



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

**PV(2025) 2546 final**

*- English translation of the French version which is authentic -*

Brussels, 14 January 2026

# TEXTE EN

## MINUTES

**of the 2546<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Commission**

**held in Strasbourg**

**(Winston Churchill building)**

**on Tuesday 25 November 2025**

**(afternoon)**

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**PV(2025) 2546 final**

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**Single sitting: Tuesday 25 November 2025 (afternoon)**

The sitting opened at 13.04 with Ms RIBERA in the chair.

**Present:**

|                |                                      |                           |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ms RIBERA      | Executive Vice-President             |                           |
| Ms VIRKKUNEN   | Executive Vice-President             |                           |
| Ms KALLAS      | High Representative / Vice-President | Items 1 to 14 (in part)   |
| Ms MÎNZATU     | Executive Vice-President             |                           |
| Mr FITTO       | Executive Vice-President             |                           |
| Mr ŠEFČOVIČ    | Member                               |                           |
| Mr DOMBROVSKIS | Member                               |                           |
| Ms ŠUICA       | Member                               |                           |
| Mr KUBILIUS    | Member                               |                           |
| Ms KOS         | Member                               |                           |
| Mr KADIS       | Member                               |                           |
| Ms ALBUQUERQUE | Member                               | Items 8 (in part) to 14   |
| Ms LAHBIB      | Member                               |                           |
| Mr BRUNNER     | Member                               |                           |
| Ms ROSWALL     | Member                               |                           |
| Mr SERAFIN     | Member                               | Items 1 to 9/13 (in part) |
| Mr JØRGENSEN   | Member                               | Items 1 to 14 (in part)   |
| Ms ZAHARIEVA   | Member                               |                           |
| Mr McGRATH     | Member                               |                           |
| Mr HANSEN      | Member                               |                           |
| Mr MICALLEF    | Member                               |                           |

Absent:

|                  |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Ms von der LEYEN | President                |
| Mr SÉJOURNÉ      | Executive Vice-President |
| Mr VÁRHELYI      | Member                   |
| Mr HOEKSTRA      | Member                   |
| Mr SÍKELA        | Member                   |
| Mr TZITZIKOSTAS  | Member                   |

The following also sat in:

|                            |                                                        |               |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Mr ADAM                    | Deputy Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT                |               |
| Ms ERIKSSON<br>WATERSCHOOT | Deputy Director-General, DG Communication              |               |
| Ms PODESTA                 | Deputy Chief Spokesperson of the Commission            |               |
| Mr DE GREGORIO             | Principal Legal Adviser in the Legal Service           |               |
| Ms REICHSTEIN              | Member of the PRESIDENT's cabinet                      | Item 8        |
| Ms STEFURIUC               | Policy Coordinator / Member of the PRESIDENT's cabinet | Items 9 to 13 |
| Mr TAQUET-GRAZIANI         | Acting Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General         |               |
| Ms DAGILE                  | Deputy 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) 2546/FINAL; SEC(2025) 2546/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) 2546)**

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet held on Friday 21 November 2025.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The Commission held over approval of the minutes of its 2542<sup>nd</sup>, 2543<sup>rd</sup>, 2544<sup>th</sup> and 2545<sup>th</sup> meetings of 21 October and 4, 12 and 19 November 2025 until a later meeting.

**4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS**

**(RCC(2025) 262)**

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (GRI) held on Thursday 20 November 2025 (RCC(2025) 262).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Accounting of greenhouse gas emissions of transport services (Regulation) – DECARO & LINS (ex-CANFIN & THALER) report – 2023/0266 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 375.

- **Cooperation among enforcement authorities responsible for the enforcement of Directive (EU) 2019/633 on unfair trading practices in business-to-business relationships in the agricultural and food supply chain (Regulation) – BONACCINI report – 2024/0318 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 381.

- **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) 376.

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

Line set out in SI(2025) 377.

- **Payment services and electronic money services in the Internal Market, amendment of Directive 98/26/EC and repeal of Directives 2015/2366/EU and 2009/110/EC (Directive) – KOVAŘÍK report – 2023/0209 (COD) / Payment services in the internal market and amendment of Regulation (EU) No 1093/2010 (Regulation) – BELKA report – 2023/0210 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 378/2.

- **Circularity requirements for vehicle design and management of end-of-life vehicles, amendment of Regulations (EU) 2018/858 and 2019/1020 and repeal of Directives 2000/53/EC and 2005/64/EC (Regulation) – GIESEKE & SAUDARGAS (ex-GIESEKE) report – 2023/0284 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 379/2.

