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To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
Subject:	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Commission work programme 2027 European Union - standing up for one another

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

Commission work programme 2027

European Union - standing up for one another

2027 Commission work programme

European Union - standing up for one another

We are constantly reminded of the acute challenges facing our Union today. A territorial war of aggression continues to rage on our continent. A fight for industrial capacities is shaping global competition. The cost of living continues to weigh on peoples' daily lives. And a battle of narratives is seeking to paralyse our democracies. We have witnessed Russian attacks on EU soil, surging energy prices, extreme drought and wildfires and rogue artificial intelligence agents autonomously hacking other systems. With the world around us in a state of flux, the **EU must retain the ability to forge its own path**.

The EU has chosen to redefine itself to become stronger and more independent. It is making an unprecedented effort to secure our continued prosperity: completing the single market, simplifying rules, integrating enlargement countries more closely, expanding our network of trade partnerships and modernising our industrial base, while upholding our unique social model and cohesion. We are further stepping up defence capabilities to protect our citizens, and are standing up for one another, from supporting Ukraine to countering drone strikes, hybrid attacks, disinformation and wildfires and other impacts of climate change.

To achieve this, we must **deliver, implement and enforce** further ambitious policies during the second half of the mandate. We must fight for our values and defend democracy and the rule of law. We must continue to drive Europe's competitiveness and further simplify our legislation. Two years into its current mandate, this Commission has tabled major proposals to strengthen our competitiveness, including 12 ambitious Omnibus packages and other simplification measures. Together, these initiatives could save EUR 22.3 billion in recurrent administrative costs per year, once fully implemented.

We will stay the course on our climate targets, with mitigation and adaptation reinforcing each other alongside a new framework for climate resilience, as well as securing water resilience and healthy nature. We will strengthen our own defence capabilities while supporting Ukraine through what could be its hardest winter yet. We will make digital policy future-proof and protect children from online harm. And because these defining challenges cannot be solved alone, we will continue building new alliances with trusted partners, backed by a long-term budget that is fit for the future.

This work programme sets out how the Commission will **deliver on these priorities**, focusing on a limited number of key initiatives that strengthen the EU's ability to act in a rapidly changing world. New initiatives will be underpinned by the Commission's revamped better regulation framework that modernises how EU laws are designed and ensures they are clear, agile and fit for purpose. Citizens will continue to contribute to political debate on various policies, including through the use of European citizens' initiatives.

Focus must also now be on **rapid delivery** of the key proposals already on the table. We invite the co-legislators to swiftly agree on the files of the Joint Declaration on legislative priorities and of the One Europe, One Market roadmap, while keeping high levels of ambition throughout

the negotiations, including on simplification. Finally, we propose to withdraw legislative initiatives that have failed to secure sufficient support in the European Parliament and the Council.

A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

Cheap imported energy and raw materials, open global trade, access to the rapidly growing Chinese market and balanced technological progress are no longer the foundation for a thriving EU economy they used to be. For this reason, independence is our priority for Europe's economy.

The Commission will take coordinated action to address **high energy prices**, in response to the impact of the current geopolitical context on supply chains, energy security and energy and fuel availability and costs. The **post-2030 energy framework** will achieve simplification, while ensuring that the 2040 framework delivers on decarbonisation objectives. To support deployment of heat pumps, reduce up-front costs for households and lower exposure to high fossil fuel prices, the Commission will explore the possibility to introduce a **clean heat market mechanism**. The Commission will safeguard the single market, including the proposal to postpone certain obligations under the **Methane Regulation**, the review of the **Temporary State aid framework** for the most exposed industrial sectors and a short-term framework to optimise EU refineries. The Commission will also pursue voluntary schemes for demand aggregation and joint procurement.

To ensure the resources necessary for modern economic sectors – from electric cars to chips, batteries and defence – are in place, we will establish a **European Corporation on Critical Raw Materials**, which will work closely with the Critical Raw Materials Centre. We will pursue measures to ensure a strong and innovative chemicals industry in the Union, and a high level of protection of human health and the environment.

