



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

PV(2026) 2558 final

- English translation of the French version which is authentic -

Brussels, 13 April 2026

TEXTE EN

MINUTES

of the 2558th meeting of the Commission

held in Brussels

(Berlaymont)

on Wednesday 4 March 2026

(morning)

and

Friday 6 March 2026

(morning)

—

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The 2558th meeting of the Commission was held in two parts:

- on Wednesday 4 March 2026, from 9.04 to 12.06;
- on Friday 6 March 2026, from 9.05 to 12.20.

First sitting: Wednesday 4 March 2026 (morning)

The sitting opened at 9.04 with Ms von der LEYEN, President, in the chair.

Present:

Ms von der LEYEN	President	
Ms RIBERA	Executive Vice-President	
Ms VIRKKUNEN	Executive Vice-President	
Mr SÉJOURNÉ	Executive Vice-President	
Ms MÎNZATU	Executive Vice-President	
Mr FITTO	Executive Vice-President	
Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Member	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Member	
Ms ŠUICA	Member	
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member	Item 8 (in part) and items 9/10 to 11 (in part)
Mr HOEKSTRA	Member	
Mr KUBILIUS	Member	
Mr SÍKELA	Member	
Mr KADIS	Member	
Ms ALBUQUERQUE	Member	
Ms LAHBIB	Member	
Mr BRUNNER	Member	Items 1 to 12 (in part)
Ms ROSWALL	Member	
Mr SERAFIN	Member	

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Ms ZAHARIEVA	Member
Mr McGRATH	Member
Mr TZITZIKOSTAS	Member
Mr HANSEN	Member
Mr MICALLEF	Member

Items 8 to 11 (in part),
and 12 to 13

Absent:

Ms KALLAS	High Representative / Vice-President
Ms KOS	Member
Mr JØRGENSEN	Member

The following also sat in:

Mr DE GREGORIO	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	
Mr VAN KEMSEKE	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	Item 8
Mr CALACEAN	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	Item 12
Ms REILLY	Member of the PRESIDENT's cabinet	Item 11
Ms REICHSTEIN	Member of the PRESIDENT's cabinet	Items 9/10
Ms SEMLALI	Policy Assistant in the PRESIDENT's cabinet	
Mr TAQUET-GRAZIANI	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(2026) 2558/FINAL; SEC(2026) 2558/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(2026) 2558)

The Commission considered the Secretary-General's report on the weekly meeting of Heads of Cabinet held on Monday 2 March and Tuesday 3 March 2026.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

(PV(2026) 2552; PV(2026) 2552, PART II; PV(2026) 2553; PV(2026) 2554)

The Commission approved the minutes of its 2552nd, 2553rd and 2554th meetings of 23 and 29 January and 10 February 2026, and held over approval of the minutes of its 2555th, 2556th and 2557th meetings of 18 and 26 February and 2 March 2026 for a later date.

4. INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

(RCC(2026) 158)

The Commission took note of the record of the meeting of the Interinstitutional Relations Group (GRI) held on Friday 27 February 2026 (RCC(2026) 158).

The Commission approved the lines proposed for the following points:

- **Amendment of Regulation (EU) 2021/691 as regards support to workers**

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affected by imminent job displacement in enterprises undergoing restructuring (Regulation) – SOMMEN report – 2025/0073 (COD)

Line set out in SI(2026) 41.

- **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(2026) 42/2.

- **Signing, on behalf of the European Union, and provisional application of the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Union and the Principality of Andorra and the Republic of San Marino, respectively (Council Decision) – 2018/0102 (NLE) / Conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Union and the Principality of Andorra and the Republic of San Marino, respectively (Council Decision) – 2024/0101 (NLE)**

Line set out in SI(2026) 43.

- **Agreement between the European Union and the Principality of Andorra on several aspects in the field of border management / Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of San Marino on several aspects in the field of border management**

Line set out in SI(2026) 44.

The Commission took note of the following point:

- **Information on the administrative arrangement on the United Kingdom (UK) participation in EU Election Observation Missions (EU EOM)**

Information set out in SI(2026) 46.

