Council of the European Union

Brussels, 1 July 2026
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PARLNAT

DRAFT MINUTES

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
(General Affairs)

16 June 2026

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Council adopted the agenda set out in document 9939/1/26 REV 1.

2. Approval of "A" items

a) Non-legislative list 9940/1/26 REV 1

The Council adopted all the "A" items listed in the document above, including all linguistic COR and REV documents presented for adoption.

b) Legislative list (Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union) 9942/26

Economic and Financial Affairs

1. Council position on DAB No 1/2026: surplus 2025 SC 9917/26
Adoption 9916/26 + ADD 1
Approval of a letter REV 2
approved by Coreper, Part 2, on 10.06.2026 FIN

The Council adopted the Council position and approved the letter. The item was taken in public session.

A statement by the Council to this item is set out in the Annex.

Legislative deliberations
(Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)

3. Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034: negotiating box SC 10058/26
Policy debate

The Council held a policy debate.

4. **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034**

a) **Regulation establishing the European Fund for economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and rural, fisheries and maritime, prosperity and security for the period 2028-2034 ('NRPP Regulation')**

9807/1/26 REV 1 + ADD 1-3
9808/26 + COR 1

The Council reached a partial general approach on the Regulation establishing the European Fund for economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and rural, fisheries and maritime, prosperity and security for the period 2028-2034.

Czechia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden presented statements, and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Romania presented joint statements, as set out in the Annex.

b) **Regulation on establishing the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), including the specific programme for defence research and innovation** [2]

10489/26 + ADD 1 REV 1 + ADD 2
10491/26 + COR 1

The Council reached a partial general approach on the Regulation on establishing the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), including the specific programme for defence research and innovation.

Austria and Slovakia presented statements and Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland as well as Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia presented joint statements, as set out in the Annex.

c) **Regulation establishing Global Europe**
Partial general approach

10432/26 + ADD 1
10442/26

The Council reached a partial general approach on the Regulation establishing Global Europe.

Bulgaria, Portugal and Spain presented statements, as set out in the Annex.

5. **Omnibus simplification legislative packages**
Progress report

9834/1/26 REV 1

The Council took note of the progress report.

6. **Any other business**

None.

Non-legislative activities

7.	Preparation of the European Council on 18-19 June 2026	🖐	
	a) Conclusions *Exchange of views*		7875/26
	b) Joint declaration on the EU legislative priorities for 2026 and One Europe, One Market Roadmap *State of play*		10395/26
8.	European Semester 2026: horizontal note on the integrated country-specific recommendations *Approval* *Transmission to the European Council*		9613/26
9.	**Eighteen-month programme of the Council (1 July 2026-31 December 2027)** ***Endorsement***	F3	10392/26

The Council endorsed the eighteen-month programme of the Council for the period of 1 July 2026 to 31 December 2027.

10.	Values of the Union in Hungary/Article 7(1) TEU reasoned proposal *State of play*		12266/1/18 REV 1 + REV 1 COR 1
11.	Any other business		
	a) Enlargement *Information from France and Germany*		10558/26

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❶ First reading

S Special legislative procedure

F3 Public debate (Article 8(3) of the Council's Rules of Procedure)

🖐 Restricted item

C Item based on a Commission proposal

Statements to the legislative A items set out in doc 9942/26

Ad "A" item 1: Council position on DAB No 1/2026: surplus 2025
Adoption
Approval of a letter

STATEMENT BY THE COUNCIL

"The Council notes that, in its presentation of the calculation of the financing of the budget [by category of own resources and by Member State], the Commission has reduced the level of detail and transparency by omitting the calculation of a "national contribution".

The discontinuation of information on the total current transfers paid by the general government of each Member State to the institutions of the European Union -figures which are subject to regular adjustments due to their basis in statistical aggregates- constitutes a break with EU financial reporting standards established at least since the financial year 2007, and also removes a standardised reference point for stakeholders, thereby limiting the possibility of conducting a well-informed analysis of contributions made to the EU budget.

The Council invites the Commission to reintroduce a calculation of "national contribution" in future draft budgets and draft amending budgets.

The adoption of this position on draft amending budget No 1/2026 is without prejudice to future or ongoing legislative deliberations that may be affected by the notion and concept of "national contributions".

