Council of the European Union

Brussels, 2 September 2026
(OR. en)

11531/26
PV CONS 44
SOC 481
EMPL 271
SAN 572
CONSOM 228
PARLNAT

DRAFT MINUTES

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
(Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs)

29 June 2026

1. **Adoption of the agenda**

The Council adopted the agenda set out in document 10825/26.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY

Non-legislative activities

2. **Advancing fair labour mobility through modernised and simplified social security coordination rules**[1] — 10383/26
Exchange of views

The Council held an exchange of views on the above topic, guided by the Presidency note set out in the document above.

3. **European Semester 2026**

a) **Spring package 2026** — 9935/26, 9955/26, 10269/26 + ADD 1
Presentation by the Commission
Exchange of views

The Council took note of the presentation by the Commission of the 2026 Spring package and held an exchange of views thereupon.

b) **Assessment of the country-specific recommendations for 2026 and implementation of the country-specific recommendations for 2025: Opinion of the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee** — 10400/26
Endorsement

The Council endorsed the Opinion of the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee on the assessment of the country-specific recommendations for 2026 and implementation of the country-specific recommendations for 2025 as set out in the document above.

[1] Attended by the Chairs of the Employment Committee (EMCO) and the Social Protection Committee (SPC) as observers.

c) **Contribution on the employment and social policies aspects of the country-specific recommendations: Recommendations on the economic, social, employment, structural and budgetary policies of each Member State**
Approval

10361/26
10885/26
10247/1/26 REV 1

The Council approved the contribution on the employment and social policies aspects of the Recommendations on the economic, social, employment, structural and budgetary policies of each Member State as listed in document 10247/1/26 REV 1 and approved the comply or explain note as set out in document 10885/26.

4. **Key Messages from the Employment Committee on gender-related aspects of job quality**[2]
Presentation by the Chair of the Employment Committee
Exchange of views

10320/1/26 REV 1

The Council took note of the presentation by the Chair of the Employment Committee of the Key Messages on gender-related aspets of job quality and held an exchange of views thereupon.

5. **Conclusions on Preventing and combating cyber violence against girls**[3]
Approval

9555/26 + COR 1 + ADD 1

The Council approved the above Conclusions.

A statement by Hungary is set out in the Annex.

6. **Social Package: Delivering on the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy and pathways for effective implementation**[4]
Exchange of views

10378/26

The Council held an exchange of views on the above topic, guided by the Presidency note set out in the document above.

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2 Attended by the Chair of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) as observer.
3 Attended by the Chairs of the Employment Committee (EMCO) and the Social Protection Committee (SPC) as observers.
4 With interventions by the Chairs of the Employment Committee (EMCO) and the Social Protection Committee (SPC).

7. **Approval of "A" items**

a) **Legislative list (Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)** 10809/26

Agriculture

1. **Regulation amending the common market organisation (CMO) Regulation as regards the strengthening of the position of farmers in the food supply chain**
Adoption of the legislative act
approved by Coreper, Part 1, on 24.06.2026

10642/2/26 REV 2
+ ADD 1 REV 2
PE-CONS 21/26
AGRI

The Council approved the European Parliament's position at first reading and the proposed act has been adopted pursuant to Article 294(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (legal basis: Articles 42, first paragraph, and 43(2) TFEU), with Latvia, the Netherlands, and Sweden voting against and Denmark, Estonia and Germany abstaining.

Statements by Germany, Latvia, the Netherlands, Austria and the Commission are set out in the Annex.

Environment

2. **Regulation on circularity requirements for vehicle design and on management of end-of-life vehicles**
Adoption of the legislative act
approved by Coreper, Part 1, on 24.06.2026

10651/26 + ADD 1
PE-CONS 13/26
ENV

The Council approved the European Parliament's position at first reading and the proposed act has been adopted pursuant to Article 294(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (legal basis: Articles 114 and 192(1) TFEU thereof in relation to Articles 14 to 36 of this Regulation), with Austria and Hungary voting against and Slovakia abstaining.

Statements by Germany, Estonia and Slovakia are set out in the Annex.