**5. COORDINATION OF EXTERNAL ACTION
(RCC(2026) 208)**

The Commission took note of the operational conclusions in RCC(2026) 208 of the meeting of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO) held on Thursday 26 February 2026.

6. WRITTEN PROCEDURES, EMPOWERMENT AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

**6.1. WRITTEN PROCEDURES APPROVED
(SEC(2026) 55 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 23 and 28 February 2026.

**6.2. EMPOWERMENT
(SEC(2026) 56 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted between 23 and 28 February 2026.

**6.3. DELEGATION / SUBDELEGATION OF POWERS
(SEC(2026) 57 ET SEQ.)**

The Commission took note of the Secretariat-General's memoranda recording decisions adopted under the delegation and subdelegation procedures between 23 and 28 February 2026, as archived in Decide.

**6.4. WRITTEN PROCEDURES SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED
(SEC(2026) 58 AND /2)**

The Commission took note of the written procedures specifically identified for which the time limit expired between 2 and 6 March 2026.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS
(SEC(2026) 59 AND /2)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
(PERS(2026) 20 AND /2)

During the meeting, Mr SERAFIN presented an additional proposal for an administrative decision, which was tabled directly to the College for approval. It was proposed to approve the internal publication of the vacancy notice for the post of Director-General for Competition.

**7.1. DG COMPETITION – AUTHORISATION OF THE INTERNAL
PUBLICATION OF A DIRECTOR-GENERAL POST AT GRADE
AD15/16**
(PERS(2026) 21)

On a proposal from Mr SERAFIN, in agreement with the PRESIDENT, and after consulting Ms RIBERA, the Commission decided to authorise the internal publication, at grade AD15/AD16, of the vacancy notice set out in PERS(2026) 21 for the post of Director-General of the Directorate-General for Competition, in accordance with Article 29(1)(a)(i) and (iii) of the Staff Regulations.

This decision would take effect immediately.

**7.2. SECRETARIAT-GENERAL – EUROPEAN COMMISSION DECISIONS
ON POST TERM-OF-OFFICE ACTIVITIES OF FORMER MEMBERS
OF THE COMMISSION**
(C(2026) 9007; C(2026) 9008; C(2026) 9009)

The Commission decided that the professional activities envisaged by Ms Věra JOUROVÁ and Ms Ylva JOHANSSON 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(2026) 9007, C(2026) 9008 and C(2026) 9009.

8. PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK OF MEASURES FOR THE ACCELERATION OF INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY AND DECARBONISATION IN STRATEGIC SECTORS AND AMENDING REGULATIONS (EU) 2018/1724, (EU) 2024/1735 AND (EU) 2024/3110 (COM(2026) 100 TO /3; SWD(2026) 70; SWD(2026) 71; SWD(2026) 72; SEC(2026) 70; RCC(2026) 17)

The PRESIDENT introduced the proposal for a Regulation on measures to accelerate EU industrial capacity, stressing the importance for Europe of protecting its strategic industries from unfair competition and of creating a favourable business environment. This was a further step after the adoption in 2024 of the Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA), which covered the clean-tech sectors and aimed to boost the competitiveness of the EU industries and technologies that were essential for decarbonisation. The proposal presented that day included the energy-intensive and automotive industries on the basis of the same principles, namely ensuring a level playing field and faster permitting procedures.

Mr SÉJOURNÉ began by describing the reasons for drawing up the proposal. He explained that production in strategic industries on EU territory was a matter of economic and strategic security. Recent developments proved this, with the

problems in transporting goods and energy caused by the war in the Middle East and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. He stressed the importance for the EU – in cooperation with its trusted partners – of being autonomous in producing the most critical components of its economy. It was also a question of saving jobs in an EU that had already lost around 200 000 industrial jobs in the electro-intensive and automotive sectors since the beginning of the Commission's term of office, mainly because of competition from China. Lastly, he stressed the importance of the measures presented that day in ensuring that the transition to a cleaner and digital economy also contributed to job creation and autonomy.