- **Objection to a delegated act pursuant to Rule 114(3) of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament: Commission Delegated Regulation**

**amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/1818 as regards the definition of controversial weapons – C(2025) 3801**

Line set out in SP(2025) 414.

- **Objection to a delegated act pursuant to Rule 114(3) of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament: Commission Delegated Regulation amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2429 as regards origin labelling for fruit and vegetables originating in the non-self-governing territory of Western Sahara**

Line set out in SP(2025) 415.

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) 2021/691 as regards support to workers affected by imminent job displacement in enterprises undergoing restructuring (Regulation) – SOMMEN report – 2025/0073 (COD)**

Line set out in SI(2025) 386/2.

- **Authorisation of Commissioner TZITZIKOSTAS to sign a declaration welcoming a Memorandum of Understanding between Member States (BG, EL, RO) on enhanced cross-border cooperation within the TEN-T Black Sea–Aegean Sea Corridor Platform**

Line set out in SI(2025) 383.

- **Oral question O-000034/2025 – Fur farming and the placing of farmed fur products on the market**

Line set out in SP(2025) 416.

The Commission took note of the following points:

- **Establishment of an application for the electronic submission of travel data (“EU Digital Travel application”) and amendment of Regulations (EU)**

**2016/399 and (EU) 2018/1726 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004, as regards the use of digital travel credentials (Regulation) – LÓPEZ AGUILAR report – 2024/0670 (COD)**

Information set out in SI(2025) 382.

– **2026 budgetary procedure: outcome of the conciliation**

Information set out in SP(2025) 407.

**5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION  
(RCC(2025) 263)**

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2025) 263 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Wednesday 19 November 2025.

**6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS**

**6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED  
(SEC(2025) 305 ET SEQ.)**

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

**6.2. EMPOWERMENT  
(SEC(2025) 306 ET SEQ.)**

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

**6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS**  
**(SEC(2025) 307 ET SEQ.)**

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

**6.4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED**  
**(SEC(2025) 308 AND /2)**

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

**7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS**  
**(SEC(2025) 309)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**  
**(PERS(2025) 98)**

**7.1. DG COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, CONTENT AND TECHNOLOGY – APPOINTMENT OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14**  
**(PERS(2025) 99 AND /2)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) and Article 29(1)(b) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the 'Enabling and Emerging Technologies' Directorate in DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology (PERS(2025) 99).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 15 July and 11 September 2025 (PERS(2025) 99/2).

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 VIRKKUNEN, it then decided to appoint Mr Kilian GROSS to the post.

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

**7.2. DG EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT AND CULTURE – APPOINTMENT  
OF A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14  
(PERS(2025) 100 AND /2)**

The Commission had before it applications under Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) and Article 29(1)(b) of the Staff Regulations for the post of Director of the 'Youth, Education and Erasmus+' Directorate in DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (PERS(2025) 100).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 18 June and 3 July 2025 (PERS(2025) 100/2).

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 and Mr MICALLEF, it then decided to appoint Ms Diana JABLONSKA to the post.

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

**7.3. DG MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA AND GULF – APPOINTMENT OF  
A DIRECTOR AT GRADE AD14  
(PERS(2025) 101 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 'Middle East' Directorate in DG Middle East, North Africa and Gulf (PERS(2025) 101).

It took note of the opinions of the Consultative Committee on Appointments of 26 September and 9 October 2025 (PERS(2025) 101/2).

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 ŠUICA, it then decided to appoint Ms Henrike TRAUTMANN to the post.

This decision would take effect on 1 December 2025.

**7.4. DG ENLARGEMENT AND EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD –  
TRANSFER TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF AN AD15  
OFFICIAL FROM THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE**

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms KOS, the Commission decided to approve the transfer of Mr Simon MORDUE, under Article 8 of the Staff Regulations, from the European External Action Service to the European Commission, and to appoint him to the post of Adviser Hors Classe in DG Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood.

These decisions would take effect on 1 December 2025.

**7.5. DG TRANSLATION – 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, the Commission decided to transfer, in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Mr Marco Umberto MORICCA – currently Director of the Directorate 'Careers and Staff Development' in DG Human Resources and Security, to the post of Director of the 'Translation' Directorate in DG Translation.

This decision would take effect on 1 March 2026.

