while creating new concrete opportunities, in order to support its partners and achieve its overall priorities.

Ms ŠUICA stressed the need to ensure effective coordination between the various strands of the EU's external action in order to avoid duplication, while at the same time making management of the financial instrument more flexible and predictable.

She welcomed the creation of a pillar dedicated to the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf, which she considered to be especially relevant in the light of recent geopolitical developments. The region remained both unstable and strategic, and the EU's engagement there needed to be structured and consistent. She stressed how important it was for the EU to position itself not only as a donor, but also as a fully-fledged actor on the international stage, underlining that this external engagement was a direct investment in the EU's security.

Ms ŠUICA concluded by noting that European companies had a role to play in the region by helping to stabilise it and foster local development, creating a safer environment that was more conducive to business. Thus, the EU's external action ought to be viewed not merely as expenditure, but as a lever for strategic outreach, including for the European economy.

Ms KOS pointed out that the 'Global Europe' instrument was part of an ambitious approach to pre-accession efforts, the aim being to support candidate countries on the road to EU enlargement by 2034. She welcomed the fact that the enlargement priorities had been fully reflected in the proposed budgetary structure, which made provision for increased flexibility margins and appropriate funding.

The proposed instrument fully applied the lessons from the specific arrangements put in place in recent years, in particular for Ukraine, the Western Balkans and

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Moldova. These experiences had made it possible to design more effective support based on clear conditions and the principle of merit. However, Ms KOS stressed that simply making funding available was not enough, as the impact of that funding would depend on partner countries' ability to carry out the expected reforms. On that point, she expressed confidence in the transformative potential of the enlargement process, which was a powerful tool to drive forward democracy, the rule of law and the upholding of fundamental rights, while boosting economic growth.

The funding mobilised was intended not only to support the economic development of neighbouring countries, but also to prepare them to fully take on the responsibilities of a future Member State so that their accession would help strengthen the EU.

She stressed that Ukraine was a special case and would require large-scale support over the coming years, for both reconstruction and the accession process. This support would have to come from both the current budgetary framework and the flexibility margins provided for ahead of the next financial framework.

Ms KOS concluded by stressing that enlargement was a shared responsibility, involving the whole Commission and requiring the collective commitment of all stakeholders.

Ms VIRKKUNEN then presented the new 'AgoraEU' instrument, which merged the current 'Creative Europe' and 'Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values' programmes. AgoraEU would comprise three strands. The 'Culture' strand would focus on cross-border cultural creation and cooperation, while the 'MEDIA+' strand would help bolster the cultural diversity and competitiveness of the audiovisual and gaming industries to support a European information ecosystem that was free, viable and diverse. Finally, an 'EU values' strand would focus on protecting and promoting fundamental rights and the rights of European citizens as enshrined in the Treaties, combating gender-based violence and violence against children and other at-risk

groups, as well as improving democratic participation and safeguarding the rule of law.

Ms VIRKKUNEN explained that these three strands would correspond to three separate budget lines, noting that the proposal being presented that day represented a doubling of the current budget. She pointed to the scale and complementarity of these objectives, and stressed that new tasks had been incorporated relating to tackling disinformation and encouraging media literacy, areas in which it was important to give the Member States support.

For his part, Mr McGRATH highlighted the significant increase in funding for the areas covered by AgoraEU. He referred in particular to the work under way to develop a European Democracy Shield and an EU Civil Society Strategy, noting that, in the years ahead, efforts would need to focus on practical implementation of those initiatives.

Mr MICALLEF particularly welcomed the fact that, in the proposal presented, funding for the areas covered by AgoraEU had been doubled. Although AgoraEU might appear to be small in scale compared with other instruments, its impact could be decisive. It also demonstrated a political commitment to protecting cultural heritage, artistic freedom and working conditions in the cultural and creative sectors.

Ms MÎNZATU then presented the new design of the Erasmus+ programme, which covered education, training, young people and sport, and now also included the European Solidarity Corps. Its budget envelope had also been increased by 50% and she stressed the significance of this point. This emblematic programme, which was known to all, had great appeal, including in the candidate countries that were waiting to come on board.

She referred to the opportunities for mobility that were available to a wide range of people in the EU and which were a valuable tool to boost support for the EU project among the younger generations. She highlighted the continual efforts to make the

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programme more inclusive and ideally reach every European citizen. The aim of the new programme would be to enable every person who wished to do so to go abroad early on in their schooling, with appropriate financial support.