<u>Statements to the legislative B items set out in doc. 9939/1/26 REV 1.</u>

<u>Ad "B" item 4 a):</u>	Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034 a) Regulation establishing the European Fund for economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and rural, fisheries and maritime, prosperity and security for the period 2028-2034 ('NRPP Regulation') *Partial general approach*

STATEMENT BY THE CZECH REPUBLIC

"The Czech Republic considers it important to reach a Partial General Approach on the Proposal for a Regulation on National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPP), so as to enable progress in the subsequent stages of the negotiations.

The Czech Republic appreciates the efforts made by the Presidency and the changes introduced in the compromise text. At the same time, it would like to underline that certain elements of the text should not be overlooked in the next stages of the negotiations.

In particular, some parts of the NRPP, including its annexes, are highly technical in nature and could not always be discussed in full detail. The Czech Republic therefore trusts that any inconsistencies which may emerge at a later stage — whether during the negotiations or during the preparation of the plan — will be duly addressed in the subsequent steps of the legislative process. This concerns, in particular, issues resulting from omissions or from elements that may not have been fully taken into account during the intensive phase leading to the Partial General Approach.

This applies notably to provisions linked to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Discussions on sectorial legislative proposals for the CAP and Common Markets Organization (CMO) will continue in the Council during the upcoming Irish Presidency and the position of the Council on both texts is expected to further develop. Considering that not all relevant agricultural provisions were transferred from the NRPP Regulation to the CAP and CMO Regulations, it is especially important to highlight that Partial General Approach for the NRPP cannot prejudge the work of AGRIFISH Council and its preparatory bodies on these two Regulations. Allowing a future discussion on a proper transitional period for the CAP will be especially necessary.

Overall, the Czech Republic remains committed to a constructive approach to the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the related legislative proposals with a view to reaching a balanced and timely agreement. In this context and in order to help to move the work forward, the Czech Republic supports the Partial General Approach as part of the broader package."

STATEMENT BY HUNGARY

“Hungary considers that the compromise text on the NRPP Regulation does not adequately reflect the real and practical risk that the approval process of the NRP Plans may significantly delay the start of implementation of the funds planned under the individual chapters, nor does the text provide for adequate chapter-level flexibility mechanisms to address these risks.

As a result, the text does not sufficiently ensure the fulfilment of the objective set out in the European Council conclusions, namely the need to ensure that EU funding reaches beneficiaries without interruption as of January 2028.“

STATEMENT BY ITALY

‘Italy thanks the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU for its hard work and, in light of the significant progress made during the negotiations, endorses the partial general approach on the Regulation.

In particular, Italy welcomes the increased visibility given to the common agricultural policy and the transfer of several key provisions relating to the CAP from the Plans Regulation to the relevant sectoral legislation; the improvements made to the governance of the Plans in order to better ensure continuity with the existing structures; the flexibility with regard to the institutional architecture of the Member States; the increased visibility given to the common fisheries policy, which nevertheless requires further efforts in terms of resource allocation; the progress made towards ensuring simplification and implementation, maintaining continuity with the current programming; and the introduction of specific co-financing rates for HOME funds.

Italy also welcomes the compromise reached on conditionality relating to the rule of law and fundamental rights. The relevant regulatory framework is now based on a more coherent and balanced approach, guided by the principles of legal certainty and proportionality and grounded in the appropriate involvement of Member States.

These elements represent significant improvements compared with the Commission’s original proposal and reflect a number of priorities that Italy has consistently supported throughout the negotiations.

At the same time, Italy wishes to reiterate its reservations regarding the insufficient safeguards envisaged for Cohesion Policy, which do not adequately preserve its specific nature and objectives. Italy stresses that Cohesion Policy, as a fundamental policy enshrined in the EU Treaties, requires stronger safeguards and greater resources to ensure its territorial dimension and long-term predictability.

Italy hopes that these concerns will be addressed in the course of the legislative process.’

STATEMENT BY LITHUANIA

“Despite the progress achieved so far on the NRPP proposal, the principle of “nothing is agreed until everything agreed” is still valid and Lithuania would like to draw attention to several important outstanding issues.