**7.6. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL / REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD –  
TRANSFER IN THE INTEREST OF THE SERVICE, UNDER  
ARTICLE 7 OF THE STAFF REGULATIONS, OF AN AD14 OFFICIAL**

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, the Commission decided to transfer, in the interest of the service, under Article 7 of the Staff Regulations, Ms Doriane GIVORD-STRASSEL – currently Director of the Directorate ‘Audit in Commission, Executive Agencies, EU Agencies and other autonomous bodies I’ in the Internal Audit Service, to the vacant post of Director/Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board.

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

**8. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – A  
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR A COMPETITIVE AND SUSTAINABLE  
EU BIOECONOMY**

**(COM(2025) 960 TO /3; SWD(2025) 895; RCC(2025) 117)**

Ms RIBERA introduced the EU Bioeconomy Strategy by pointing out that bio-based industries played a major role in the EU economy, creating jobs and added value. She highlighted the expected benefits of the proposed strategic framework for citizens, the economy and the environment, and the positive message it sent to industry. It was a welcome development set against an unstable international backdrop, but a lot of work would be needed to help implement the strategy and unlock its full potential.

Ms ROSWALL underlined that the bioeconomy covered a whole range of economic sectors and provided much-needed answers to contemporary challenges. At the

same time, it strengthened EU resilience, sustainability and competitiveness in key areas such as energy, agriculture and food security. The bioeconomy already played a major role in job creation and economic growth in the EU, employing more than 17 million people and generating around EUR 2.7 trillion in 2023. Ms ROSWALL used several concrete examples of products already on the market to illustrate the bioeconomy's potential, such as plant-based construction materials, marine fuels made from wastewater, textiles produced from microbes or batteries made with bacteria.

She then presented the four strands of the strategy. The first strand sought to speed up innovation and investment to transform European ideas into industrial solutions. A more flexible regulatory framework, faster approvals, adapted test and deployment environments, and mechanisms to attract investment and facilitate scaling up were needed in order to step up innovation in the bioeconomy. A European bioeconomy regulators and innovators' forum would be set up to promote the exchange of best practice and expedite procedures.

The second strand aimed to build new lead markets for bio-based materials and technologies with high potential for economic growth and environmental benefits. This concerned the following sectors in particular: plastics, fibres, textiles, chemical products, fertilisers, plant protection products, building materials, biorefineries, advanced fermentation, and the permanent storage of biogenic carbon. The Commission would also stimulate demand for bio-based products, for example by setting targets for the use of these products, by promoting their inclusion in public procurement, and by facilitating collective purchases of bio-based solutions by European companies.

The third strand sought to guarantee the sustainable use of biomass by ensuring that forests, soils, water and ecosystems were managed within their ecological limits. It was also essential to promote circularity and enhance the value of secondary biomass, by making use of agricultural waste, by-products and organic waste, while

at the same time reducing Europe's dependence on fossil imports and supporting rural and coastal communities.

The fourth and final strand aimed to harness the global opportunities of the bioeconomy by making it easier for EU companies to access global markets and by developing strategic partnerships that reduced vulnerabilities in the value chain.

In conclusion, Ms ROSWALL stressed that the EU was well placed to become a world leader in sustainable biotechnologies, materials, products and know-how, thanks to its solid research base and innovative industries. Given the current geopolitical climate, resource security strengthened the EU's competitiveness and resilience. The proposed strategy would therefore help the EU become more prosperous and autonomous, deliver on decarbonisation and create quality jobs, while strengthening regional resilience and industrial value chains.

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

- the importance of making the bioeconomy a driver of competitiveness, innovation and strategic autonomy for the EU, against a backdrop of high stakeholder expectations and increased global competition;
- the need to remove regulatory and administrative obstacles to enable start-ups to grow and new bio-based products to reach the EU internal market, in particular through faster and more predictable approvals;
- the need to step up the industrialisation of bio-based solutions by stimulating demand and facilitating access to the EU market, to avoid the situation where companies scaled up outside the EU;
- the significant potential of the blue bioeconomy and the still largely untapped potential of marine and coastal resources, as well as the wealth of possibilities linked to making better use of biomass streams in the agricultural sector;

- the role of biotechnologies and recovering waste and by-products to reduce external dependencies, strengthen energy independence and help the transition towards a more circular economy;
- the vital contribution of the bioeconomy to the environmental and climate transition, including for rural, woodland and coastal communities, and the importance of facilitating and supporting the roll-out of sustainable solutions;
- the need for clearer communication on the benefits of the bioeconomy and better awareness raising among consumers to get them on board and to stimulate demand;
- the high expectations regarding future cross-cutting legislative initiatives, in particular in the areas of biotechnology, energy and the environment, to remove persistent barriers and to help the bioeconomy flourish within the EU.