Lastly, Ms MÎNZATU mentioned that the European university alliances supported by the programme were essential for the EU's competitiveness.

Ms LAHBIB pointed out that the EU Civil Protection Mechanism was one of the main means of exercising solidarity between Member States in the event of a disaster, whether it be a fire, flood, health crisis or major technological incident. Given its cross-cutting nature, civil protection had to be fully embedded in all EU policies.

She noted that the Mechanism had been ramped up considerably in recent years; however, in terms of risks and threats, the landscape was evolving rapidly in Europe. Crises were more frequent and complex, and often had knock-on effects. She gave the example of recurrent forest fires, such as those in the area near Athens, which illustrated the need to anticipate requirements and mobilise resources before crises even began. In that context, she stressed the importance of pre-positioning Europe's response capabilities, in particular to combat fires, and more generally of boosting the EU's capacity to anticipate and coordinate emergencies and ensure a rapid response.

Ms LAHBIB welcomed the proposal for a coherent Multiannual Financial Framework that sought to bring existing instruments together in a more integrated, flexible and clearer system. In particular, she welcomed the reinforcement of rescEU, the enhanced role of the Emergency Response Coordination Centre, as well as the proposed measures to simplify the co-financing rules that applied to interventions by the Member States and the other 10 countries that were part of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

She also pointed to the progress made on cooperation between civilian and military actors, as well as the creation of a dedicated centre for coordinating information in

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crisis situations and tackling the disinformation that could exacerbate the impact of disasters and undermine the public response.

She stressed that, as had been seen during the pandemic, the Civil Protection Mechanism also needed to be able to respond to health emergencies. She was glad that this structural approach to preparedness was now reflected in the Regional and National Partnership Plans, the European Competitiveness Fund and Horizon Europe.

Ms LAHBIB concluded by welcoming the ambitious and consistent approach that was based on anticipating crises, coordination and tangible expressions of solidarity between Europeans and which would help to ensure that the EU was better prepared for future crises.

Mr TZITZIKOSTAS then presented the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), indicating that, for 2028-2034, the transport envelope of the CEF would be twice as large as in the current budget, bringing its total allocation to EUR 51.5 billion. Through this envelope, the Facility would be able to finance the EU's priorities, both those relating to competitiveness, for example by improving civilian transport connections within the single market, and those concerning defence, through military mobility and dual-use infrastructure projects.

He also welcomed the greater consistency between instruments in the future EU budget and the streamlining thereof. In that respect, complementarity between the Connecting Europe Facility and other instruments in the EU budget would be essential. The National and Regional Partnership Plans could complement CEF funding for the national sections of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). Similarly, the European Competitiveness Fund and Horizon Europe could help finance transport innovations and attract private investment, for example to develop alternative fuels and greener connectivity solutions in Europe.

Lastly, Mr TZITZIKOSTAS welcomed the fact that the EU's long-term draft budget made reference to tourism, an economic sector that accounted for 10% of Europe's

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gross domestic product. He stressed the importance of the Connecting Europe Facility and the National and Regional Partnership Plans in terms of developing sustainable tourism in all of Europe's regions.

Mr JØRGENSEN welcomed the fivefold increase in the energy strand of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for 2028-2034, compared to the amounts provided for in the current budget.

Six years ago, the European economy was operating thanks to cheap imports of Russian gas, which was no longer the case. In this context, he referred to the EU's new energy infrastructure needs, such as trans-European networks and interconnectors, hydrogen pipelines and coal pipelines, which were vital for ensuring the EU's energy independence and energy decarbonisation and for reducing energy prices.

Mr JØRGENSEN emphasised the Connecting Europe Facility's fundamental role in implementing the EU's political priorities, which justified the significant increase in the energy strand's budgetary allocation. He also stressed the high rate of return of each euro invested in cross-border energy connection projects, which were economically attractive for all Member States where such infrastructure was installed.