3. **Regulation amending Regulation 2024/1157 as regards the prohibition to export mixed municipal waste destined for recovery**
Adoption of the legislative act
Decision to derogate from the eight-week period provided for in Article 4 of Protocol 1 on the role of national Parliaments in the EU
approved by Coreper, Part 1, on 24.06.2026

10649/26
PE-CONS 35/26
ENV

The Council approved the European Parliament's position at first reading and the proposed act has been adopted pursuant to article 294(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (legal basis: Article 192(1) TFEU). The Council also decided to derogate from the eight-week period provided for in Article 4 of Protocol 1 on the role of national parliaments in the EU.

General Affairs

4. **Omnibus VII: Regulation amending Regulations on the simplification of the implementation of harmonised rules on artificial intelligence (Digital Omnibus on AI)**
Adoption of the legislative act
approved by Coreper, Part 2, on 24.06.2026

10752/26 +
ADD 1-2
PE-CONS 30/26
SIMPL

The Council approved the European Parliament's position at first reading and the proposed act has been adopted pursuant to Article 294(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (legal basis: Article 114 TFEU).

Statements by Belgium, Greece and the Commission are set out in the Annex.

Research

5.	**Council Decision laying down the measures necessary for the implementation of Protocol No 37 on the financial consequences of the expiry of the ECSC Treaty and on the Research Fund for Coal and Steel** *Adoption of the legislative act* approved by Coreper, Part 1, on 24.06.2026	SC	10085/26 6884/26 COMPET

The Council adopted a Council Decision laying down the measures necessary for the implementation of Protocol No 37 on the financial consequences of the expiry of the ECSC Treaty and on the Research Fund for Coal and Steel (legal basis: Article 2, paragraph 1, of Protocol No 37 on the financial consequences of the expiry of the ECSC Treaty and on the Research Fund for Coal and Steel, annexed to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.).

Justice and Home Affairs

6.	**Regulation on the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and Union support for health emergency preparedness and response** *Progress report* approved by Coreper, Part 2, on 24.06.2026	IC	10490/26 PROCIV IPCR

The Council took note of a progress report on the Regulation on the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and Union support for health emergency preparedness and response.

General Affairs

7.	**Regulation establishing the European Fund for Regional Development including for European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) and the Cohesion Fund for the period from 2028 to 2034** *Partial general approach* approved by Coreper, Part 2, on 24.06.2026	IC	10087/26 + ADD 1-2 10161/26 + COR 1 COH

The Council adopted a partial general approach on the Regulation establishing the European Fund for Regional Development including for European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) and the Cohesion Fund for the period from 2028 to 2034.

Statements by Italy and Slovakia are set out in the Annex.

8. Regulation establishing the European Social Fund as part of the National and Regional Partnership Plan for the period from 2028 to 2034 ❶C 10089/26 + ADD 1 10163/26 COH
Partial general approach
approved by Coreper, Part 2, on 24.06.2026

The Council adopted a partial general approach on the Regulation establishing the European Social Fund as part of the National and Regional Partnership Plan for the period from 2028 to 2034.

A statement by Italy is set out in the Annex.

b) Non-legislative list 10808/26

The Council adopted all "A" items listed in the documents above, including all linguistic COR and REV documents presented for adoption. Statements to these items are set out in the Annex.

Non-legislative activities

8. Conclusions on Housing: Shifting demographics and shaping policies[3] 10765/26
Approval

The Council approved the above Conclusions.

9. Housing Security for all: Responding to the needs of students and middle-income households[3] 10389/26
Exchange of views

The Council held an exchange of views on the above topic, guided by the Presidency note set out in the document above.

Any other business

10. a) Current legislative proposals (Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)[5]

i) **Revision of the Regulations on the coordination of social security systems (883/04 and 987/09)** — 8631/26

ii) **Revision of Directive 2004/37/EC on carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxic substances at work (sixth batch)** — 11823/25 + ADD 1

iii) **Traineeships Directive** — 8148/1/24 REV 1

iv) **Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment (Article 19)** — 10817/24

Information from the Presidency

The Council took note of the information provided by the Presidency on the above items.

b) Initiative for the establishment of a European Day in Remembrance of the Victims of Accidents at Work and for the Protection and Dignity of Workers — 11082/1/26 REV 1

Information from Belgium, Hungary and Italy

The Council took note of the information provided by Belgium, Hungary and Italy, supported by Germany, Malta, Romania and Spain.

c) Presidency events[5] — 10928/26

Information from the Presidency

The Council took note of the information provided by the Presidency.

d) Work programme of the incoming Presidency

Information from Ireland

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5 Attended by the Chairs of the Employment Committee (EMCO) and the Social Protection Committee (SPC) as observers.