He then presented the content of the proposal, the main objectives of which were to increase demand for low-carbon technologies and products manufactured in Europe and to ensure that investment – whether public or private, domestic or foreign – prioritised EU production. He detailed the three main chapters of the proposal. The first chapter covered four types of public funding – public procurement, subsidies, auctions and State aid – in three strategic sectors: heavy industry, clean technologies and automotive. The second chapter regulated direct investment from abroad, laying down conditions to be met, especially in terms of European jobs. The third chapter introduced industrial acceleration areas designed to enable industrial symbiosis and encourage clean manufacturing projects. The creation of these areas by the Member States would help industrial projects access permits, energy, raw materials and financing.

Lastly, Mr SÉJOURNÉ explained how the proposal was designed. It was targeted at a limited number of critical components in a small number of strategic sectors that received public funding. He highlighted that the proposal was also open to the EU's trusted partners, since it provided for equivalence for products from non-EU countries with which the EU had trade agreements. This equivalence would not apply to countries that did not respect the principle of reciprocity or where there was a risk of dependency. He added that the proposal furthered simplification efforts

because it was based on a self-certification mechanism for businesses and therefore imposed no additional administrative burden on them.

He concluded by saying that the proposal struck a fair balance and as such could be defended before the European Parliament and the Council.

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

- broad support for the proposal, which was the result of lengthy internal discussions within the Commission and struck a delicate political, technical and legal balance;
- the need to reconcile, on the one hand, the model of an open European market and free competition and, on the other, the geopolitical need to defend European interests in a global economy dominated by subsidies and the industrial overcapacity of certain players;
- support for introducing targeted and proportionate requirements for the origin of ‘Made in EU’ products, but also a call for more detailed analysis of the costs and benefits of those new requirements by sector and by Member State; an analysis that could feed into the subsequent legislative process and help implement the Regulation;
- the broad scope of the ‘Made in EU’ approach, which also covered the EU’s trusted partners willing to be involved fairly in European value chains, especially partners that had concluded free trade agreements with the EU or were parties to the WTO’s Agreement on Government Procurement;
- in that context, the delegated powers that the Commission would have for amending the list of those partners on the basis of the principle of reciprocity;
- the political case for strengthening the role of the bioeconomy as a strategic

means for the EU to decarbonise its industry while creating new jobs, and the need for further reflection for a biotech act II;

- questions about possibly excluding certain partners from EU nuclear energy tenders and the potential consequences of this possibility for the EU economy;
- the importance, of good public communication with stakeholders, the European Parliament, the Member States and the EU's international partners to explain the content and the expected impact of the Regulation on European industry, international trade and foreign direct investment;
- the proposal's important role in boosting the competitiveness of EU manufacturing, encouraging foreign investment with added value for the European economy, speeding up permitting and simplifying and streamlining procedures – especially through the use of European business wallets – while providing for a review clause that would allow the impact on the industrial sectors concerned to be fully assessed;
- at the same time, the relevance for the EU of continuing to work towards completing the single market to reduce administrative and energy-related costs and improve the business environment, as part of a whole set of measures to increase European competitiveness, which that day's proposal was an integral part of;
- the political message that the proposal sent to international partners, namely that the EU remained the most reliable partner in a turbulent world, that it wished to diversify its supplies of critical components and keep its public procurement markets open, that it respected its international commitments, but also had the necessary tools to recalibrate its international economic relations in the absence of reciprocity from non-EU countries or in the event of risks to its economic security.

In response to the comments, Mr SÉJOURNÉ said that the proposal aimed to adapt the EU's economic model to the current geopolitical context, while taking due account of the free trade agreements the EU had concluded and the need to reduce certain economic dependencies. Single market harmonisation remained at the heart of the proposal, so that European companies could grow and the EU diversify its international trade relations. He stressed the importance of maintaining European production and know-how in batteries, clean technologies and steel and aluminium, in order to be able to cope with any economic shock or diplomatic tension.

Lastly, he explained that the choice of products equivalent to Made in EU for European public procurement covered a list of trusted partner countries, which would have to comply with the principle of reciprocity. He stressed that European public money had to support EU autonomy and that the cost of this strategic autonomy would certainly be lower than European dependence on other global players.