The latest version of the NRPP Regulation places a significant number of CAP-related provisions into brackets. As a result, the substance of the current agreement remains limited, with important elements such as financing, the overall EU contribution, key annexes and other essential provisions effectively deferred to future negotiations. Moreover, the partial general approach cannot be interpreted as an agreement to the proposed MFF structure.

This also raises a broader concern regarding the integrity of the CAP within the NRPP framework. The CAP should not be treated merely as one component of a horizontal planning and financing instrument. Its specific objectives, delivery model, control system and protected financing logic need to remain clearly identifiable and legally safeguarded within the overall architecture.

In addition, several CAP-related concerns remain unresolved, such as extension of output-based delivery model to CAP investment interventions, level of financial correction rates, flexibility for adjusting target values, placing of food processing outside the list of ring-fenced CAP interventions.

Given these unresolved issues, we remain concerned that key elements of the CAP architecture and implementation framework are not yet sufficiently safeguarded. Therefore, Lithuania believes that these concerns should be adequately addressed in the forthcoming negotiations.”

STATEMENT BY MALTA

“Malta acknowledges the considerable efforts undertaken by the Cypriot Presidency and the progress achieved in advancing discussions on the NRPP Regulation.

Nevertheless, Malta remains concerned that the proposed implementation framework does not explicitly preserve a genuine real cost-based implementation option alongside performance-based and simplified cost approaches.

Malta considers that a model primarily based on estimated costs and milestones may create significant budgetary, governance and accountability challenges, particularly where responsibility for implementation and financial risk is concentrated at central level, which should be carefully reflected in the design of a long-term framework.

Malta therefore maintains that the future framework should preserve a genuine choice between implementation models, including an explicit real cost-based option alongside performance-based and simplified cost approaches.

Malta further considers that, given that responsibility for implementation and financial risk lies with the Member State, the application of conditionalities under the Regulation - particularly where these rely on reports, assessments or similar instruments capable of giving rise to financial or implementation consequences, must be grounded on transparent, objective and verifiable criteria and applied in a manner that ensures legal certainty, proportionality, transparency and equal treatment.

Malta underlines that the principle that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed remains fully applicable. Malta reserves the right to revisit this issue in the context of future negotiations on the Regulation and in the context of the broader discussions on the MFF."

STATEMENT BY THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

"While acknowledging the progress achieved on the NRPP Regulation Slovakia supports continued efforts towards establishing simpler, realistic and workable rules for the future programming period bringing overall positive change to regions and people.

We share the common objective of all Member States to ensure the timely implementation of the National and Regional Partnership Plans. In this context, Slovakia has already launched its national preparations in a spirit of partnership, cooperation, and constructive engagement.

Given the importance of the NRPP Regulation, which brings together several Treaty-based policies and instruments, Slovakia continues to advocate for greater clarity, consistency, and coherence with sectoral legislations and the performance framework. Ensuring legal certainty, predictability, and clear implementation rules remain our key priority.

The proposal represents a fundamental shift in the delivery model and has the potential to contribute to modernisation of the Cohesion Policy. To achieve this objective, it is essential that this transformation also delivers genuine simplification for beneficiaries. Regarding the performance framework, Slovakia supports a results-oriented approach, provided that a greater flexibility is ensured for Member States while reducing the administrative burden. At the same time, the delivery framework should allow the use of the most appropriate implementation methods including the real-cost model in duly justified cases. Moreover, we advocate for removing inconsistencies regarding the verification obligations of the plan authorities, which, together with the broad definition of serious non-compliance, create uncertainty as to the scope of controls and audits and risk undermining the clarity of the overall control framework.

Slovakia fully respects the principles of the rule of law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights and remains committed to their consistent and objective application. To further strengthen legal certainty, predictability, objectivity and proportionality, Slovakia believes that additional work is needed to establish credible sources, assessment methodologies and a direct link between the breach and the sound financial management or the financial interests of the Union. This should include a strong preventive dimension together with a reinforced focus on dialogue to remedy deficiencies, as well as a strict application of the principle of proportionality.

Particular attention should be given to ensuring legal certainty and predictability during the transition between programming periods of the Common Agricultural Policy. From Slovakia's perspective, this and other important CAP elements including the proposal for degressivity and capping of payments, should be further addressed. A suitable approach should therefore be identified that reflects the different farm structures across the EU and safeguards the continuity of support, especially regarding direct payments, which remain essential for maintaining the viability, resilience and competitiveness of European and Slovak farmers.