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

- broad support for the overall architecture of the Multiannual Financial Framework proposal, deemed to be a response tailored to the new geopolitical reality, which required the EU to invest more in its defence, security, competitiveness and green transition, while at the same time streamlining, simplifying and increasing the flexibility of its long-term budget;
- calls to further bolster the EU's support for territorial cohesion, decarbonisation and the competitiveness of the EU's traditional industries, with a particular

focus on the common fisheries policy, which was an exclusive competence of the EU;

- in the context of the war in Ukraine, a positive reception for the proposed EUR 100 billion to be allocated to the country's reconstruction, alongside calls to boost support for the EU's eastern border regions, which were directly impacted by the conflict;
- support for the new mechanism set up to index the budget to real inflation should it deviate significantly from the 2% target set by the European Central Bank;
- the political and interinstitutional discussions to come on the next Multiannual Financial Framework, and the importance of highlighting European added value in areas such as defence, internal security and migration, where the EU budget had increased the most;
- support for the new smart conditionalities to strengthen the rule of law and ensure sustainable funding for civil society, but with certain reservations regarding how they would interact with cohesion policy financing criteria as defined in the Treaties;
- broad support for the proposed own resources system, coupled with questions on the appropriateness of a specific tax on large companies, and suggestions for alternative resources, including a digital tax, a tax on e-commerce and small parcels, a levy on profits linked to crypto-assets or even a tax on the revenues of the new EU carbon market (ETS 2);
- a call to make swift progress on increasing tobacco excise duty, both as an own resource and as a public health tool, while also underlining the risks linked to the emergence of a parallel market;

- a largely positive reception for the EU budget's borrowing capacity, which would allow the EU to react more quickly in the event of major crises, but also a reminder of the debt level, which had an impact on long-term economic growth;
- broad support for the new Global Europe instrument, praised for its ability to leverage the EU's external action in partner countries to make the most out of its effectiveness and visibility;
- in this context, a call to modernise the network of EU delegations throughout the world, to equip them with the expertise needed to promote the EU's external action.

In response to a specific question on the total amount of the EU's own resources, the Commission's Director-General for Budget stated that the proposal envisaged an average of EUR 58.52 billion a year for the period 2028-2034.

The PRESIDENT returned to the question of own resources and green financing, emphasising the 35% climate mainstreaming target, which equated to around EUR 750 billion.

As regards the potential impact of the contribution from companies, she assured the members of the College that the Commission was seeking to maintain an investment- and business-friendly environment in Europe, reminding them of the Commission's active support for businesses, in particular through the development of targeted programmes. The proposed new own resources system sought to distribute the tax burden on consumers and businesses fairly. Without such a system, there would be inevitable cuts in funding to EU priorities.

The PRESIDENT also underlined that the EU Treaties did not limit cohesion policy financial criteria, the details of which were set out in a specific Regulation. She emphasised the advantages of the new budget structure and was convinced that progress could be made by modernising how the budget was used, to guarantee a greater impact on the ground.

Lastly, she thanked the members of the College for their commitment throughout this process, and underlined the vital contribution made by all Commission departments. Thanks to their collective endeavours, it had been possible to draft the various legal texts that underpinned the Multiannual Financial Framework proposal.

Following these presentations, the Commission:

- approved the Communication in COM(2025) 570/6 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, together with the staff working documents distributed as SWD(2025) 570/5 and SWD(2025) 571/3, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 571/3 for transmission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and, for information, to the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for an Interinstitutional Agreement in COM(2025) 572/3 for transmission to the Council and the European Parliament and, for information, to the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments;
- approved the Report in COM(2025) 573/3 for transmission to the Council and the European Parliament and, for information, to the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Council Decision in COM(2025) 574/2 for transmission to the Council, the European Parliament and the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Council Directive in COM(2025) 581 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic

and Social Committee and the national parliaments and, for information, to the Committee of the Regions;

- adopted the proposal for a Council Directive in COM(2025) 580/3 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the national parliaments, and, for information, to the Committee of the Regions, together with the impact assessment, the summary thereof and the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in SWD(2025) 560, SWD(2025) 561 and SEC(2025) 560, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 545/4 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Court of Auditors and, for information, to the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment and the summary thereof in SWD(2025) 590 and SWD(2025) 591, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 565/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment in SWD(2025) 565, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 542/3 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 541/3 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments;

- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 540/3 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 558 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 552 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 559 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 560/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 555/4 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment, the summary thereof and the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in SWD(2025) 555, SWD(2025) 556 and SEC(2025) 555, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 543/4 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment, the summary thereof and the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in SWD(2025) 555, SWD(2025) 556 and SEC(2025) 555, the contents of which were noted;

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- adopted the proposal for a Council Decision in COM(2025) 544/5 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment, the summary thereof and the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in SWD(2025) 555, SWD(2025) 556 and SEC(2025) 555, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 551/5 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment, the summary thereof and the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in SWD(2025) 552/2, SWD(2025) 553 and SEC(2025) 548, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 550/4 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment, the summary thereof and the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in SWD(2025) 550, SWD(2025) 551 and SEC(2025) 547, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 549/4 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment, the summary thereof and the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in SWD(2025) 550, SWD(2025) 551 and SEC(2025) 547, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 548/4 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the Court of Auditors and the national parliaments, together with the impact assessment, the summary thereof

and the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in SWD(2025) 545, SWD(2025) 546 and SEC(2025) 545, the contents of which were noted;

- adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2025) 547/5 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments.