The PRESIDENT wound up the debate by noting the need for rules-based international trade and fair competition, and the geopolitical imperative of ensuring certain technologies were produced in Europe to avoid economic dependencies. She felt that the solution offered by that day's proposal struck the right balance between those two requirements in full compliance with the trade rules negotiated between the EU and the countries party to free trade agreements and the WTO's Agreement on Government Procurement. Lastly, she stressed the usefulness of reviewing the Regulation after an initial period of application to identify the need for subsequent adjustments.

Following these presentations, the Commission adopted the proposal for a Regulation in COM(2026) 100/3, 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 staff working document, the impact assessment, the summary thereof and the opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny

Board in SWD(2026) 70, SWD(2026) 71, SWD(2026) 72 and SEC(2026) 70, the contents of which were noted.

- 9. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ON THE EU INDUSTRIAL MARITIME STRATEGY
(COM(2026) 111 TO /3; RCC(2026) 14)**
- 10. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – EU PORTS STRATEGY
(COM(2026) 112 TO /3; SWD(2026) 81; RCC(2026) 14)**

Mr FITTO introduced the two Communications presented that day by stressing the strategic nature of the maritime sector and the key role of ports, maritime industry and maritime transport for the competitiveness, security and cohesion of the EU, particularly in an increasingly volatile geopolitical environment. He highlighted the numerous challenges facing the sector, such as the cost of the energy transition, an ageing workforce and increased global competition.

He stated that the proposed industrial maritime and port strategies responded to the requests of stakeholders, and were based on extensive consultation and an integrated, comprehensive approach that covered all segments of the maritime ecosystem. The strategies provided important indications of the European and national funding that could be mobilised and complemented by private funding. Finally, Mr FITTO considered that they sent a strong message to the industrial maritime and port authorities, whose concerns had been duly taken into account.

Mr TZITZIKOSTAS noted that it was essential to have in place a policy framework

to help the maritime industry speed up innovation, digitalisation and the clean energy transition, and develop industrial opportunities to remain competitive globally. Maritime connections were essential lifelines for many European regions and islands, and their strategic importance was only growing in an unstable geopolitical context. He added that European manufacturing and maritime industries were fundamental to the EU's sovereignty, as they were key enablers of European independence and strategic autonomy.

He stressed that the maritime sector was a driver of growth, thanks to trade within the EU and with external partners. However, the sector was facing many challenges linked to global competition, increasing energy and production costs and the difficulty of maintaining a skilled workforce. With the exception of high-end shipbuilding and advanced technologies, all segments of the sector had lost market shares. It was therefore essential to take immediate action to preserve the EU's global competitiveness. He noted that the European fleet was rapidly losing ground to the fleets of countries in Asia. The industrial maritime strategy therefore aimed to strengthen the EU's maritime leadership in shipbuilding. The strategy included 16 flagship actions, distributed across the three pillars of shipyards, transport and defence.

Mr TZITZIKOSTAS also considered it crucial to help the maritime sector decarbonise, notably by ensuring that revenues from the Emissions Trading System (ETS) were reinvested in the sector to make this transition a success. He added that it would probably be necessary to revise EU legislation in the light of decisions expected from the International Maritime Organization (IMO). He also indicated that EU capabilities should be developed for dual use transport and the construction of ice-breaking vessels, which were important for sovereignty, defence and security, particularly in the Arctic and the Baltic. He highlighted that the strategy also included measures to develop skills, training and retraining for quality jobs throughout the maritime sector.

With regard to the port strategy, Mr TZITZIKOSTAS reminded the College that ports were the backbone of the EU economy. Around 74% of external trade passed through ports, along with about 400 million passengers annually. More than 400 000 people were employed directly in the port sector. Ports were a gateway to and from the EU, and they now needed to digitalise, decarbonise and become more secure. The port strategy rested on the five pillars of competitiveness, energy transition, security, employment and investment, and contained several flagship initiatives. The strategy proposed common principles for port projects receiving EU funding and criteria for EU investment projects in third country ports. Enhanced cooperation in the fight against crime, including cybercrime, was also planned.