In this respect, Slovakia underlines the importance of maintaining the necessary legislative space to ensure that the final architecture of the overall framework remains operational, internally consistent and capable of delivering its objectives in practice."

STATEMENT BY SPAIN

'Statement by Spain

regarding the partial general approach on the Regulation establishing the European Fund for economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and rural, fisheries and maritime, prosperity and security for the period 2028-2034 ('NRPP Regulation')

General Affairs Council, 16 June 2026

Spain appreciates the work the Cyprus Presidency has done over the past several months on the proposal for a Regulation on National and Regional Partnership Plans, and acknowledges the progress made on different aspects of the file. We would also like to thank the Commission for providing information and organising technical seminars to try to clarify specific elements of the text.

We reaffirm our commitment to continuing to work actively with the Cyprus and Irish Presidencies with the clear goal of addressing the challenges presented by this proposal before the end of the year.

However, we cannot support the proposed text of the National and Regional Plans Regulation.

Spain is firmly and unquestionably committed to the European project and to the proper implementation of its policies and priorities. Nevertheless, we consider that the proposal for a single fund based around national and regional plans presents structural, political, technical and governance challenges to its effective implementation.

At this stage, there are still unresolved questions regarding the implementation and practical aspects of the proposal.

Any changes to governance in the area of cohesion and the CAP, as founding principles protected by the Treaties, must respect the territorial balance that defines the Union. The proposal for national and regional plans undermines these principles and does not prioritise or guarantee the role of the regions or the pursuit of their balanced development.

The proposal for national and regional plans obscures the specific nature and purpose of the different Community policies, bringing profoundly heterogeneous investment priorities together into a single programming and management model and under the same rules regarding design and implementation.

In addition, the model as presented raises serious doubts as to its practical feasibility insofar as it disregards the institutional, constitutional and administrative reality of the Member States. Europe is built on a diverse range of management systems and budgetary procedures which are nevertheless always based on real, verifiable and controlled expenditure.

The Commission proposal does not offer simplification, but rather imposes an additional administrative burden stemming from the parallel system of milestones and targets whose efficiency has not been demonstrated. It creates legal and financial uncertainty, making programming more difficult and penalising regions with fewer resources and thus the core of cohesion policy.

The proposal is not clear about the role of the regions and their degree of political, administrative and financial autonomy in a model that departs from the traditional distribution used in previous periods. This issue is even more complex in countries in which the regions have a constitutional mandate to autonomously exercise fundamental powers relating to the planning, implementation and management of public policies.

We cannot support a proposal that dilutes the powers of our regions. There is unanimous and shared concern, both in the central government and in the Autonomous Communities, over the real implications of this model.

For the reasons given above, there is a risk that the model will be a source of complexity, uncertainty and greater implementation challenges for the Member States.

As regards the common agricultural policy (CAP), we are concerned about both the proposed funding levels and the envisaged governance model.

In particular, the possibility of including new interventions, such as investments in the processing and marketing of agri-food products and investments in forestry or irrigation, to be financed from reserved or ring-fenced funds in a CAP budget that is significantly lower than it is currently.

We also have serious reservations regarding the proposed transitional measures to provide continuity in payments and with the EU Facility, where farmers would be excluded both from the fund and from the reserve for crises arising from natural disasters, which is an issue of great concern for the agricultural sector.

We consider that all of the technical matters relating to the CAP that are included in the Regulation should in any case be discussed in parallel with the rest of the CAP legislation.

We will continue to work actively and constructively towards a proposal that is ambitious in its objectives but also applicable in practice, with the clear goal of arriving at a model that guarantees the role of the regions and works for all of the Member States.'

STATEMENT BY SWEDEN

"Sweden welcomes the stronger link that has been made to the European semester and the country specific recommendations in this part of the Regulation. Sweden can accept the partial general approach, but we maintain our objections regarding the wording in ANNEX VI point b). Sweden understands the word including to entail that funds may be allocated to address material deprivation, through food and/or basic material assistance to the most deprived persons but that material deprivation can equally be addressed by accompanying measures."