Following these presentations, the Commission agreed, on a proposal from Ms RIBERA, that the Communication in COM(2025) 960/3 would be formally adopted by finalisation written procedure, the deadline for which was set at 10.00 on Thursday 27 November 2025 (PE/2025/8253).

**9. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE OF REGIONS AND THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK – 2026 EUROPEAN SEMESTER – AUTUMN PACKAGE – DELIVERING ON THE COMPETITIVENESS COMPASS: PUSHING FORWARD WITH REFORMS AND INVESTMENTS  
(COM(2025) 955 AND /2; RCC(2025) 118)**

- 10. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE – ALERT MECHANISM REPORT 2026 PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 3 OF REGULATION (EU) N° 1176/2011 ON THE PREVENTION AND CORRECTION OF MACROECONOMIC IMBALANCES**  
(COM(2025) 956 AND /2; SWD(2025) 900; SWD(2025) 956 AND /2; RCC(2025) 118)
- 11. RECOMMENDATION FOR A COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON THE ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE EURO AREA**  
(COM(2025) 957 AND /2; SWD(2025) 957 AND /2; RCC(2025) 118)
- 12. PROPOSAL FOR A JOINT EMPLOYMENT REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION AND THE COUNCIL**  
(COM(2025) 958 AND /2; RCC(2025) 118)
- 13. RECOMMENDATION FOR A COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**  
(COM(2025) 959 AND /2; RCC(2025) 118)

Ms RIBERA introduced the European Semester autumn package, stating that it set out economic and employment policy priorities to boost competitiveness. She noted that, in an increasingly challenging geopolitical environment, the Commission called for coordinated action to strengthen productivity, innovation and investment, in line with the Competitiveness Compass. In a context of modest growth and uncertainties linked to the international situation, many ways of stimulating Member States' economies had been identified. She referred especially to the new angle proposed that year, which emphasised the importance of human capital.

In the absence of Mr SÉJOURNÉ, Ms RIBERA then asked Ms MÎNZATU and Mr DOMBROVSKIS to present the components of the autumn package falling within their areas of competence.

Ms MÎNZATU began by mentioning the Employment Report presented jointly by the Commission and the Council. It monitored employment and social developments in the EU as well as the implementation of the employment guidelines, in accordance with Article 148 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The situation observed was very similar to the previous year's, with good results on labour markets but inadequate labour productivity and skills shortages. The report also highlighted the poor quality of some jobs and continued in-work poverty, as well as the untapped potential of some 50 million people currently outside the labour market in the EU, mostly women and young people.

Ms MÎNZATU then pointed out the importance of the new Recommendation on human capital, which aimed to encourage more determined European action in this key area for competitiveness, i.e. talent and skills. While it was not a matter within the EU's remit, it was the subject of crucial dialogue and cooperation with Member States. She mentioned the need to create new value chains in Europe and to address skills and talent shortages and insufficient labour mobility. She referred in particular to the example of artificial intelligence, a technology which would require the recruitment of around 7 million workers in the EU by 2027.

She specified that this Recommendation went beyond a country-specific approach and looked at human capital from an EU-wide perspective. She indicated that four key measures were recommended: (i) reversing the trend in basic skills; (ii) improving results in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); (iii) strengthening vocational education and training to boost competitiveness; and (iv) investing in education and skills. Ms MÎNZATU noted that these concerns would also be reflected in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and stressed that talent, education and skills should now be systematically taken into account.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS pointed out that, in launching the 2026 European Semester cycle, the Commission was putting European competitiveness at the heart of EU

action. In a difficult external context, growth had to be generated from within Europe and boosting competitiveness, productivity and innovation in the EU remained a top priority. He specified that the Competitiveness Compass was a general roadmap that would guide EU policies, while the European Semester was the central mechanism for coordinating policy implementation at national and regional level.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS then reviewed the various macroeconomic and fiscal aspects of the autumn package. He began by presenting the Recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area. It called on the Member States concerned to take a series of measures to boost competitiveness, both individually and collectively within the Eurogroup. These were measures focused on security and defence, investment, the labour market and the financial sector. Member States also had to continue implementing their recovery and resilience plans before the NextGenerationEU instrument expired in August 2026.

