



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2025) 2544 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 10 December 2025

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2544th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 12 November 2025

(morning)

PV(2025) 2544 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

EN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Attendance list	5-6
1. AGENDAS (OJ(2025) 2544/FINAL; SEC(2025) 2544/FINAL)	7
2. WEEKLY MEETING OF HEADS OF CABINET (RCC(2025) 2544).....	7
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES	7
4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS (RCC(2025) 257)	7
5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION (RCC(2025) 259).....	10
6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS.....	10
6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2025) 286 ET SEQ.).....	10
6.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2025) 287 ET SEQ.)	10
6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS (SEC(2025) 288 ET SEQ.)	11
6.4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED (SEC(2025) 289 AND /2).....	11
7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS (SEC(2025) 290/2 AND /3)	11
7.1. DG ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS – APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT GRADE AD15 (PERS(2025) 91 AND /2).....	12
7.2. DG RESEARCH AND INNOVATION – APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT GRADE AD15 (PERS(2025) 92 AND /2).....	12
7.3. DG DEFENCE INDUSTRY AND SPACE – TRANSFER IN THE INTEREST OF THE SERVICE, UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS, OF AN AD15 OFFICIAL	13
7.4. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE – APPOINTMENT OF A PRINCIPAL ADVISER AT	

PV(2025) 2544 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

EN

GRADE AD14 (PERS(2024) 68 TO /3)	13
7.5. DG FINANCIAL STABILITY, FINANCIAL SERVICES AND CAPITAL MARKETS UNION – ADOPTION OF A SHORTLIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE POST OF MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE AUTHORITY FOR ANTI- MONEY LAUNDERING AND COUNTERING THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM (PERS(2025) 89 AND /2).....	14
7.6. DG ENERGY – AUTHORISATION FOR THE INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD15/16, AND EXTERNAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD15, OF A DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL POST (PERS(2025) 90).....	14
7.7. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – EUROPEAN COMMISSION DECISIONS ON POST TERM-OF-OFFICE ACTIVITIES OF FORMER MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION (C(2025) 9028; C(2025) 9029; C(2025) 9030; C(2025) 9031; C(2025) 9032).....	15
8. JOINT COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY SHIELD: EMPOWERING STRONG AND RESILIENT DEMOCRACIES (JOIN(2025) 791 TO /3; RCC(2025) 110).....	15
9. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – EU STRATEGY FOR CIVIL SOCIETY (COM(2025) 790 AND /2; RCC(2025) 108).....	15
10. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – A CULTURE COMPASS FOR EUROPE (COM(2025) 785 TO /3; SWD(2025) 785; RCC(2025) 107).....	21

11. DRAFT JOINT DECLARATION ‘EUROPE FOR CULTURE – CULTURE FOR EUROPE’ (COM(2025) 786 AND /2).....	21
12. OTHER BUSINESS.....	25
12.1. JUDGMENT OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON MINIMUM WAGES IN THE EU	25
12.2. PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK.....	25

Single sitting: Wednesday 12 November 2025 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.05 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	Items 1 to 10/11 (in part)
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member	
Mr HOEKSTRA	Member	
Mr KUBILIUS	Member	
Ms KOS	Member	
Ms ALBUQUERQUE	Member	
Ms LAHBIB	Member	Items 1 to 10/11 (in part)
Mr BRUNNER	Member	
Ms ROSWALL	Member	
Mr SERAFIN	Member	
Mr JØRGENSEN	Member	
Ms ZAHARIEVA	Member	
Mr McGRATH	Member	
Mr TZITZIKOSTAS	Member	Items 8/9 (in part) to 12
Mr HANSEN	Member	
Mr MICALLEF	Member	

Absent:

Ms KALLAS	High Representative / Vice-President
Mr SÍKELA	Member
Mr KADIS	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 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	Items 8/9
Ms STEFURIUC	Policy Coordinator / Member of the PRESIDENT's cabinet	Items 8/9
Ms SEMLALI	Policy Assistant in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	
Mr CHARLES	Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General	
Mr TAQUET-GRAZIANI	Acting Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General	

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

1. AGENDAS

(OJ(2025) 2544/FINAL; SEC(2025) 2544/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) 2544)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet held on Monday 10 November 2025.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Commission held over approval of the minutes of its 2540th, 2541st, 2542nd and 2543rd meetings of 7, 16 and 21 October and 4 November 2025 until a later meeting.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2025) 257)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (GRI) held on 7 November 2025 (RCC(2025) 257).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034 – Proposals to be shared with the European Parliament and the Council with a view to a meeting under Article 324 TFEU**

Line set out in SPI(2025) 86.