JOINT STATEMENT BY ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

"Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania acknowledge the progress achieved during the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework package. We remain fully committed to supporting the work of the Cypriot and Irish Presidencies to reach an agreement this year.

Nevertheless, important concerns remain regarding the extent to which the proposed framework reflects the challenges faced by the European Union's Eastern border regions, in particular those bordering Russia and Belarus.

On 18 February 2026, the Commission adopted its Communication "Strong Regions for a Safe Europe", recognizing that NUTS2 regions bordering Russia, Belarus and Ukraine face specific security, economic and demographic challenges stemming from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, hybrid threats and the fundamentally changed geopolitical environment and states that "the regions most affected by the deteriorating security environment and by increased risks of conventional military actions are those on the external border with Russia and Belarus". Addressing these challenges comes at the expense of long-term investments in competitiveness, innovation, societal well-being and sustainable socio-economic development. Communication rightly underlines that strengthening the resilience and prosperity of these regions is a strategic investment in Europe's security and stability.

While references to the Communication and the challenges faced by Eastern border regions have been introduced into several legislative proposals, the corresponding provisions do not yet sufficiently reflect the scale, persistence and unique nature of these challenges.

The needs and circumstances of the eastern border regions are unique, and the challenges faced by Eastern border regions in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania go beyond what can reasonably be addressed through national budgets alone. These regions are required to absorb growing security, resilience and preparedness costs and impact on the population, while simultaneously safeguarding their economic vitality, social cohesion and long-term development prospects. Without a stronger response, these pressures risk deepening territorial disparities and undermining the attractiveness and competitiveness of regions located on the Union's external border. In this context, there is high importance to mitigate these challenges properly.

Therefore, we maintain our position that regions bordering Russia and Belarus require greater visibility across the future legislative framework, accompanied by additional EU-level support and adequate budgetary backing under the Multiannual Financial Framework. A framework that acknowledges these challenges without providing a commensurate response risks falling short of the Union's strategic objectives.

The Baltic States remain among the Member States receiving the lowest proposed ring-fenced amounts per hectare. Given the challenges and additional investments needs to stregthen security and resilience of the EU's Eastern border regions, continuing external convergence of direct payments remains important to ensure food security and resilience of our regions. This issue should be addressed accordingly."

For these reasons, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania consider that further work is required to ensure that the next Multiannual Financial Framework delivers a more balanced and credible response to the realities faced by the regions bordering Russia and Belarus.

JOINT STATEMENT BY HUNGARY, BULGARIA, THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND ROMANIA

"Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Romania acknowledge the work done by the Cypriot Presidency on the NRPP Regulation.

Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Romania believes that despite reaching the partial general approach on the NRPP Regulation, the principle of "nothing is agreed until everything agreed" is still valid, especially due to the fact that the NRPP Regulation has obvious and strong interlinkages among others with the post 2027 CAP regulations, where adopting the general approach will require more time and will only be reached later.

Therefore Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Romania underline that the future approval of the general approach on the CAP regulations might require changes in the CAP-related articles of the NRPP Regulation and preserve the right to initiate that."

<u>Ad "B" item 4 b):</u> Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034

b) Regulation on establishing the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), including the specific programme for defence research and innovation
Partial general approach

STATEMENT BY AUSTRIA

'Austria acknowledges that every state is free to choose its own energy mix, as a matter of national competence. However, Austria maintains that nuclear energy is not a sustainable, economically viable or safe technology for Europe's future. In Austria's view, resources from the Union budget should not be used for investments in nuclear power, including the construction of new nuclear power plants, lifetime extensions for existing facilities or the decommissioning of nuclear installations.

Austria remains willing to continue with the negotiations and supports the partial general approach on the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), on the understanding that the Fund will neither promote nor finance the construction or decommissioning of nuclear power plants.'

STATEMENT BY SLOVAKIA

"Slovakia fully supports the objectives of the European Competitiveness Fund to leverage the strength of European research and innovation to strengthen the competitiveness of the European industry. In this respect the European Competitiveness Fund is a key instrument for the next programming period. Slovakia also acknowledges the progress achieved during the negotiations and supports continued efforts to develop simpler, realistic and workable rules capable of delivering positive change across the Union ensuring that the Fund contributes to competitiveness in a genuinely European and inclusive manner.