❶	First reading
S	Special legislative procedure
C	Item based on a Commission proposal
2	Public debate proposed by the Presidency (Article 8(2) of the Council's Rules of Procedure)

ANNEX

Statements to the legislative "A" items set out in doc. 10809/26

Ad "A" item 1):	**Regulation amending the common market organisation (CMO) Regulation as regards the strengthening of the position of farmers in the food supply chain** *Adoption of the legislative act*

STATEMENT BY GERMANY

"The German Federal Government abstains on the proposal for a Regulation amending 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, as amended by the trilogue compromise of 5 March 2026.

We share the proposal's goal of strengthening the position of farmers. Overall, however, we are not convinced that the instruments provided for therein are suitable to effectively achieve that goal. We are particularly critical of the additional bureaucratic burden associated with the proposal and the high degree of effort and cost associated with the changeover. One of our key objectives is to reduce needless bureaucracy and avoid unnecessary costs for the economy. In comparison to other European countries, the German agri-food industry is particularly affected by the introduction of protected meat designations, for which we consider regulation to be unnecessary.

In light of the above, we cannot accept the proposal. At the same time, we acknowledge that the trilogues succeeded in bringing about significant adjustments. Member States will be given the possibility to derogate from the obligation to conclude written contracts with certain minimum content. While the derogation for the dairy sector is limited, it covers essential elements.

The Presidency also made every effort to defend the Council's position on protected meat designations: terms that are widely used in the German market far beyond the meat sector (such as burger, sausage and schnitzel) can still be used freely, designations in the fish sector remain unaffected and generous transitional and continued marketing periods have been achieved."

STATEMENT BY LATVIA

“Latvia votes against the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending 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" (hereafter – the proposal).

During the process of discussing the proposal, Latvia has consistently maintained the view that any proposals aimed at strengthening the position of producers in the supply chain must deliver genuine and tangible benefits to producers.

With regard to contractual relations and respecting the views of the Latvian agricultural sector, Latvia is of the opinion that the decision to require mandatory written contracts should remain at the discretion of Member States rather than being imposed as a compulsory obligation.

Latvia brings forward the following arguments for voting against the proposal:

1) We believe the provisions on contracts and contractual relations within the CMO Regulation should remain unchanged, and that the establishment of mandatory written contracts and mediation mechanisms should be left to the discretion of Member States. In particular, Latvia is against the provisions on contracts contained in Article 148, as it does not allow Member States to decide that contracts in the dairy sector should not be mandatory;

2) Latvia also cannot support the departure from the Council mandate regarding mediation mechanism and the reduction of the minimum supply value threshold from EUR 20,000 to EUR 10,000.”

STATEMENT BY THE NETHERLANDS

“The Netherlands welcomes the agreement reached on the proposal for the Regulation amending 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 given. The new rules concerning contractual relations and other provisions contribute to a stronger bargaining position for farmers, an objective that has been actively supported by the Netherlands throughout the decision making process. In this process, it was essential to ensure a level playing field and broad application across the EU to fulfill the "One Europe, One Market" objective.

However, on both procedural and substantive grounds, the Netherlands cannot support the last-minute addition of restrictions on the use of meat-related terms and the limitations imposed on the possibilities for cultivated meat. These restrictions do not contribute to consumer clarity and create unnecessary regulatory burden for the business community. Furthermore, they undermine the development of new and hybrid products and discourage innovation and private investment - elements vital to strengthening the future earning capacity of the European agricultural and food system. Consequently, this runs counter to the recommendations of the Draghi Report to enhance the EU's future global competitiveness.