- **Framework for Financial Data Access and amendment of Regulations (EU) No 1093/2010, (EU) No 1094/2010, (EU) No 1095/2010 and (EU) 2022/2554 (Regulation) – VAN OVERTVELDT (ex-HOOGVEEN) report – 2023/0205 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 337.

- **Production and marketing of forest reproductive material, amendment of Regulations (EU) 2016/2031 and 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repeal of Council Directive 1999/105/EC (Regulation on forest reproductive material) (Regulation) – DORFMANN report – 2023/0228 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 327/2.

- **Plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed, and amendment of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 (Regulation) – POLFJÄRD report – 2023/0226 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 340.

- **Amendment of Directive 2014/32/EU as regards electric vehicle supply equipment, compressed gas dispensers, and electricity, gas and thermal energy meters (Directive) – TOMAŠIČ report – 2024/0311 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 346.

- **Improving and enforcing working conditions of trainees and combating regular employment relationships disguised as traineeships (Directive) – HOMS GINEL report – 2024/0068 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 347.

- **Amendment of Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) 2021/2116 as regards the strengthening of the position of farmers in the**

food supply chain – IMART report – 2024/0319 (COD)

Line set out in SI(2025) 349.

- **Amendment of Regulations (EU) 2021/694, (EU) 2021/695, (EU) 2021/697, (EU) 2021/1153, (EU) 2023/1525 and 2024/795, as regards incentivising defence-related investments in the EU budget to implement the ReArm Europe Plan (Regulation) – KOLS report – 2025/0103 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 350.

- **Business in Europe: Framework for Income Taxation (BEFIT) (Council Directive) – REGNER report – 2023/0321 (CNS)**

Line set out in SP(2025) 394/2.

- **Amendment of Regulation (EEC) No 2658/87 as regards the introduction of a simplified tariff treatment for the distance sales of goods and of Regulation (EC) No 1186/2009 as regards the elimination of the customs duty relief threshold (Council Regulation) – 2023/0157 (NLE)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 341.

- **Prolongation procedure for the appointment of a TEN-E Coordinator for the Baltic synchronisation project**

Line set out in SPI(2025) 84.

The Commission took note of the following points:

- **Conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (Directive) – WIEZIK report – 2025/0090 (COD)**

Information set out in SP(2025) 392.

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality – KNOTEK report – 2025/0524 (COD)**

Information set out in SP(2025) 393.

- **Framework for strengthening the availability and security of supply of critical medicinal products as well as the availability of, and accessibility of, medicinal products of common interest, and amendment of Regulation (EU) 2024/795 (Regulation) – SOKOL report – 2025/0102 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2025) 348/2.

5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION (RCC(2025) 259)

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2025) 259 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 5 November 2025.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED (SEC(2025) 286 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 3 and 9 November 2025.

6.2. EMPOWERMENT (SEC(2025) 287 ET SEQ.)

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 3 and 9 November 2025.

**6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2025) 288 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedures between 3 and 9 November 2025 archived in Decide.

**6.4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED
(SEC(2025) 289 AND /2)**

The Commission took note of the written procedures specifically identified for which the time limit expired between 10 and 14 November 2025.

**7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2025) 290/2 AND /3)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2025) 88/2 AND /3)**

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

It was proposed to approve the appointment of Ms Annika ERIKSGAARD to the post of Deputy Director-General of DG Economic and Financial Affairs, and of Ms Maria-Cristina RUSSO to the post of Deputy Director-General of DG Research and Innovation. It was also proposed to approve the transfer in the interest of the service of Ms Lorena BOIX ALONSO to the post of Deputy Director-General of DG Defence Industry and Space.

**7.1. DG ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS – APPOINTMENT OF A
DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT GRADE AD15
(PERS(2025) 91 AND /2)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Deputy Director-General for ‘Investment and International (in charge of Directorate D)’ in DG Economic and Financial Affairs (PERS(2025) 91).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 30 July and 6 November 2025 (PERS(2025) 91/2).