Slovakia agrees that excellence must remain the core principle of the Fund. However, excellence should be complemented by criteria and safeguards that ensure broad participation, promote the dissemination of excellence across the Union and support the development of diversified and resilient European value chains. Slovakia remains concerned that the current text does not sufficiently address inclusive access to funding opportunities for businesses from all Member States, nor does it provide a sufficient framework for engaging Europe`s full innovation potential, expertise and production capabilities. Without clearer provisions in this regard, there is a risk that the Fund will primarily benefit already well-established ecosystems and further widen the competitiveness gap between different Member States. The balance between excellence, competitiveness and broad participation should therefore be further strengthened.

Slovakia acknowledges the need to advance negotiations on the proposal with a view to its timely adoption together with the European Parliament. Slovakia stands ready to continue engaging constructively in the next stages of the legislative process with the aim of achieving a more balanced, inclusive and effective European Competitiveness Fund."

JOINT STATEMENT BY ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA AND POLAND

"We support the objectives of the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) with the ambition to strengthen the resilience, security and competitiveness across the whole Union. At the same time, we consider that the Fund should be adequately prepared to respond to the evolving security and economic realities in the Union.

Geopolitical context, in particular Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine and persistent hybrid attacks across the Union, have demonstrated that energy and communications networks are essential components of Europe's competitiveness and security architecture. Recent incidents particularly in Member States on the Union's eastern border have also exposed vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure and supply chains, underlining the need for stronger European support for preparedness, recovery capabilities and strategic reserves. More broadly, the deteriorating security environment also affects economic resilience and competitiveness by increasing investment risks, raising financing costs and weakening growth prospects in the regions most exposed to security and military threats, as highlighted in the Commission Communication on the EU's eastern regions bordering Russia, Belarus and Ukraine (COM (2026) 82) and duly noted in the European Council conclusions of 19 March 2026.

Against this background, we consider it important that the ECF framework:

1. should provide for a clearer and more operational recognition of critical infrastructure;

2. should adequately reflect in the operative part of the Regulation suboptimal investment situations driven by persistent geopolitical risks, in particular in EU's eastern border regions facing structurally higher risk premia and weaker investment conditions;

3. should appropriately recognise regions exposed to long-term geopolitical pressure, including EU's eastern border regions, alongside other structurally disadvantaged territories.

In light of the above, we can support Partial General Approach for the ECF at this stage, with the clear expectation that above mentioned key elements will be duly reflected in the final compromise text."

JOINT STATEMENT BY BULGARIA, CROATIA, CZECH REPUBLIC, HUNGARY AND SLOVENIA

"Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia recognise the importance of strengthening the competitiveness of European industry, research and innovation and welcome the objectives of the proposal establishing the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF).

At the same time, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia consider that the current draft Regulation does not yet provide sufficient predictability regarding the mechanisms that would ensure the effective realisation of a vision to mobilise and connect complementary capacities, infrastructures, expertise and innovation ecosystems across all Member States, thereby enabling the Union to fully harness its collective potential.

Nevertheless, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia acknowledge the need to advance negotiations on the ECF with a view to its timely adoption together with the European Parliament and therefore support the Partial General Approach as an important step in this process. This support is given on the understanding that further work on the Fund's implementation modalities will continue during the subsequent stages of the negotiations."

Ad "B" item 4 c): Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034
c) Regulation establishing Global Europe
Partial general approach

STATEMENT BY BULGARIA

‘The Republic of Bulgaria attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of human rights. The country is and will remain dedicated to its human rights commitments.

At the same time, and without prejudice to its support for the compromise text of the Partial General Approach, Bulgaria reiterates its national position regarding some elements, included in the proposed Regulation establishing “Global Europe”:

In 2018 the Bulgarian Constitutional Court adopted a decision stating that the Council of Europe’s Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (“Istanbul Convention”) promotes legal concepts related to the notion of “gender” that are incompatible with main principles of the Bulgarian Constitution. Any reference to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention) will not be applicable with regard to the Republic of Bulgaria in accordance with Judgement № 13/2018 of the Constitutional Court. For the same reasons, Bulgaria reaffirms its position on the EU Global Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in External Action (GAP III) and does not consider itself bound by its application.