Therefore, while the proposed Regulation contributes to the farmer's position in the chain, on balance the Netherlands is unable to support the compromise agreement reached between the Council, the European Commission and the European Commission on the proposal for the regulation amending 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, in light of the reservations about the aforementioned restrictions."

STATEMENT BY AUSTRIA

"Austria has always given constructive support to practicable provisions to strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain.

In discussions, the following were and are particularly important for Austria:

- derogations from the mandatory use of written delivery contracts for agricultural products, in particular in the dairy sector;
- adequate differentiation in competition law between recognised producer organisations and non-recognised producer organisations or other entities.

<u>Derogations from the mandatory use of written delivery contracts for agricultural products, in particular in the dairy sector</u>

In the context of Regulation (EU) No **1308/2013 (Articles 148 and 168)** establishing a common market organisation (CMO), **Member States are currently able to decide**, in the interests of **subsidiarity**, whether **written contracts** are required for deliveries to first purchasers, excluding cooperatives.

At present, **no** written **contracts are required in Austria**; the national *Erzeuger-Rahmenbedingungen-Verordnung* (Producer Framework Conditions Regulation), based on the *Marktordnungsgesetz* (Law on Market Organisation – MOG), provides that a supplier of raw milk or agricultural products may demand a contract. Written milk delivery agreements are already common practice in Austria, but do not have to comply exactly with the provisions of the CMO.

The present proposal for an **amendment to the CMO** gives rise to **fundamental changes** to **contractual relations**:

Written **contracts** are now fundamentally **mandatory** for **all deliveries** of agricultural products; in the dairy sector, besides raw milk, this now also includes deliveries of all dairy products.

Additional conditions (including transparent and democratic methods to determine prices in advance, taking into account the impact on the remuneration of farmers and payment periods and procedures) are attached to the **exceptions** for **cooperatives**, and those exceptions are bound up with **legal uncertainty**.

A **new revision clause** for contracts with a duration of more than 12 months (**six months in the dairy sector**) has been introduced which unilaterally allows the supplier to terminate the delivery contract at any time. To date, the aim of the CMO has been to require delivery contracts to have a duration of at least six months; there is now a **danger** that **shorter durations are more likely to be offered**. This applies in particular to the dairy sector.

While **derogations** for specific **products** or **elements of a contract** remain possible, they must be determined at national level, which entails bureaucratic burden.

There is a **danger** that only **short-term delivery contracts** will be offered or that it will be even more difficult for smaller suppliers in remote areas to find a buyer. This will make no difference to market conditions: at present, the increase in milk volumes in the EU is putting pressure on producer prices.

<u>Extension of competition law derogations to non-recognised producer organisations and other entities</u>

Up until now, it was – by way of derogation from Article 101(1) TFEU – permissible for any producer organisation (PO) recognised under Article 152(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 to plan production, optimise the production costs, place on the market and negotiate contracts for the supply of agricultural products, on behalf of its members for all or part of their total production.

In future, those derogations from competition law will be **extended** to **non-recognised POs, cooperatives and organisations in any other equivalent legal form recognised by national law** that have applied for recognition and have not yet been recognised as a PO by a Member State, provided that they meet the requirements set out in Article 152(1) and Article 154 of the CMO Regulation.

Any such PO may avail itself of that derogation within the period provided for in Article 154(4), point (a), of the CMO Regulation or, if the Member State has not taken any decision on the application for recognition by the end of that period, **within five years of the date of submission of the application for recognition**, unless the relevant Member State has decided to refuse the recognition.

The following consequences are to be expected *ex ante*:

- The addition of new beneficiaries will counteract ongoing simplification efforts – we can expect the anticipated increase in the number of checks to lead to increased administrative burden.
- Furthermore, the fact that procedures may be ongoing for years creates legal uncertainty, which poses a significant risk of serious cartel penalties in the case of *ex post* findings of non-compliance with recognition requirements.
- Attention should also be drawn to the emergence of increasing differences between Member States in the timing of recognition procedures within the prescribed five-year period.