We will work to reduce barriers in the single market, including through enforcement action. In line with the 2025 Single Market Strategy, we will consider a **measure on preventing single market barriers**. We will tackle **unjustified territorial supply constraints** that continue to limit consumer choice and cause significant price differences across the EU, in particular for everyday consumer goods. This will complement actions taken to tackle unfair trading practices in the food chain. We will table proposals to complete the **Savings and Investment Union**, including the venture capital framework reform and the **Bank competitiveness and simplification package**. We will conduct a mid-term review of the Savings and Investments Union.

Together with the Eurogroup and the European Central Bank, we will continue to strengthen the role of the euro as a key tool for EU competitiveness, our position as a geopolitical actor, our economic resilience and our strategic independence. We welcome the co-legislators' progress in negotiations on the **digital euro** and will support their efforts to find a swift agreement. And we will further assess a **possible reform of the European sovereign safety net architecture**.

We will continue our efforts to significantly simplify regulation and reduce administrative burdens across the board. To avoid that rules agreed by the EU become more complex when

transposed and implemented by the Member States, we will work towards the **Pact against gold-plating**. Member States should be transparent about any additions they make when bringing EU law into their national rules and about the impact of these additions for businesses and the single market. It would also introduce a 'review and remove' mechanism in the context of the European Semester to address burdens resulting from gold-plating.

We will propose further measures to **accelerate permitting**, particularly for projects in the EU's strategic interest to attract additional investment. We will address regulatory simplification opportunities in the **transport, housing and digital areas**.

With the speed of technological progress, we need to ensure that our companies can thrive in an environment that is fit for the future. We will review the digital decade targets, and propose a broader **digital transformation package** to better reflect the latest developments. We will work to harness AI's potential for the cultural and creative sectors, support creators, safeguard human creativity and cultural and linguistic diversity as well as promote ethical use of AI.

To tap the potential of artificial intelligence, we will propose a blueprint for action in **five sectors of industrial AI**: health, transport, agri-food, advanced manufacturing and defence and space, as well as actions to strengthen Europe's position in the AI stack, from chips, to data, to compute and innovative funding instruments, in particular equity, complementing other forms of support, to support the necessary investments.

Furthermore, we will strengthen Europe's collective cyber preparedness, resilience and industrial competitiveness in a streamlined manner.

Supporting people and strengthening our societies and social model

2027 will mark the tenth anniversary of the **European Pillar of Social Rights.** New technologies and demographic change mean increased challenges but also opportunities for European societies. Meanwhile, the worlds of work and education are changing, and the cost of living is rising. When we talk about competitiveness, we are talking about jobs, people and livelihoods. In upholding the key principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, we will propose actions to safeguard our unique social market economic model, where people always come first.

Next year, we will also organise a **summit** to restate the commitment to the enduring principles of our Social Pillar.

Tackling the housing crisis is not only an economic necessity. It is also vital to remove a source of anxiety affecting too many Europeans. Building on the EU's Affordable Housing Plan, we will propose a **housing simplification package** aimed at increasing the supply of homes by cutting red tape and making it easier to carry out building and renovation works.

Given the barriers young people are facing today, education remains the EU's most valuable resource. Our competitiveness has benefited from cooperation between European universities, helping to boost skills and innovation. To take this a step further, we will propose the **European Universities alliances 2.0** to deliver high-quality, cross-border education across the EU. The **Skills Guarantee** will offer opportunities for further professional development and help workers by promoting upskilling and reskilling into new jobs in growing and strategic sectors.

We also need to support young people in the face of the challenges raised by the impact of AI on the labour market, including by considering improvements in the existing schemes.

Today, almost half of people aged 65 and over with care needs do not get the help they need. Over 50 million Europeans, primarily women, provide essential care for relatives or friends, often with little support. Care services are an essential part of our social infrastructure. We will therefore launch a **European Care Deal** to promote affordable, quality care, reduce staff shortages and improve careers for care workers.