In view of the above-mentioned, the Republic of Bulgaria accepts the term “gender” (“пол“) to refer to the two biologically defined sexes “male/female.’

STATEMENT BY SPAIN

‘With regard to recital 58 of the proposal for a Regulation establishing Global Europe, Spain hereby makes the following statement, and asks the General Secretariat of the Council to include it in the minutes of the General Affairs Council meeting on 16 June 2026.

Spain firmly believes that a human rights approach to migration fosters social integration and cohesion, which strengthens European values and thus benefits society as a whole.

Spain remains committed to fighting migrant smuggling and the criminal organisations involved in human trafficking. Spain will continue to encourage dialogue with the countries of origin and transit as the best and most effective strategy.

While the Regulation was being negotiated, we consistently opposed the inclusion of the term ‘innovative solutions’. Unfortunately, the term still appears in the recitals of the text, rendering it impossible for us to accept.

We would put forward the following arguments:

Formally, this language has never been used in European Council conclusions or in Community legislation. In particular, the term ‘innovative solutions’ is not used in the Returns Regulation, in the Safe Third Country Regulations or in the Regulation on the list of safe countries of origin. We find it extremely problematic that horizontal legislation such as the Financial Regulation includes a reference to these ‘innovative solutions’ when no such reference has been made in the sectoral domains in which it should have been recognised beforehand.

It is precisely for this reason that the Council Legal Service has pointed out the ‘legal indeterminacy’ of this expression on numerous occasions. In addition to the legal argument, there are also arguments relating to finance and legal certainty: the possibility of financing a legal uncertainty opens the door to arbitrariness.

Recital 58 states: ‘All migration related actions under the Instrument should be implemented in full respect of international law, including international human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law, and Union and national competences.’ This wording is reflected in the operative part, specifically in Article 12(2): ‘Those actions shall be implemented in full respect of international law, including international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, Union and national competences.’ On the basis of that provision, we consider that ‘return centres’ do not fall within the scope of the ‘innovative solutions’ referred to in that same recital and, therefore, that these centres cannot be financed with funds from the Global Europe instrument.

The Court of Justice of the European Union has not yet ruled on the question of the possible location of external detention centres. However, in her opinion of 4 June 2026, Advocate General Laila Medina considers that the location of the centres is a non-harmonised state competence and points out that grounds for detention and, above all, guarantees are fully harmonised by EU law and that the Member State responsible must be able to guarantee them (C-706/25 and C-707/25).

Guaranteeing the rights of asylum seekers outside the territory of the EU, that they have the necessary legal assistance and that they have effective access to resources, including access to justice, involves a disproportionate cost that is prohibitive in terms of sustainability and due budgetary diligence. Worse still, that strain on the budget ultimately does not guarantee those rights, because states are outsourcing their responsibility to facilitate removals, making it more difficult to ensure rights and all guarantees.

In addition to legal and budgetary considerations, we cannot overlook the political and external relations aspect. These centres, as recent practice has shown, generate huge opposition in the host societies, which governments that lean towards extreme positions can capitalise on politically, moving further away from the European Union and thus weakening its position in the world and its essential relationships with third countries.

States of first entry, which include Spain, have been building long-lasting diplomatic relations of trust with third countries on the basis of equality and cooperation, which are yielding positive results. The establishment and financing of these centres by the European Union not only poses a serious problem for our image, but could jeopardise the architecture for law-enforcement or diplomatic cooperation that we have spent decades building.'

STATEMENT BY PORTUGAL

'Portugal fully supports a strong Global Europe programme, which is a key instrument for promoting the Union's values, principles and interests throughout the world.

We therefore believe that the Union's limited resources should be focussed on supporting measures that are effective, consensual and have the greatest possible impact.

Taking those principles into account, Portugal still has some reservations regarding the reference to 'innovative solutions' in the Global Europe proposal.

Furthermore, that terminology does not correspond to the European Council's established language, on migration in particular, and its precise meaning and implications are insufficiently clear.

However, in a spirit of compromise, and given the importance of the Global Europe programme, the general balance of the package and the progress achieved during the negotiations, Portugal will support the adoption of the text and asks that its position be recorded in the minutes.'