- Furthermore, a completely new recognition procedure has been introduced (currently: *ex ante* verification; in future: *ex post* verification).
- In addition to the issues mentioned, the new provision represents **a weakening of the current system for recognised POs: the benefits for POs which have already been recognised will diminish.**

Austria believes that maintaining the ***status quo*** **in the recognition system** would **clearly be preferable**, not least to safeguard the **benefits for POs which have already been recognised.** Finally, to date, it has already been possible for all non-recognised POs, cooperatives and other entities to obtain recognition as POs and thus benefit from the exemptions from competition law.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Austria continues to see scope for greater consideration of these points and **therefore calls on the European Commission <u>to evaluate the present amendments</u> within a reasonable time frame.**

However, Austria will <u>not oppose the compromise reached and will vote in favour.”</u>

STATEMENT BY THE COMMISSION

“The Commission has announced a revision of EU rules on public procurement for the second quarter of 2026, with a view to enabling and facilitating the use of sustainability, resilience and European-preference criteria in procurement.

In this context, the Commission will examine how public procurement, while respecting single market rules and international obligations, can support sustainability objectives and a European preference. These objectives will support also European food policy and products which originate from small farms, are locally produced and marketed from short supply chains.”

Ad "A" item 2): **Regulation on circularity requirements for vehicle design and on management of end-of-life vehicles**
Adoption of the legislative act

STATEMENT BY GERMANY

"1. In Germany's view, the measures intended to combat the unknown whereabouts of vehicles set out in the political trilogue agreement relating to the Commission's proposal for a Regulation on circularity requirements for vehicle design and on management of end-of-life vehicles, amending Regulations (EU) 2018/858 and 2019/1020 and repealing Directives 2000/53/EC and 2005/64/EC are insufficient. The Federal Republic of Germany considers that the rules in question are not effective enough to reduce illegal dismantling or illegal export.

Germany therefore reaffirms the importance of the impact assessment on the unknown whereabouts of vehicles, as provided for in the Regulation, and the resulting measures, and requests that these take place at an earlier stage.

2. From Germany's perspective, the mirror clause contained in the political trilogue agreement is problematic from the point of view of trade policy, as it is a protectionist instrument creating barriers to trade. Germany does not therefore consider such a clause to be suitable for ensuring the necessary protection of the internal market. The inclusion of the mirror clause in the Regulation does not constitute a precedent for future legislation or free trade agreements.

For this reason, Germany calls for an immediate impact assessment of the mirror clause, including the impact in terms of trade policy and trade law, the impact on EU industry and third countries, and implementation issues.

Notwithstanding these concerns, Germany agrees with the political trilogue agreement in the spirit of an overall compromise."

STATEMENT BY ESTONIA

"Estonia can support the final text of the end-of-life vehicles regulation (ELV). However, we would like to reiterate our concerns regarding extended producer responsibility (EPR) in the Article 22.

The text introduces additional cross-border obligations for manufacturers, which may create a risk of double payments where costs are covered through both national EPR schemes and the cross-border mechanism. We remain concerned, that this can lead to increased administrative burden, as manufacturers would be required to appoint authorised representatives in multiple Member States and demonstrate compliance through parallel arrangements.

Estonia would have preferred a solution more closely aligned with already established EPR principles, as reflected in the Council's General Approach. Such an approach would have better safeguarded against double payments, reduced administrative burden and maintained a clearer link between producer responsibility and the placing of vehicles on the market.

While we support the overall text, we still highlight that the implementation of Article 22 may pose significant practical challenges for Member States, manufacturers and producers."

STATEMENT BY SLOVAKIA

"Slovakia welcomes this regulation, which we consider to be an important step towards strengthening the circular economy and establishing a comprehensive legal framework for the whole life cycle of vehicles.

Nevertheless, we would like to draw attention to certain points that, in our view, would require further discussion. We are particularly concerned about the possible negative impacts of the newly introduced obligations and definitions, which could result in an increase in administrative burden and costs for economic operators.

In particular Slovakia would like to highlight Article 22 on the cross-border cost allocation mechanism for end-of-life vehicles. In our view, this mechanism needs to be clarified further in order to ensure equal treatment and effective implementation across the EU, in particular as regards the movement of vehicles between Member States.