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 Mr DOMBROVSKIS, it then decided to appoint Ms Annika ERIKSGAARD to the post.

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

**7.2. DG RESEARCH AND INNOVATION – APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY
DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT GRADE AD15
(PERS(2025) 92 AND /2)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Deputy Director-General for ‘Innovation, Prosperity and International Cooperation’ in DG Research and Innovation (PERS(2025) 92).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 30 July and 25 September 2025 (PERS(2025) 92/2).

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 ZAHARIEVA, it then decided to appoint Ms Maria-Cristina RUSSO to the post.

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

7.3. DG DEFENCE INDUSTRY AND SPACE – TRANSFER IN THE INTEREST OF THE SERVICE, UNDER ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS, OF AN AD15 OFFICIAL

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr KUBILIUS and Mr VÁRHELYI, the Commission decided to transfer, in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Ms Lorena BOIX ALONSO, currently Deputy Director-General for Health in charge of Directorates B, C and D in DG Health and Food Safety, to the post of Deputy Director-General of DG Defence Industry and Space.

This decision would take effect on 1 January 2026.

**7.4. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE – APPOINTMENT OF A PRINCIPAL ADVISER AT GRADE AD14
(PERS(2024) 68 TO /3)**

The Commission had before it the list of 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 Principal Adviser for Relations with internal and external stakeholders in the Internal Audit Service (PERS(2024) 68).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 19 May and 12 June 2025 (PERS(2024) 68/2 and /3).

The Commission proceeded to compare the applicants' qualifications for the post. On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, it decided to appoint Mr Giorgios ROSSIDES to the post.

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

**7.5. DG FINANCIAL STABILITY, FINANCIAL SERVICES AND CAPITAL MARKETS UNION – ADOPTION OF A SHORTLIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE POST OF MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE AUTHORITY FOR ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND COUNTERING THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM
(PERS(2025) 89 AND /2)**

The Commission took note of the information set out in point 2 of PERS(2025) 88/2 and, on a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms ALBUQUERQUE, decided:

- to adopt the shortlist of candidates proposed for the post of member of the Executive Board of the Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AMLA), in Frankfurt, and to consider this list as the Commission proposal;
- to task Ms ALBUQUERQUE, the Member of the Commission responsible, with communicating this decision to the European Parliament and to AMLA's General Board.

These decisions would take effect immediately.

**7.6. DG ENERGY – AUTHORISATION FOR THE INTERNAL AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD15/16, AND EXTERNAL PUBLICATION, AT GRADE AD15, OF A DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL POST
(PERS(2025) 90)**

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Mr JØRGENSEN, the Commission decided to authorise the internal and interinstitutional publication, at grade AD15/16, and external publication, at grade AD15, of the vacancy notice in PERS(2025) 90 for the

post of Deputy Director-General for ‘Coordination of Euratom policies (responsible for Directorates D and E)’ in DG Energy, in accordance with Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii), Article 29(1)(b) and Article 29(2) of the Staff Regulations.

This decision would take effect immediately.

7.7. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – EUROPEAN COMMISSION DECISIONS ON POST TERM-OF-OFFICE ACTIVITIES OF FORMER MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

(C(2025) 9028; C(2025) 9029; C(2025) 9030; C(2025) 9031; C(2025) 9032)

The Commission decided that the professional activities envisaged by Mr Josep BORRELL, Mr Margaritis SCHINAS, Mr Thierry BRETON, Ms Margrethe VESTAGER and Ms Stella KYRIAKIDES 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) 9028, C(2025) 9029, C(2025) 9030, C(2025) 9031 and C(2025) 9032.

8. JOINT COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY SHIELD: EMPOWERING STRONG AND RESILIENT DEMOCRACIES
(JOIN(2025) 791 TO /3; RCC(2025) 110)

9. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF

**THE REGIONS – EU STRATEGY FOR CIVIL SOCIETY
(COM(2025) 790 AND /2; RCC(2025) 108)**

The PRESIDENT introduced the Joint Communication on the European Democracy Shield, in the absence of Ms KALLAS, and the EU Strategy for Civil Society, stressing that these two initiatives were aimed at strengthening the EU's democratic resilience in the face of the steady increase in disinformation and manipulation of public opinion. This was one of the most urgent challenges facing European democracies, as electoral processes within the EU and in partner countries were increasingly exposed to foreign interference that could undermine their legitimacy.