Europe's changing generational structures and population dynamics present both significant challenges and opportunities for our societies and economies. The Commission will work further on developing a coherent strategic approach to prepare our systems for **changing demographic realities**. The needs of rural communities deserve particular attention, to prevent land abandonment and population decline.

We will propose a strategy on the **right to stay**, to create the conditions for every European to build a future in the place they call home**.** It will look at the challenges that may arise from or lead to economic decline and population loss, and identify the measures that might be needed for regions and citizens to thrive and succeed.

A new era for European defence and security

Our external borders, critical infrastructure and the values underpinning our 'European way' are increasingly coming under threat. Member States face hybrid attacks on their soil. Despite unprecedented decisions and funding, the **2030 defence readiness objective is at risk**. We therefore need to do more to achieve these goals and to strengthen our resilience, preparedness and capacity to respond rapidly to crises, or worse.

We remain committed to supporting Ukraine in its strong defence against the ongoing aggression by the Russian Federation, as we know exactly what is at stake. We will continue investing in and boosting our defence capabilities, notably in the field of air and missile defence, drone and counter-drone systems and ammunition. Integration between the defence industries of the EU and Ukraine is therefore extremely important, so we will work on implementing the EU-Ukraine Defence Industrial Pact. In cooperation with Ukraine and leading EU industries, we will further develop a cost-effective and modular air defence system. In addition, we will set up a **new European Instrument for Strategic Enablers** such as critical support assets and force multipliers ranging from strategic transport and air-to-air refuelling, to space and cyber defence, in cooperation with Member States, the European Defence Agency and the EUMS. To address the evolving nature of the many threats to Europe's security, the EU should set up a **European Security Emergency Protocol**, helping enable Member States facing a direct and credible threat to benefit from a swift and common European response. In addition, the EU's mutual assistance clause under Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union should be further operationalised. We will also explore the possibility of establishing a **European Security Council** with our closest partners.

Europe needs to step up its access to space capacity to ensure autonomy as a strategic enabler for European defence and the competitiveness of our industry. The EU will develop a new European vision on access to space.

When it comes to combatting illegal migration, we have made good progress on reform. Collective capacity has clearly improved in all areas and illegal border crossings are at their lowest levels since 2021. Unauthorised onward movements are declining and returns increasing. We need to build on this and continue our efforts to effectively implement the Pact on Migration and Asylum on the ground, in a spirit of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility.

This includes applying the new legal framework on returns, continuing to strengthen the security and resilience of our external borders, including by agreeing quickly on a strengthened Frontex mandate, improving the enforcement of existing rules, strengthening partnerships with third countries and ensuring that solidarity and responsibility work in practice. Following the events in Ceuta this summer, we will strengthen our capacity to monitor and address disinformation in close cooperation with Europol and other EU agencies. We will propose a **European emergency response framework** providing Member States with additional flexibility in border management and standard asylum and return procedures. In parallel, we will reinforce cooperation with neighbouring and partner countries to boost investment, to offer young people meaningful prospects, with jobs, skills training and apprenticeships, including through the Mediterranean Youth Skills and Jobs Initiative. We will increase our diplomatic engagement with countries of origin, while using all our tools and leverage in a strategic and coherent way. We will also modernise the **Schengen visa framework** while facilitating legitimate travel, labour mobility and welcoming talent to the EU.

We will step up joint efforts to combat organised crime and terrorism by strengthening **operational cooperation between law enforcement authorities**, including at international level**.** We will improve the protection of critical infrastructure and reinforce our response to hybrid threats. We will further assess the impact of **data retention rules** at EU level, with a view to following up next year.

Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature

Quality of life in Europe will increasingly depend on our ability to adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate. This year's wildfires saw the Union Civil Protection Mechanism activated twelve times in ten different countries. We will keep strengthening this collective shield and investing in prevention, preparedness and long-term resilience. To that end, we will consider the possibility of reinforcing **European capacities and capabilities**.