As regards the fiscal aspects of the package, which were being adopted in parallel by written procedure, he stressed that implementation of the new European fiscal framework was on track. All Member States had already submitted their medium-term plans, and the Council had adopted recommendations setting net expenditure paths for each of them. Member States' efforts should now focus on implementing those plans and enhancing the effectiveness and quality of public expenditure and revenue. He stressed the importance of these efforts in view of the considerable pressure on public finances.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS pointed out that the Commission had assessed compliance with the EU fiscal framework by all Member States and had provided guidance to ensure that their fiscal policy in 2026 was aligned with the relevant Council recommendations: either those endorsing Member States' medium-term plans or, for Member States under an excessive deficit procedure (EDP), recommendations aiming to bring an end to the EDP. He added that the Commission's assessment focused on the growth of net expenditure, the single operational indicator in the

reformed economic governance framework. For the 16 Member States for which the Council had activated the national escape clause, the assessment took into account the flexibility for increases in defence expenditure.

The Commission had adopted opinions on the 2026 draft budgetary plans of the 17 euro area countries that had submitted plans in October. The plans of 12 Member States, namely Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovakia and Finland, were in line with the net expenditure growth recommended by the Council. The plans of three euro area countries, namely Croatia, Lithuania and Slovenia, were at risk of non-compliance with fiscal rules. The plans of two Member States (the Netherlands and Malta) were assessed as being at risk of material non-compliance.

He noted that five non-euro area countries, namely Denmark, Czechia, Poland, Romania and Sweden, were expected to comply with fiscal policy recommendations. Two Member States (Bulgaria and Hungary) were assessed as being at risk of non-compliance. All Member States at risk of non-compliance were invited to take the necessary measures to ensure compliance with the fiscal framework.

Mr DOMBROVSKIS then referred to the Commission report under Article 126(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) to assess compliance with the Treaty's deficit criterion by two Member States, Germany and Finland. The Commission acknowledged the exceptional circumstances that had had a major impact on national public finances, i.e. the unfavourable economic situation and the urgent need to increase defence expenditure. In the light of the assessment contained in the report, opening an excessive deficit procedure was warranted only for Finland. Therefore, after taking into account the opinion of the Economic and Financial Committee, the Commission would consider proposing to the Council the opening of an excessive deficit procedure for Finland and would propose to the Council a recommendation to put an end to the excessive deficit situation.

Lastly, Mr DOMBROVSKIS said that the Alert Mechanism Report called for in-depth reviews to be drawn up for the seven Member States already identified in the previous annual cycle as having imbalances, i.e. Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia and Sweden. The Commission would carefully monitor any emerging imbalances, particularly in areas such as housing prices and cost competitiveness, as well as external imbalances.

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

- the usefulness of the European Semester exercise and the case for considering a similar process in the field of defence;
- the value of a regular evaluation mechanism such as this for all Commission policies, analysing the situation, examining the impact of the political decisions taken and suggesting improvements;
- in the context of the proposed Council Recommendation on human capital, the worrying nature of the demographic decline and its impact on the sustainability of social systems, and the need to encourage Member States to take stock of this problem, which had an impact on the prospects for competitiveness.

Following these presentations, the Commission:

- approved the Communication set out in COM(2025) 955/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank, and, for information, to the national parliaments;
- approved the Communication in COM(2025) 956/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee, and, for information, to the European Central Bank, the Committee of the Regions, the European Investment Bank and the national parliaments,

together with the staff working documents distributed as SWD(2025) 900 and SWD(2025) 956/2, the contents of which were noted;

- adopted the Recommendation for a Recommendation in COM(2025) 957/2 for transmission to the Council and, for information, to the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the European Central Bank, the European Investment Bank and the national parliaments, together with the staff working document distributed as SWD(2025) 957/2, the contents of which were noted;
- adopted the proposal for a report in COM(2025) 958/2 for transmission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank, and, for information, to the national parliaments;
- adopted the Recommendation for a Recommendation in COM(2025) 959/2 for transmission to the Council, and, for information, to the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the European Central Bank, the European Investment Bank and the national parliaments.

## **14. OTHER BUSINESS**

### ***14.1. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS***

Ms KALLAS reported on the latest developments in external relations.

She began by referring to the situation in Ukraine and the ongoing peace plan talks. She felt that the impact of EU sanctions targeting the Russian shadow fleet and of American sanctions on Russian oil was creating a favourable environment for the talks, as was the possibility of Ukraine receiving loans backed by frozen Russian assets. She stressed the importance of continuing to

work on President Trump's 28-point peace plan for Ukraine, which, as things stood, did not impose any obligations on Russia. Lastly, EU foreign ministers would hold an informal meeting on Wednesday 26 November to discuss that very issue.