She noted the rapid intensification of hybrid threats aimed at discrediting European democracies. Referring to the recent elections in Romania and Moldova, she noted that the EU had demonstrated its ability to detect, demystify and counter disinformation campaigns in these instances. She concluded by stressing the importance for the EU to equip itself with the necessary means to protect itself and defend its democratic values.

Ms VIRKKUNEN acknowledged the difficulty of countering disinformation in a free and open society and stressed the importance of protecting democracy while respecting freedom of expression. She referred to the legislative initiatives previously adopted on this matter at EU level, namely the European Democracy Action Plan in 2020 and the Defence of Democracy Package in 2023, and stressed that the focus was now on preserving the information space, in particular on digital platforms, safeguarding the role of independent media, which was under extreme pressure, as well as strengthening the resilience of civil society.

She said that the future European Centre for Democratic Resilience would aim to pool Member States' expertise and better share information between the various actors. She pointed out the essential role played by independent media, and that existing protective measures would be complemented by rules that would ensure fair competition between traditional media and new digital platforms, which would

now have to fully assume their responsibilities.

Lastly, Ms VIRKKUNEN noted the importance of investing more in people's skills, helping to develop critical thinking and improving the ability to recognise fake news, not only within the EU, but also in neighbouring countries. She concluded by welcoming the presentation that day of the EU Strategy for Civil Society, the aim of which was to strengthen the engagement, protection and support of civil society organisations.

Mr McGRATH began by pointing out that democracy was the beating heart of the European Union and the foundation of Europeans' freedom, security and way of life. He stated that democracy was currently under threat, as the civic space in Europe and elsewhere was shrinking, trust was eroding, and opposition forces were testing the determination of the democratic camp. He stressed that the collective actions taken today would shape future democracies and societies, and that in this context it was important to firmly defend democracy, protect those who safeguarded freedoms, and ensure that the voice of every citizen was heard. The initiatives presented that day showed the EU's determination not to be a bystander to any democratic backsliding.

He felt that the European Democracy Shield and the EU Strategy for Civil Society embodied Europe's commitment to resist disinformation, defend free and fair elections, and empower people and organisations working to keep democracy alive. He noted that fundamental rights, fair elections, independent media and a safe civic space were the first line of defence of democracy. By protecting them, the Commission was strengthening the foundations of the EU's security and its preparedness for future challenges.

Mr McGRATH then detailed some of the key actions of the European Democracy Shield. Firstly, he mentioned the creation of the European Centre for Democratic Resilience, the aim of which was to prevent autocratic regimes from undermining democratic freedoms and systems in Europe, whether through hybrid attacks or war.

The Centre would pull together EU and Member States' capacities to counter threats such as information manipulation and foreign interference, to work collectively to strengthen European democratic resilience, and to preserve the information space for citizens to express themselves freely and exercise their democratic rights.

Secondly, Mr McGRATH stressed that the integrity of European electoral processes had to be safeguarded, as free and fair elections were the very foundation of democracy. He noted that it was not at all a question of influencing the outcome of elections, but of ensuring that, whatever the result of the votes, citizens had confidence in the integrity of the process as being free from interference. He said that support for Member States would be stepped up, while respecting their prime competence on these matters, to respond to new challenges, such as the use of artificial intelligence in election campaigns. The Commission would also work with Member States to ensure security from online and offline threats.

Thirdly, it was important to prevent traditional media, which played a key role in the democratic space, from being economically weakened and excluded from the information space due to the growing role of social media. He stressed that, following the adoption of the European Media Freedom Act in 2024, it was now necessary to ensure, through the upcoming review of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, that reliable media content had a prominent place in the information space and that free and independent media remained sustainable.

With regard to the EU Strategy for Civil Society, Mr McGRATH considered that it gave power back to the people and ensured that civil society could operate safely, speak freely and access the necessary funding. He stressed the importance of engagement, protection and support, as well as adequate funding. With regard to engagement, he felt that, all too often, it was based on goodwill rather than clear structures. He announced that a new Civil Society Platform would be launched in 2026 to provide a framework for facilitating dialogue between the EU and civil society actors on EU values and rights.

He then noted that protection and support actions must help ensure that the civic space remained open and safe in the face of growing legal and administrative pressure, intimidation and disinformation. The strategy established an online knowledge hub to monitor threats and support evidence-based responses.