Mr TZITZIKOSTAS added that numerous employment measures would be implemented and that a roadmap for small ports would be drawn up. The existing instruments would be used to the fullest to decarbonise the fleet and finance the shipyards of the future through the Horizon Europe programme. He concluded by expressing the wish that, in addition to technical measures, the two strategies would help set the course for a sustainable and prosperous maritime future and strengthen the EU's strategic autonomy.

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

- the importance of incorporating a security dimension into the port strategy, as this was key to protecting the territory of the EU, its interests and its citizens through better coordination of security between the relevant services, a strengthened fight against corruption and organised crime, and international cooperation to export high security standards;
- a reminder that the security challenges included cybersecurity, vigilance with regard to the IT value chain and the protection of submarine cables in order to ensure the competitiveness and security of EU ports;

- the need also to take into account economic security issues, and the example of protective measures taken by other global players;
- the observation that the proposed strategies were essential for the blue economy, supported maritime fisheries and aquaculture and formed part of the broader context of the European Ocean Pact;
- a reminder that the Commission’s Ocean Eye initiative, which aimed at strengthening ocean observation capacities and international cooperation to that end, had been very well received by the various stakeholders in the EU and beyond;
- the link between the maritime sector, the greening of the economy and the need for coordination to avoid distortions of competition at international level;
- in this context, the suggested strengthening of coordination with financial institutions such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB);
- the importance of modernising vessels and promoting clean maritime transport, including by means of ETS revenues and the European Innovation Fund, while monitoring the risks of the existing rules being circumvented;
- a reminder of the strategic role played by seaports, particularly in the Mediterranean, in connecting the EU to the Indo-Pacific and Africa, and of their key contribution to the EU’s strategic autonomy;
- the need for the EU to control the critical supply chain and ensure the security of corridors and crossing points such as the Strait of Hormuz, as demonstrated by recent events;
- the observation that ports were crucial for the EU’s independence, security and sovereignty, and that they needed to be developed further so that they could be

used for both civilian and military purposes, including to facilitate military transport and mobility;

- a reminder that, in a crisis situation, ports were also essential for the deployment inland of defence and supply capabilities;
- the observation that port infrastructures were getting old and were in need of funding, including EU funding, to strengthen the competitiveness and resilience of ports; the need, in parallel, to monitor non-EU companies involved in the improvement of these infrastructures;
- the importance of paying attention to investments in ports located in countries in the Global South, which were important for the EU's security and economy and for its interests in the extraction and refining of critical raw materials;
- a reminder of the work under way on a future EU exemption scheme for public aid to ports;
- the need to support, including by means of subsidies, the EU's maritime industry, and in particular shipyards and maritime transport, in its decarbonisation effort, while paying particular attention to maintaining competitiveness in an increasingly competitive sector;
- the importance of training in encouraging the development of maritime and port skills, and the role that academic institutions such as the University for the Mediterranean could play in this respect;
- the key role of workers in value chains and the recognition of the maritime sector as a potential source of skilled jobs, with an increased need for skills development to face the challenges of the future.

The PRESIDENT concluded by pointing out that around 80% of ETS revenues were transferred to the Member States, which spent around 5% of these revenues on

average on the decarbonisation of their industry. Meanwhile, around 20% were paid into the EU budget, all of which was invested in the industrial transition and in research and development.

Following these presentations, the Commission:

- approved the Communication in COM(2026) 111/3 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(2026) 112/3 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 distributed as SWD(2026) 81, the contents of which were noted.

**11. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY 2026-2030
(COM(2026) 113 AND /2; SWD(2026) 82; RCC(2026) 16)**

Ms MÎNZATU introduced the Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030, stressing that gender equality was a necessity and that Europe would not backslide on its commitment to defending women's rights. She pointed to the major progress made in recent years thanks to an innovative legal framework adopted by the Commission during its previous term of office, and stressed that the key task now was to implement the applicable rules throughout the EU. On that point, she made particular mention of the Directives on work-life balance, pay transparency,

combating violence against women and domestic violence, and improving the gender balance on corporate boards.