32. WHITE PAPER FOR THE ANTI-FRAUD ARCHITECTURE REVIEW (COM(2025) 546 TO /3; RCC(2025) 65)

The Commission approved the White Paper in COM(2025) 546/3 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments.

33. OTHER BUSINESS

33.1. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Ms KALLAS briefed the College on the latest developments in the EU's external relations.

As regards the situation in the Middle East, she welcomed the agreement obtained the previous week with Israel allowing humanitarian aid into Gaza and, in this respect, thanked Ms LAHBIB and her department, and Mr Bigot, the EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process. She nevertheless stressed that everything would depend on the implementation of this agreement on the ground, and indicated that she would keep the Member States regularly informed about developments.

She had also briefed foreign ministers on the range of different options possible under the EU-Israel Association Agreement, in line with the mission

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given to her by the Heads of State or Government in June 2025. In this connection, it was important that the Commission continued to reflect on possible next steps in case the situation on the ground in Gaza failed to improve.

Ms KALLAS had also participated alongside Ms ŠUICA in the meeting of the EU Southern Neighbourhood partners on Monday 14 July. It was the first time in eleven years that Syria had been represented at the meeting. In the current geopolitical context, the presence of both Israel and Palestine, as well as that of almost all the EU's Southern partners, was a notable success. This had been welcomed as such by the Member States at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 15 July 2025. The ministerial discussions had focused on the future Pact for the Mediterranean, where all the EU's partners had committed to strengthening the EU-Mediterranean partnership.

On the situation in Ukraine, Ms KALLAS noted that Russia had stepped up its attacks, with unprecedented missile and drone strikes, while Ukraine continued to resist and fight back. The US had announced it would send Ukraine additional Patriot air defence systems, munitions and missiles financed by European countries. Russia had stepped up the use of chemical weapons on the Ukrainian front. The EU would have to quickly look into how it could support Ukraine in this area, including at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

On sanctions against Russia, Ms KALLAS pointed out that it had not yet been possible to obtain a consensus at the Foreign Affairs Council on the 18th package of sanctions and that discussions on this matter would continue on 16 July.

With regard to the forthcoming international summits, particularly in Asia, she invited the members of the College taking part in those meetings to refute the false information put out by Russia. She made particular reference to the

EU-China Summit scheduled for 24 July, where it was hoped that progress could be made on the different files on the agenda.

The Commission took note of this information.

33.2. COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION ON THE REQUEST FOR REGISTRATION, PURSUANT TO REGULATION (EU) 2019/788 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ENTITLED 'SAVE YOUR RIGHT, SAVE YOUR FLIGHT!'
(C(2025) 4754)

In the absence of Mr ŠEFČOVIČ, the Secretary-General presented to the College the request for registration of the citizens' initiative entitled, in the authentic language (English), 'Save your right, save your flight!'.

The initiative's organisers were raising their concerns about the changes envisaged to passengers' rights, which were likely to water down protections that travellers had relied on for two decades. The organisers considered that these changes would result in a loss of time, money and rights when compared to the level of protection offered by the current legislation. The aim of the initiative, as expressed by the organisers, was to call for the reversal of passenger-hostile changes and the preservation of the current compensation eligibility thresholds.

The Secretary-General noted that no part of this citizens' initiative manifestly exceeded the scope of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act of the Union for the purpose of implementing the Treaties. Consequently, this initiative could be considered admissible, and she therefore proposed to register it.

She concluded her presentation by pointing out that the organisers would now have to start collecting the necessary number of signatures, i.e. at least one

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million signatures in seven Member States. It was only after the signatures had been collected that the Commission would give its opinion on the substance of the initiative.

Following this presentation, the Commission confirmed that the citizens' initiative 'Save your right, save your flight!' had met the conditions needed for it to be registered. In accordance with C(2025) 4754, it therefore decided to inform the organisers and authorised Mr ŠEFČOVIČ to sign the reply on behalf of the College, to send it to the organisers, and to publish it, for information, in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

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The Commission's other discussions on certain agenda items are recorded in the special minutes.

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The meeting closed at 15.59.