In this context, we would stress that the effective functioning of this mechanism is closely linked to the broader regulatory framework governing registration, de-registration and cross-border transfers of vehicles. The cross-border aspect of the management of end-of-life vehicles cannot be addressed in isolation and requires harmonisation with other relevant transport legislation. In particular, we consider it essential to ensure the smooth sharing of information and access to vehicle databases in Member States, including registration records and data on de-registration. Therefore, we would ask the Commission to assess whether further action at EU level is needed, including possible amendments to support the practical functioning of Article 22 or practical guidelines to assist Member States and economic operators in implementing this mechanism consistently and in a uniform manner."

<u>**Ad "A" item 4):**</u>	**Omnibus VII: Regulation amending Regulations on the simplification of the implementation of harmonised rules on artificial intelligence (Digital Omnibus on AI)** *Adoption of the legislative act*

STATEMENT BY BELGIUM

"Belgium welcomes the significant advancements that have been made in the Digital Omnibus on AI as a result of constructive discussions, and reaffirms its commitment to striking a balance between simplification and the protection of fundamental rights – a balance that this compromise text has managed to achieve, and therefore we support it.

We would especially highlight the importance of the amendment banning AI systems capable of generating non-consensual sexually explicit content. This is an important issue that needs to be addressed, in particular in order to provide adequate proactive protection in this area. Our agreement is contingent on this measure, which is fully in line with European values.

In addition, we would like to return to two points which we feel are still problematic.

Firstly, while we understand that the grace period for labelling AI-generated content is due to technical challenges, we regret the postponement of this obligation. In our view, this raises major questions regarding the protection of individuals and transparency in relation to deepfakes, which are issues that cannot be postponed without considerable risk.

Secondly, we welcome the clarifications on bias detection, but regret that the concept of strict necessity has not been further clarified and that the use of alternative solutions, such as synthetic data, has not been further encouraged in order to ensure a balanced and responsible approach."

STATEMENT BY THE COMMISSION

"The Commission welcomes the political agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council on the Digital Omnibus on AI.

At the same time, the Commission is deeply concerned with the choice of the deadlines attached to two important follow-up tasks entrusted to the Commission. The agreed Regulation foresees, among other things, that the Commission should:

1. adopt delegated acts by 2 August 2027 specifying whether and under what conditions certain AI Act requirements may be limited for high-risk AI systems referred to in Article 6(1) AI Act because sectoral legislation already ensures an equivalent or higher level of protection, and

2. develop guidelines by 1 August 2027 on the interplay between high-risk AI requirements and sectoral legislation.

The Commission fully supports the objective of improving complementarity between the AI Act and sectoral product legislation. Avoiding unnecessary duplication is essential for legal certainty, competitiveness and effective implementation. The Commission notes that the agreement reached on the AI Omnibus is coherent with its proposal for a revision of the Medical Devices Regulations (COM(2025)1023) and therefore it does not affect this proposal.

As regards point 1 above, the Commission considers that the value of this new mechanism lies precisely in its ability to address issues of complementarity on an ongoing basis, as new sector-specific rules relevant for AI systems are adopted under the Union harmonisation legislation listed in Annex I AI Act and concrete overlaps arise. The deadline is therefore problematic, as it risks turning this mechanism into a one-time exercise and may limit the Commission's ability to act where new overlaps are identified after the sector-specific assessment has been carried out by the abovementioned date.

Second, in relation to point 2 above, the development of guidelines on the interplay between high-risk AI requirements and sectoral legislation will require careful analysis, and the outcome must be robust, practical and legally clear. Since the entry into application of high-risk requirements to high-risk AI systems referred to in Article 6(1) AI Act has been postponed to 2 August 2028, a deadline for the adoption of the guidelines on the practical application of some of those requirements a full year before that entry into application may jeopardise the development of reliable support tools for industry and authorities."

STATEMENT BY GREECE

"Extension of obligation – Article 111 (new paragraph 4) of the AI Act - DIGITAL OMNIBUS ON AI - 2025/0359(COD) / PE-CONS 30/26

Greece welcomes the significant progress achieved on the "Digital Omnibus AI" through constructive discussions, both at the level of Member States in the Council and in the trilogues with the European Parliament. It reaffirms its commitment to striking a balance between simplification and the protection of the fundamental rights of European citizens—a balance that is achieved by this compromise text, which we therefore support. We would also like to extend our warmest thanks to the Cypriot Presidency, whose efforts and guidance enabled us to reach this compromise text quickly and decisively.