With regard to funding, which he considered to be the backbone of an independent civil society, the strategy highlighted the available EU funding and presented simplified procedures and safeguards to ensure transparency and respect for EU values, while strengthening links with private donors, philanthropic organisations and pro bono legal communities.

Mr McGRATH concluded his presentation by noting that democracy was being undermined worldwide by hybrid threats, disinformation and digital deception. He felt that the European response must combine resilience, unity and action. He emphasised that strong democracies were not only a moral choice, but the greatest source of strength for Europe's economy, its security and its future.

During the discussion that followed, the Commission raised the following main points:

- the need for a coherent strategic approach to address disinformation and attempts to exploit the EU's democratic values, by promoting reliable and factual information and supporting public media and fact-checking initiatives;
- the need to support the democratic and media resilience of the candidate countries, which found themselves on the front line of foreign interference, with a view to their gradual integration into the EU;
- the importance of strengthening, in close cooperation with the Member States, media literacy, civic education and critical thinking, particularly among younger generations, as well as of better understanding the impact of new forms of online socialisation on democratic values;

- the need for in-depth reflection on the structural challenges facing contemporary democracies in a context of social and political change characterised by evolving forms of civic participation;
- the need to take into account the gender dimension of the fight against disinformation, as women were prime targets in the public space;
- the need to assess the effectiveness of the measures already put in place and draw lessons from them as regards their contribution to strengthening democratic values and social cohesion in European societies.

The PRESIDENT concluded the discussion by reminding the College that the Commission's fight against disinformation had already generated valuable experience. She pointed out that, while the phenomenon was not new, its impact was now being amplified by social media and artificial intelligence. She stressed the need for the EU to use those same tools to promote verified information and increase citizens' access to reliable sources.

Following these presentations, the Commission:

- approved the Joint Communication in JOIN(2025) 791/3 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) 790 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. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – A CULTURE COMPASS FOR EUROPE

(COM(2025) 785 TO /3; SWD(2025) 785; RCC(2025) 107)

11. DRAFT JOINT DECLARATION ‘EUROPE FOR CULTURE – CULTURE FOR EUROPE’

(COM(2025) 786 AND /2)

Ms MÎNZATU introduced the Culture Compass for Europe as a roadmap for putting culture at the heart of political, social and economic life in the EU. She stressed that culture was an integral part of European identity and enabled the EU’s values and history to be passed on to future generations. She highlighted the importance of preserving cultural heritage, while harnessing technological change, including Artificial Intelligence (AI). She also underlined the need to improve artists’ working conditions – which were often precarious – and to make more systematic use of available data to assess the state of culture in the EU. She concluded by saying that culture was a pillar of European identity and should continue to be central to EU action.

Mr MICALLEF began by stressing the sizeable potential of the cultural sector and Europe’s leading position in that regard. He highlighted the role of culture in European identity, the EU’s linguistic diversity and its rich cultural heritage, with more than 500 UNESCO world heritage sites. He also mentioned the vital contribution culture made to the European economy, generating more than 200 billion in annual added value, and to the labour market, with more than 8 million people working in the cultural and creative industries.

The Compass rested on a ‘Europe for Culture – Culture for Europe’ vision and was an overarching strategic framework for culture at EU level. It aimed to protect and strengthen culture while unlocking its transformative potential for social and

democratic resilience and EU competitiveness. The framework was the result of broad consultation with the various stakeholders.

The Compass would guide EU policies in four key directions, focusing on an EU that: (i) upheld and strengthened European values and cultural rights; (ii) empowered artists and cultural professionals, and supported people; (iii) drew on culture and cultural heritage to become more competitive, resilient and cohesive; and (iv) championed international cultural relations and partnerships.

The Communication was accompanied by a draft Joint Declaration, which the co-legislators would be asked to sign, and which reflected the joint commitment by the Commission, Parliament and Council to put culture at the heart of European policies. In that regard, ministers and MEPs had voiced their political support for the initiative on many occasions.

In addition to the Joint Declaration, the Compass would be implemented using three additional tools: (i) a report on the state of culture in the EU, (ii) a structured dialogue with cultural stakeholders and (iii) an EU cultural data hub. The report would provide a periodic overview of culture at EU level and assess progress in implementing the Compass and the Joint Declaration. It would draw on the regular structured dialogue with the cultural and creative sectors and the new EU cultural data hub, which would enable more uniform and centralised data collection to support evidence-based policymaking.

