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DRAFT MINUTES

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION(Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research
and Space))

28 and 29 November 2024

MEETING ON THURSDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2024

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Council adopted the agenda set out in document 15898/24.

2. Approval of 'A' items

a) Non-legislative list

16139/24

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

Non-legislative activities

INTERNAL MARKET AND INDUSTRY

3. Conclusions on the future of European competitiveness



16080/24

Approval

The Council approved the text of conclusions as amended during the meeting (document 16294/24).

Statements by Austria and Germany are set out in the Annex.

4. Better regulation in Europe

15630/24

Exchange of views

Any other business

5. a) Joint proposal for a renewed European automotive policy: balancing competitiveness and climate ambition



15960/24

Information from Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, Italy, Poland, Romania and Slovakia

The Council took note of the information from Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, Italy, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

b) Current legislative proposals (Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)



(i) Regulation on combating late payment in commercial transactions

12976/1/23
REV 1 (en)

(ii) Supplementary protection certificate package

8851/23
8869/23
+ ADD 1-2
8894/23
+ ADD 1-3
8887/23 + ADD 1

(iii) Package Travel Directive
Information from the Presidency

16338/23 + ADD 1

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

c) Bioeconomy – next steps in the EU



15966/24

Information from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain and Sweden

The Council took note of the information provided by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

d) Reaping the full benefits of the biotech revolution



15969/24

Information from Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Slovakia and Spain

The Council took note of the information provided by Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Slovakia and Spain.

e) The development of European Battery production and way ahead to ensure a competitive European Battery Industry



15962/24

Information from Sweden, France and Germany

The Council took note of the information provided by Sweden, France and Germany.

- b) **(continuation) Current legislative proposals**
(Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)



- iv) **Regulation on a public interface connected to the Internal Market Information System for the declaration of posting of workers and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012**

15620/24

Information from the Commission

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

- f) **2024 Report of the Network of SME Envoys to the Competitiveness Council**

15453/24

Presentation by the Commission

- g) **Work programme of the incoming Presidency**

Information from Poland

MEETING ON FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2024

Non-legislative activities

RESEARCH

6. **Conclusions on strengthening the competitiveness of the EU, reinforcing the European Research Area and overcoming its fragmentation**



15553/24

Approval

The Council approved the text of conclusions as set out in the document above.

7. **Conclusions on a potential Europe-wide R&I initiative on advancing sustainable natural resource management, food systems security and the deployment of the bioeconomy, harnessing the potential of Central and Eastern Europe**



15304/24

+ COR 1

+ REV 1 (et)

Approval

The Council approved the text of conclusions as set out in the documents above.

8. **Conclusions on the Commission's communication on advanced materials** 15398/24
Approval

The Council approved the text of conclusions as set out in the document above.

9. **The contribution of research and innovation to the competitiveness of the European Union: follow-up to the recommendations of the report on "The future of European Competitiveness"** 15518/24
Policy debate

The Council held a policy debate.

SPACE

10. **Conclusions on reinforcing European competencies in the space sector** 15018/24
+ COR 1
Approval

The Council approved the text of conclusions as set out in the documents above.

11. **Conclusions on the interim evaluation of the European Union's Space Programme** 15017/24
+ COR 1
Approval

The Council approved the text of conclusions as set out in the documents above.

12. **The future of the Union space policy** 15020/24
+ COR 1
Exchange of views

Any other business

Research

13. a) **Reinforcing the independence of the European Research Council (ERC)** 15779/24

Information from Denmark, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden

The Council took note of the information provided by Denmark, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

- b) Work programme of the incoming Presidency
Information from Poland

Space

- c) Work programme of the incoming Presidency
Information from Poland

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- 1** First reading
- 2** Public debate proposed by the Presidency (Article 8(2) of the Council's Rules of Procedure)
- C** Item based on a Commission proposal
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Statements to the non-legislative "B" items set out in doc. 15898/24

Ad "B" item 3: **Conclusions on the future of European competitiveness**
Approval

STATEMENT BY AUSTRIA

“In view of the global competitive dynamics, it is essential that a holistic strategy for promoting competitiveness and productivity will be further developed in order to close the growth and innovation gaps between Europe and competing third countries.

However, Austria states a critical position on the following topics of the Presidency Conclusions:

1. Reduction of reporting requirements: The reduction of unjustified administrative burden and reporting requirements for industry and SMEs - respecting existing standards - is key. The statements in para 5, in particular on “reality checks” and the “Think Small First” principle, should remain, and the reduction of reporting requirements beyond the 25% target should be implemented quickly using a specific methodology.
2. Nuclear energy: Austria maintains the view that only those technologies that are safe, sustainable and environmentally sound, particularly renewable energy technologies should be promoted. For the Austrian government, any reference to clean energy and clean technologies does not encompass nuclear power.
3. Financing: Austria welcomes the fact that the Presidency Conclusions reject any prejudgement of the upcoming MFF negotiations. Austria is also opposed to further debt mutualisation. Investments must be financed in particular by mobilising private funds. In line with the Eurogroup+ declaration on competitiveness, as public funds must be utilised effectively.”

STATEMENT BY GERMANY

“Germany expressly supports the objectives of the conclusions on the future of European competitiveness.

The Council conclusions contain many important points with a view to the future work program of the new Commission. Strengthening EU competitiveness is the central challenge and task of the new legislature. We also welcome the emphasis in the conclusions on education, research and innovation as key to competitiveness.

The Draghi report is an unmistakable wake-up call. Strengthening EU competitiveness must go hand in hand with the continuation and further development of the Green Deal agenda as a driver of growth, investment and innovation, the acceleration of the digital transformation and the preservation of social cohesion. We need a horizontal, cross-sectoral improvement in economic framework conditions. This requires, in particular, the future-oriented further development of the internal market, tangible progress in reducing bureaucracy and speeding up procedures while maintaining necessary protection standards, a reduction in energy prices, measures to secure skilled workers, strengthening research and innovation and an ambitious trade agenda based on openness.

We therefore generally welcome the language on the single market. We also welcome the fact that economic security and the reduction of dependencies are mentioned as the third pillar of the Draghi report in the Council conclusions. It will be important that the Clean Industrial Deal takes a holistic and comprehensive approach that provides the right incentives for innovation, transformation, investment and thus inclusive growth and technological sovereignty.

Despite our support for the above-mentioned points, Germany could not agree to the Council conclusions:

Germany is of the opinion that EU funding can only be used to support technologies that are safe, sustainable and environmentally friendly and for which targets exist at Union level. This is not the case for nuclear energy from nuclear fission (nuclear power). The German government had advocated a formulation that respects the energy sovereignty of the Member States. This is not sufficiently reflected in paragraph 15 of the Council Conclusions. The German government therefore could not agree to the text.”