However, we would like to reiterate our strong dissatisfaction with the four-month grace period for labeling content generated by artificial intelligence (Article 111(4), as amended). It should be recalled that, already during the Council-level discussions on the negotiating mandate, Greece submitted a statement on this matter, requesting that no extension be granted.

Greece remains of the view that this is an obligation of the utmost importance, directly linked to trust in information and the protection of the democratic process, and we therefore express our regret at the postponement of this obligation."

Ad "A" item 7): **Regulation establishing the European Fund for Regional Development including for European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) and the Cohesion Fund for the period from 2028 to 2034**
Partial general approach

STATEMENT BY ITALY

"Italy thanks the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the intensive work carried out on the proposals for regulations concerning the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, including Interreg, and the European Social Fund. We acknowledge the significant progress achieved during the negotiations and appreciate the improvements introduced in the compromise texts.

In particular, with regard to the ERDF/Cohesion Fund Regulation, Italy warmly welcomes the inclusion of the article on the "right to stay," proposed by Italy and aimed at strengthening—consistent with the Strategy promoted by Executive Vice-President Fitto—the attractiveness of territories, access to essential services, connectivity, and the conditions that enable people to remain in more fragile areas. We also positively assess the strengthening of provisions on support for disadvantaged areas, regional innovation and transformation, and sustainable urban development, as well as the transfer of provisions relating to Interreg from the general NRPP Regulation to the sectoral ERDF/Cohesion Fund Regulation, with a more detailed articulation that allows for better recognition of the specific nature of European territorial cooperation.

As regards the ESF Regulation, we welcome the strengthening of support for the demographic transition and a clearer specification of the Fund's contribution to objectives relating to quality employment, skills, education and training, social inclusion, the fight against poverty, and access to services.

At the same time, Italy expresses reservations about certain aspects of the legislative texts under approval.

First, the sectoral regulations still do not sufficiently delineate the scope of intervention of the cohesion policy Funds, nor is this aspect clearly specified in the Regulation on national and regional Partnership Plans, even though the mission of these Funds is defined by the TFEU. This is compounded by the absence of a dedicated financial allocation for Cohesion Policy and its Funds. In this regard, the Italian proposal to include a sectoral annex identifying the areas of intervention and the relevant indicators for ERDF, Interreg, and ESF has not been accepted. Such an instrument would have strengthened legal certainty, programming clarity, and the visibility of the Funds.

Secondly, it is considered that the development of fundamental rights and the promotion of the rule of law should constitute a horizontal principle rather than areas of intervention for the Cohesion Policy Funds.

Third, the ESF Regulation does not provide for the possibility of supporting technical assistance interventions, as has always been the case in previous programming periods. This option, which is foreseen for the ERDF, is essential to ensure effective programming and implementation of interventions in the areas of employment, skills, social inclusion, and social, health, educational, and training services.

Italy will continue to participate constructively in the legislative process, with the aim of strengthening the coherence of the sectoral regulations, preserving the identity of the cohesion policy Funds, and ensuring a clear, proportionate programming framework, fully consistent with the objectives laid down in the TFEU."

STATEMENT BY SLOVAKIA

"While acknowledging the progress achieved on the draft ERDF 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 welcome the amendments made to Article 12a(5) of the proposal and we also appreciate the addition of letter b) to the last sentence of Article 10(2).

However, following consultation with the Interreg Europe Managing Authority, Slovakia proposes to reintroduce the common Interreg audit sample into the ERDF Regulation, based on good experiences from the current programming period. We propose to add a separate Article concerning the common Interreg audit sample to the new ERDF/CF Regulation, similarly as it was made in the Interreg Regulation 2021 – 2027:

Based on good experiences from previous programming periods and the feedback received from beneficiaries we also propose to reintroduce common eligibility rules for Interreg programmes into the ERDF Regulation. Therefore, we propose to include an article on the hierarchy of rules in the Regulation or, alternatively, to include this article in the implementing act referred to in the Art. 9(1), in order to ensure continuity with the previous programming period and transparent conditions for beneficiaries.