She stressed the importance of women's economic empowerment, highlighting the gender gaps that still existed, particularly in terms of pay and pensions. Closing those gaps could create 10 million additional jobs by 2050 and boost GDP by 10%. In this context, she noted the tie-in with the strategy on intergenerational fairness that was also being tabled that day.

Ms MÎNZATU added that it was also necessary to reduce gender-related health inequalities through new projects and gender-sensitive clinical trials. In addition, the strategy focused on women's political empowerment, as the presence of women in decision-making positions was systemic for a real transformation of society. She concluded by noting that gender equality was also important in terms of training to encourage greater diversity, whether it was training for boys in health- and education-related subjects or for girls in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).

Ms LAHBIB said that the strategy being presented that day covered all the principles set out in the EU Roadmap for Women's Rights that the Commission had presented in 2025. She explained that the strategy was structured around eight principles, accompanied by 30 concrete measures. The first principle related to tackling gender-based violence, both offline and online. One in three women in Europe would experience violence during their lives and, every week, more than 10 femicides were committed in the EU. She stressed the need for full implementation of the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, and also stressed the EU-wide objective of putting in place a consent-based definition of rape. Moreover, she underlined the importance of continuing a structured dialogue with online platforms to tackle the escalation of online violence.

The second principle concerned women's health. The strategy devoted a specific section to that issue and included a number of new measures, including cooperation

with the World Health Organization to improve the quality and accessibility of women's healthcare. As regards the third principle, equal pay and financial independence, Ms LAHBIB noted that significant pressure was being brought to bear by certain players in the business sector to postpone implementation of the Pay Transparency Directive. However, she stressed that the Commission would give Member States and social partners its full support to ensure effective and swift implementation of the Directive.

As regards the fourth principle, on work-life balance and gender equality in care, Ms LAHBIB announced the forthcoming publication of a European Care Deal with a strong focus on gender issues. To illustrate the importance of the fifth principle, which concerned gender equality in employment and working conditions, including measures to better address sexual harassment in the workplace under the future Quality Jobs Act, she noted that over 40% of women aged 18-29 had been victims of sexual harassment at work in the EU.

As regards the sixth principle on inclusive education, she announced an initiative to encourage more men to join the health and education sectors, alongside continued efforts to attract more women into science and other sectors in which they were under-represented. The seventh principle focused on equality in public and political life. The Commission would present a Recommendation on safety in politics, addressing both offline and online threats, including disinformation, with a particular focus on women in politics.

The eighth principle underlined the need for robust gender mainstreaming across all EU policies, including the budgetary process. Ms LAHBIB stressed that gender equality would also remain a key priority with respect to the EU's external action and humanitarian aid, with a particular focus on access to water, sanitation, education and healthcare for women and girls. She concluded by stressing that the strategy sent a clear message: the EU would not waver on its commitment to promoting gender equality for the benefit of everyone in the EU.

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

- broad support for the strategy, and the observation that gender inequalities remained, including in terms of pay, and required determined follow-up;
- concern that women were under-represented in research, innovation and start-ups, despite their excellent educational outcomes, and support for an upcoming action plan targeting female entrepreneurs;
- the observation that there had been backsliding on gender equality; this was particularly evident in the recent difficulties encountered in securing international agreement on fundamental principles, such as equal opportunities for women's career development;
- the need to factor in the digital world, especially the rapid rise in online violence, and the need for effective enforcement of the Digital Services Act, to make the online space safe for everyone;
- support for a consent-based definition of rape and satisfaction with recent legislative progress in the area of victims' rights;
- the importance of addressing the issue of access to finance for women in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as agriculture;
- the relevance of ensuring that gender-equality policies also addressed issues that disproportionately affected men and boys, including inequality in terms of life expectancy and addiction, and support for initiatives encouraging men to move into female-dominated sectors;
- the fact that there were differences between the public and private sectors in terms of gender inequalities, highlighting the need for tailored responses.