Mr MICALLEF then elaborated on the four key directions of the Compass. The first direction, on EU values and cultural rights, emphasised the importance of artistic freedom, cultural and linguistic diversity, wider access to culture and more public participation. Flagship measures here included a new EU performing arts prize, publication of a report to help Member States increase cultural participation among people with disabilities, and a voluntary framework for mutual recognition of national cultural passes for young people. DiscoverEU culture routes would also be promoted and cultural offers in the EU youth discount card would be expanded.

The second direction, on empowering artists and cultural professionals and supporting people, focused on working conditions in the sector, facilitating cross-border mobility, youth engagement, and essential connections between culture, education, health and well-being. An EU artists' charter would set out principles for fair working conditions. A youth cultural ambassadors' network would also involve young cultural professionals in policymaking and raise awareness of the importance of culture and heritage for young people.

Mr MICALLEF then explained the third direction, focused on increasing competitiveness, resilience and cohesion through culture. He highlighted the significant contribution the sector could make to the economy. The third direction sought to harness digital technology, ensuring that AI fostered human creativity rather than replacing it, and contributed to cultural and linguistic diversity. To that end, an AI strategy would be formulated for the sector. This direction also promoted culture-led regional and local development, and the preservation of cultural heritage. It proposed to strengthen the European Heritage Label and Capitals of Culture after 2033, put forward a Communication and a Council Recommendation on the future of New European Bauhaus, and launch a new European partnership for resilient cultural heritage.

Lastly, the fourth direction, on championing international cultural relations and partnerships, promoted the role of culture as an enabler of peace and confirmed the EU's place as a global leader in the sector. The EU strategy on international cultural relations would be updated together with Ms KALLAS, and the Team Europe approach would be used for culture. Culture was a crucial resource for strengthening a values-driven approach to international relations.

Mr MICALLEF concluded by pointing out that the Culture Compass vision could only come to life if existing and future funding instruments were mobilised at every level, noting that the budget for culture in the next Multiannual Financial Framework would play a crucial role. Other sources of funding, such as private investments, philanthropy and public-private partnerships were also important.

During the discussion that followed, the Commission raised the following main points:

- the importance of culture as a pillar of European identity and source of unity, and its key role in the enlargement process and in the protection of cultural heritage in candidate countries;
- the need to strengthen resilience against disinformation campaigns that used culture and identity to undermine European values;
- the desire to support creativity and innovation while better protecting artists, especially from AI-related risks;
- the value of mobilising private finance and philanthropy on top of public support for the cultural sector;
- recognition of the role of agriculture and food in Europe’s cultural heritage, and of support for measures promoting culture in rural areas under the Common Agricultural Policy.

Following these presentations, the Commission:

- approved the Communication in COM(2025) 785/3 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, together with the staff working document SWD(2025) 785, the contents of which were noted;
- approved the draft Joint Declaration in COM(2025) 786/2 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.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

12.1. JUDGMENT OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON MINIMUM WAGES IN THE EU

The PRESIDENT informed the College of the judgment delivered the previous day by the Court of Justice of the European Union concerning the Directive on adequate minimum wages in the EU.

She welcomed the fact that the Court had confirmed the Directive's legal basis and, in so doing, the role of collective bargaining. The Directive provided that, in the absence of trade unions, appropriate structures had to be put in place to define a minimum wage level. It had been shown that such mechanisms contributed to increasing employment and reducing poverty.

The PRESIDENT also stressed that this was a key judgment that paved the way for the '28th regime', which should be presented as soon as possible and designed in such a way as to ensure its effectiveness in all Member States.

The Commission took note of this information.

12.2. PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The PRESIDENT reported on the progress of the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), noting that a meeting of the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission had been held on Monday 10 November, under the procedure laid down in Article 324 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). She welcomed the constructive nature of this meeting, which had made it possible to promote cooperation and reconcile the positions of the institutions.

The three institutions had thus found common ground on the three main topics: (i) the role of the regions, (ii) the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP),

and (iii) the governance of the Multiannual Financial Framework. It was on this basis that the Danish Presidency of the Council would prepare the negotiating mandate which would be submitted to the Heads of State or Government at the next European Council.

The Commission took note of this information.

*

* *

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

*

* *

The meeting closed at 10.18.