We also draw your attention to the fact that the last sentence of Article 8(3)(d) of the ERDF Regulation as amended by the compromise of 21 May 2026 concerning the VAT eligibility: „For the purposes of plausibility and reasonability, recoverable VAT shall not be included in the total estimated costs of the measure;“ has been deleted (the sentence disappeared in the new version from 19 June 2026 without striking out the text). The rule in question is included in the NRPP regulation, but in Article 22(2b)(d), which does not apply to Interreg. The issue of VAT eligibility for Interreg operations needs to be clarified.

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 implementable, capable of delivering its objectives in practice."

<u>Ad "A" item 8):</u> **Regulation establishing the European Social Fund as part of the National and Regional Partnership Plan for the period from 2028 to 2034**
Partial general approach

STATEMENT BY ITALY

"Italy thanks the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the intensive work carried out on the proposals for regulations concerning the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, including Interreg, and the European Social Fund. We acknowledge the significant progress achieved during the negotiations and appreciate the improvements introduced in the compromise texts.

In particular, with regard to the ERDF/Cohesion Fund Regulation, Italy warmly welcomes the inclusion of the article on the "right to stay," proposed by Italy and aimed at strengthening—consistent with the Strategy promoted by Executive Vice-President Fitto—the attractiveness of territories, access to essential services, connectivity, and the conditions that enable people to remain in more fragile areas. We also positively assess the strengthening of provisions on support for disadvantaged areas, regional innovation and transformation, and sustainable urban development, as well as the transfer of provisions relating to Interreg from the general NRPP Regulation to the sectoral ERDF/Cohesion Fund Regulation, with a more detailed articulation that allows for better recognition of the specific nature of European territorial cooperation.

As regards the ESF Regulation, we welcome the strengthening of support for the demographic transition and a clearer specification of the Fund's contribution to objectives relating to quality employment, skills, education and training, social inclusion, the fight against poverty, and access to services.

At the same time, Italy expresses reservations about certain aspects of the legislative texts under approval.

First, the sectoral regulations still do not sufficiently delineate the scope of intervention of the cohesion policy Funds, nor is this aspect clearly specified in the Regulation on national and regional Partnership Plans, even though the mission of these Funds is defined by the TFEU. This is compounded by the absence of a dedicated financial allocation for Cohesion Policy and its Funds. In this regard, the Italian proposal to include a sectoral annex identifying the areas of intervention and the relevant indicators for ERDF, Interreg, and ESF has not been accepted. Such an instrument would have strengthened legal certainty, programming clarity, and the visibility of the Funds.

Secondly, it is considered that the development of fundamental rights and the promotion of the rule of law should constitute a horizontal principle rather than areas of intervention for the Cohesion Policy Funds.

Third, the ESF Regulation does not provide for the possibility of supporting technical assistance interventions, as has always been the case in previous programming periods. This option, which is foreseen for the ERDF, is essential to ensure effective programming and implementation of interventions in the areas of employment, skills, social inclusion, and social, health, educational, and training services.

Italy will continue to participate constructively in the legislative process, with the aim of strengthening the coherence of the sectoral regulations, preserving the identity of the cohesion policy Funds, and ensuring a clear, proportionate programming framework, fully consistent with the objectives laid down in the TFEU."

Statements to the non-legislative "B" items set out in doc. 10825/26

Ad "B" item 5): **Conclusions on Preventing and combating cyber violence against girls**
Approval

STATEMENT BY HUNGARY

“Hungary recognises and promotes equality between men and women in accordance with the Fundamental Law of Hungary and the primary law, principles and values of the European Union, as well as commitments and principles stemming from international law. Equality between women and men is enshrined in the Treaties of the European Union as a fundamental value. In line with these and its national legislation, Hungary interprets gender equality as providing equal chances and opportunities for women and men. Within this and in line with these and its national legislation, Hungary interprets the concept of ‘gender’ as reference to ‘sex’ in the *Council Conclusions on Preventing and combating cyber violence against girls*.”