In response to some of the points raised during the discussion, the PRESIDENT stressed that the issue of work-life balance raised the question of caring for relatives in our societies. She noted that investments in quality childcare and schools, as well as adequate parental leave, benefited both men and women. She concluded by stressing that gender equality strategies were intended to benefit everyone.

Following these presentations, the Commission agreed, on a proposal from the PRESIDENT, that the Communication in COM(2026) 113/2 would be formally adopted by written procedure, the deadline for which was set at 10.00 on Thursday 5 March 2026 (PE/2026/1455).

**12. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – STRATEGY ON INTERGENERATIONAL FAIRNESS
(COM(2026) 110 AND /2; SWD(2026) 80 AND /2; RCC(2026) 15)**

Ms MÎNZATU presented the Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness, which was a new approach to ensuring that long-term considerations were embedded more systematically in EU policymaking. The strategy's overarching goal was to guarantee that today's decisions were made with the future in mind, ensuring a fair balance of benefits and burdens across all generations.

She referred to the proposals put forward by young people during the Youth Policy Dialogue, for example on pensions, tackling climate change and housing policies. Their proposals differed from the positions traditionally taken by politicians. Ms MÎNZATU therefore stressed the importance of fully involving the younger generations in policymaking, as they would be the most affected by new policies in the longer term. She added that generations who had not yet voted or had not yet

been born would be directly affected by the decisions taken today, meaning they had to be taken into account in the policymaking process for all EU policies.

Mr MICALLEF stressed that, in drawing up the strategy being presented that day, one of the major challenges had been to agree on a common definition of the cross-cutting concept of intergenerational fairness. The strategy comprised two complementary strands: (i) ensuring that long-term thinking was more systematically embedded in EU policymaking, and (ii) giving greater consideration to young people's opinions and concerns to strike a better balance between the needs of current and future generations. With demographic change and an ageing European population, young people were becoming the largest minority population in the EU, but their concerns were often sidelined. However, young people would live the longest with the consequences of decisions taken today, meaning they needed to be heard and fully involved in policymaking.

Mr MICALLEF then explained that the strategy was based on an analysis of the impact that the megatrends shaping European society today, such as demographic change and the green and digital transitions, might have on both current and future generations. The strategy then assessed the economic, social, demographic and environmental costs of doing nothing. To address the impacts of these megatrends, the strategy proposed a new intergenerational fairness 'contract', inspired by the work of the European Citizens' Panel on this topic. The contract was built on three pillars: (i) fairer and more forward-looking policymaking; (ii) fairer opportunities to ensure that no generation would be left behind, and to unite all generations around shared goals; and (iii) fairer places, since a person's future prospects also depended to a large extent on where they were born or where they lived.

The three pillars were translated into 15 concrete measures, which Mr MICALLEF illustrated with three examples. First, an intergenerational fairness index would be created, bringing together a set of indicators to measure intergenerational fairness and better assess the contribution of public policies to building the future, looking

beyond GDP alone. Second, in cooperation with the European Committee of the Regions, local and regional initiatives would be developed bringing together different generations to think about the future of their regions. Lastly, the Futures Balance tool, an AI-based policy assessment tool, would be rolled out and used systematically at all levels. The tool was designed to identify the long-term implications of policy choices, their possible spillover effects and alternative options.

Mr MICALLEF stressed the need to launch these activities within the next 12 months to achieve tangible results by 2028, which was when a review would be carried out as part of the United Nations Declaration on future generations. The strategy also highlighted what already existed, as many EU policies already included an intergenerational dimension. By way of example, he mentioned generational renewal in agriculture, the development of supplementary pensions under the Savings and Investments Union, the European Democracy Shield and the European Semester. He concluded his presentation by saying that the success of this strategy would be determined by the extent to which it permeated all of the Commission's work.

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

- the need to increase awareness of this approach and the measures taken, particularly in order to bolster the bond of trust with young people;
- the importance also of better addressing the specific challenges faced by older people, including reduced visibility in public life, certain forms of discrimination in terms of employment and access to healthcare, the digital divide, loneliness and the greater likelihood of being a victim of fraud and theft;

- the relevance of the European demography toolbox as a means of feeding into long-term thinking, as well as the upcoming longevity roadmap and the third demography Report;
- the need to also involve young people from outside the EU.