With regard to Gaza, Ms KALLAS welcomed the new UN Security Council resolution. In her view, the next step was to work towards establishing an international force to keep the peace. In that connection, at the Foreign Affairs Council held on 20 November, Ministers had expressed their support for expanding the mandate of the two missions under the Common Security and Defence Policy, namely EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS, and for stepping up European coordination efforts under the auspices of the Civil-Military Coordination Centre.

Finally, Ms KALLAS referred to EU-Asia relations, pointing out that some members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) had recently called for a free trade agreement with the EU.

The brief discussion that followed focused on the prospects for peace in Ukraine, as well as the EU's trade negotiations with certain Asian countries and the recent EU-ASEAN meeting in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia).

The Commission took note of this information.

#### **14.2. YOUTH DIALOGUES**

Mr MICALLEF gave an update on the first round of Youth Dialogues held in 2025. In his view, the dialogues helped encourage young people to take part in the EU decision-making process and provided direct input into the Commission's priorities. Feedback from the participants had been very positive and they had called for more structured follow-up and closer involvement in the policy-making processes. He also recalled that 2025 marked an important milestone with the first application of the youth check to

the Commission's work programme.

In the course of the brief discussion that followed, the College noted the relevance of holding meetings with young Europeans in a less formal environment. It was also important to ensure that Members of the Commission visiting a Member State took the time to meet young people in various real-life settings and not just at universities.

The Commission took note of this information.

#### ***14.3. INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN***

On this 25<sup>th</sup> of November, which marked the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Ms MÎNZATU and Ms LAHBIB addressed the difficulties linked to gender equality and the backsliding currently being witnessed in our societies. They pointed out that statistical data also showed an increase in gender-based violence, particularly online.

They noted that, for 2025, the main theme of this International Day was tech-driven gender-based violence in the digital world, where there was a sustained increase in threats against women and girls. They deplored the shortcomings of legislation in this field, the slowness of legal proceedings, the lack of legal recognition of this type of attack in certain countries, and the impunity of digital platforms. They also pointed to the rapidly changing situation as new forms of abuse using artificial intelligence were emerging. They called for the current regulatory framework to be updated, as it fell short of what was required and was ill-suited to the fast-changing nature of the virtual world.

The Commission took note of this information.

#### ***14.4. 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 'DEMAND THE FULL SUSPENSION OF THE EU-ISRAEL ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT IN VIEW OF ISRAEL'S VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS'***

***(C(2025) 8013)***

***14.5. 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 'EU STARS ON MY PASSPORT (STAR-PASS)'***

***(C(2025) 7935)***

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ presented to the College two European Citizens' Initiatives for registration by the Commission.

The first initiative entitled, in the authentic language (English), 'Demand the full suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement in view of Israel's violations of human rights' called for the EU-Israel Association Agreement to be completely suspended owing to human rights violations by Israel.

The second initiative entitled, in the authentic language (English), 'EU Stars On My Passport (STAR-PASS)' called on the Member States to introduce an additional option for EU Member State passport covers. The cover would have a blue background with a circle of gold stars and would bear the words 'EUROPEAN UNION'.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ pointed out that the Commission was required to register a citizens' initiative if the conditions set out in the Regulation of 17 April 2019 on European Citizens' Initiatives were met, including the requirement that no part of the initiative in question should be manifestly outside the scope of the Commission's powers.

Noting that the two requests for action did not manifestly fall outside the powers conferred on the Commission, Mr ŠEFČOVIČ proposed that they should be registered. The organisers could then start collecting the necessary signatures, namely at least one million in seven Member States. Only after the organisers had obtained that number of signatures would the Commission have to examine the substance of the requests for action.

Following this presentation, the Commission confirmed that the citizens' initiatives 'Demand the full suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement in view of Israel's violations of human rights' and 'EU Stars On My Passport (STAR-PASS)' met the conditions for registration. In accordance with C(2025) 8013 and C(2025) 7935, it therefore decided to inform the organisers and authorised Mr ŠEFČOVIČ to sign the replies on behalf of the College, to send them to the organisers, and to publish them, for information, in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

The Commission also agreed to transmit these decisions, for information, to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the national parliaments.

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The meeting closed at 14.30.