This summer's heatwaves and droughts placed the natural environment and the agricultural and energy sectors under severe stress. Europe's farmers coped in the face of these adverse conditions, but more needs to be done to help the agricultural sector be better prepared for extreme conditions in the future. Against this background, we will put forward a **European Water Initiative** to help better manage our vital water resources for our citizens, our food security and our industries. More needs to be done to strengthen agricultural resilience in the face of global and climate pressures. To strengthen EU preparedness for the impacts of heatwaves, especially for the most vulnerable, the Commission will develop an integrated **European Heatwave Plan** to address these impacts through a cross-sectoral approach. We will launch a **Climate Insurance Alliance** which will address Europe's climate insurance protection gap and take steps to **improve risk management in all sectors**.

We will also continue to protect nature and biodiversity. The **review of the nature protection Directives** will allow us to assess whether changes to the legal framework are needed to continue to function effectively to achieve their objectives in a simple way.

Given the key role **fisheries and aquaculture** play in the transition towards a sustainable and competitive food system, the Commission will put forward the targeted measures announced in its Vision 2040 to enable the sector's modernisation and generational renewal.

We will continue to strengthen the resilience of our **health systems** and the robust framework on food safety and animal and plant health.

Due to climate action, demand for clean tech products and services will continue to rise. To ensure progress towards climate neutrality and move away from fossil fuels while preserving the competitiveness of the EU automotive industry, we will review the **CO_2 standards for heavy-duty vehicles**.

Protecting democracy, upholding our values

A Europe worth living in is one that protects its people, cares for them, empowers them to actively participate in democracy and defends the values that define who we are. We will launch the **Congress of Europe** seventy years after the signing of the Treaty of Rome. It will bring together the brightest minds from across the EU to construct an inspiring vision of common Europe for a new generation.

Democracy is under increasing internal and external pressure. Disinformation and information manipulation are spreading fast, further fuelled by artificial intelligence. We will step up our work under the **European Democracy Shield**, pooling our resources with Member States, enlargement countries and stakeholders to reinforce situational awareness and support response capacity to threats. We will strengthen the EU's resilience against foreign interference and disinformation and support everyone's access to reliable and trustworthy information, safeguard the integrity of our elections and support independent media, journalists and civil society. We will continue working to boost democratic resilience at home and abroad. The Commission is consulting stakeholders on the Regulation on political advertising. Building on the feedback, it will consider the application and effectiveness of the rules and their impact on engagement in the democratic space. We will also continue exploring options on hate offences committed online.

Rising polarisation and the rapidly changing information landscape have increased threats, attacks and violence against political candidates and elected representatives, with women particularly affected. We will put forward a Commission Recommendation on **safety in politics** with measures to prevent and respond to threats to the safety of political candidates and elected representatives. These will help safeguard inclusive democratic participation and representation, fostering trust in political institutions.

Discrimination and inequality have no place in our society, yet for many people in Europe they remain a daily reality. We will **follow up on the successful European citizens' initiative against conversion practices** with a Commission Recommendation calling on Member States to ban these abusive practices that have no place in our Union.

A global Europe: leveraging our power and partnerships

As economic coercion increases and supply chains are weaponised, Europe needs to double down on **diversification** and advance trusted **partnerships** that reinforce its strengths and reduce vulnerabilities.

The **EU and Canada** have a shared understanding of today's challenges, whether it be economic coercion, artificial intelligence, innovation, climate change, Arctic security or geopolitics. This makes Canada one of our closest allies and we will continue strengthening our strategic partnership. At the same time, we will deepen our partnership with the United Kingdom. We will also further pursue the deepening of our trade and economic ties with the Americas, Asia and Africa, to open new opportunities for European businesses, make our supply chains more resilient and secure the raw materials and components we need. In concrete terms, we will work towards concluding or signing, and implementing, the Free Trade Agreements with Indonesia, India, Australia, the Philippines and Thailand.