Following these presentations, the Commission agreed, on a proposal from the PRESIDENT, that the Communication in COM(2026) 110/2 would be formally adopted by written procedure, the deadline for which was set at 10.00 on Thursday 5 March 2026 (PE/2026/1407).

13. OTHER BUSINESS

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION ON THE REQUEST FOR REGISTRATION OF THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ENTITLED 'EUROPEAN PUBLIC SOCIAL NETWORK' PURSUANT TO REGULATION (EU) 2019/788 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL (C(2026) 1492)

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ presented to the College the request for registration of the European Citizens' Initiative entitled, in the authentic language (English), 'European Public Social Network'.

The aim of the initiative, as expressed by the organisers, was to ask the Commission to establish a public social media platform at the European level, which would form an alternative to the current platforms and be impartial and independent from political pressures while also guaranteeing the rights of all people without distinction.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ 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 he therefore proposed to register it. He concluded his presentation by pointing out that the organisers would now have to start collecting the necessary number of signatures, i.e. at least one 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 'European Public Social Network' had met the conditions needed for it to be registered. In accordance with C(2026) 1492, 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 first sitting closed at 12.06.

Second sitting: Friday 6 March 2026 (morning)

The second 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	Item 14 (in part)
Ms KALLAS	High Representative / Vice-President	Item 14 (in part)
Ms MÎNZATU	Executive Vice-President	
Mr FITTO	Executive Vice-President	
Mr DOMBROVSKIS	Member	
Ms ŠUICA	Member	
Mr VÁRHELYI	Member	
Mr HOEKSTRA	Member	
Ms KOS	Member	
Mr SÍKELA	Member	
Mr KADIS	Member	
Ms ALBUQUERQUE	Member	
Ms LAHBIB	Member	
Ms ROSWALL	Member	
Mr SERAFIN	Member	
Mr JØRGENSEN	Member	
Ms ZAHARIEVA	Member	
Mr TZITZIKOSTAS	Member	
Mr HANSEN	Member	
Mr MICALLEF	Member	

Absent:

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ	Member
Mr KUBILIUS	Member
Mr BRUNNER	Member
Mr McGRATH	Member

The following also sat in:

Mr SEIBERT	Head of Cabinet to the PRESIDENT
Mr DE GREGORIO	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
Mr BEHRNDT	Deputy Secretary-General
Ms PETKOVA	Director of Coordination and Administration in the PRESIDENT's cabinet
Mr VAN KEMSEKE	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet
Mr PIERGIOVANNI	Adviser in the PRESIDENT's cabinet
Ms SEMLALI	Policy Assistant in the PRESIDENT's cabinet

The following attended the introductory part of the orientation debate:

Mr BIROL	Executive Director of the International Energy Agency	Item 14 (in part)
Ms COZZI	Director of 'Sustainability, Technology and Outlooks' at the International Energy Agency	Item 14 (in part)
Mr BLASI	Special Advisor to the Executive Director of the International Energy Agency	Item 14 (in part)

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

PV(2026) 2558 final

14. ORIENTATION DEBATE ON ENERGY PRICES (SEC(2026) 77)

The PRESIDENT opened the orientation debate on energy prices by welcoming Mr Fatih Birol, Executive Director at the International Energy Agency (IAE). The College had already planned to address the issue of the structurally high energy prices in Europe before the recent escalation of tensions in the Middle East. The PRESIDENT noted that the current geopolitical context made this discussion all the more urgent, since energy prices were a major obstacle to the EU economy's competitiveness.

During his presentation, Mr Birol took stock of the energy situation in the wake of the conflict in the Middle East. He then went on to discuss the transformation of the European energy system. Following an exchange of views with the College, the PRESIDENT warmly thanked Mr Birol for attending the Commission's meeting.

The College then had an orientation debate on potential options that could contribute to reducing energy prices in Europe.

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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 12.20.