Part of these efforts is a dedicated **diversification instrument** that will strengthen our resilience and help accelerate derisking and diversification, as we reduce strategic dependencies that create risks for the EU's economic security. We will also strengthen the EU's ability to face global macroeconomic imbalances, making effective **use of the EU's instruments** and enhancing the EU toolbox to better address these imbalances, including by working on a dedicated geoeconomic **deterrence pact**.

To secure peace, Europe must project power, deter threats, counter challenges and expand its influence. Through collective efforts, we have done more on defence in the last few years than in the decades before. But as threats increase, our approach must evolve.

Our support for **Ukraine**, its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity remains unwavering, and we will continue to work for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. For this, we remain committed to closer defence cooperation and defence industry integration, assisting Ukraine in making steady progress on its European path and stepping up pressure on Russia. This support will include strengthening Ukraine's critical infrastructure and humanitarian supplies to face another very tough winter, efforts to ensure freedom of navigation in the Black Sea while revitalising the solidarity lanes, further air defence capacities and joint work on developing a cost-effective and modular missile defence system together with Ukraine.

The EU will continue to support and actively contribute to peace and stability in the **Middle East**, **North Africa** and in the **Gulf**. We will continue to implement the Pact for the Mediterranean, and strengthen cooperation with regional partners on multiple fronts by **creating new** partnerships **and deepening existing ones**, delivering humanitarian support and engaging diplomatically to de-escalate and prevent further conflict. Security in the Middle East impacts European security. In 2027, protection of and assistance for the vulnerable people in Gaza, as well as in Yemen, will remain crucial, amidst a persistently dire situation. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains at the heart of many tensions in the region, affecting the security of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. We also continue to support Syria's recovery and ensure it remains on a stable path. The EU will also focus on helping to restore stability and ending regional conflicts involving Iran, the Gulf region and the **Red Sea** and on promoting freedom of navigation and maritime security through the straits of **Hormuz** and **Bab al-Mandab**.

The EU supports effective **multilateralism and the rules-based international order** with the UN at its core, while promoting and defending international law. We will continue to engage with partners in driving forward UN reform to deliver efficiently on peace and security, human rights and sustainable development. The EU reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the rules-based international order, of which the International Criminal Court is a fundamental part.

Delivering together and preparing our EU for the future

To deliver on this policy agenda, the EU needs a modern, flexible and well-funded budget. Preparations for the **2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework** will accelerate in 2027 so that funds start flowing as of 1 January 2028 to support the EU's competitiveness, security and defence, food security, cohesion and decarbonisation efforts, and Europe's global mission. For this, it is imperative that we reach a political agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework by the end of 2026, including a significant package of new own resources to avoid a damaging funding gap. In 2027, we will work intensively with the European Parliament, the Council and Member States to finalise sectoral legislation and preparations. In parallel, the protection of the EU budget will be further enhanced by the upcoming revision of the OLAF and EPPO Regulations and the PIF Directive, as a result of the review of the anti-fraud architecture.

Successful **EU enlargement** matters for our security, future stability and competitiveness, as well as for strengthening our position in a volatile world. In recent years, enlargement countries have made significant progress, particularly Montenegro which is completing its path towards the end of accession negotiations, Albania that has started closing negotiating chapters, and Ukraine and Moldova, which are progressing with the opening of negotiating clusters. As enlargement moves forward, the EU must also prepare. Our **pre-enlargement policy reviews** will help make sure that a larger Europe retains the capacity to act decisively.

In order to meet the expectations of citizens and businesses, we will continue to have a focus on **delivery**, building on the positive experiences of the Joint Declaration monitoring process we have established jointly with the European Parliament and Council. To ensure swift delivery of our rules, **effective implementation and resolute enforcement** remain essential. The Commission has already reinforced its support to Member States and is stepping up use of innovative tools to simplify implementation and reduce burdens. We will continue to engage directly with stakeholders and practitioners, including through implementation dialogues. Alongside this work programme, the Commission is presenting its **second annual overview report on simplification, implementation and enforcement**, to take stock of progress made on simplification and cost savings.

Europe will only be stronger if we work together at different levels and across borders. The time to deliver on our independence is now.