

Brussels, 4 March 2026
(OR. en, pl, hu, lt)

6385/26
PV CONS 7
ECOFIN 201
PARLNAT

DRAFT MINUTES
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION¹
(Economic and Financial Affairs)
17 February 2026

¹ In the presence of the President of the EIB

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Council adopted the agenda set out in document 5905/1/26 REV 1.

2. Approval of "A" items

a) Non-legislative list

5902/1/26 REV 1

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

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

5903/26

Environment

1. Directive on priority substances in the field of water policy



5970/1/26 REV 1

Adoption of the Council's position at first reading and of the statement of the Council's reasons

+ ADD 1 REV 2

14144/25

approved by Coreper, Part 1, on 11.02.2026

+ ADD 1 REV 1

ENV

The Council adopted its position at first reading, in accordance with Article 294(5) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and the statement of the Council's reasons (legal basis: Article 192(1) TFEU), with Bulgaria and Poland abstaining. Statements to this item are set out in the Annex.

Legislative deliberations

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

3. Savings and Investments Union: Supplementary pensions package



a) Directive amending Directives (EU) 2016/2341 and 2016/97 as regards the strengthening of the framework for occupational retirement provision

15757/25 + COR 1

b) Regulation amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1238 on a pan-European Personal Pension Product (PEPP)

15756/25 + COR 1

Policy debate

The Council held a policy debate on the two files.

4. Any other business 5108/26
Current financial services legislative proposals
Information from the Presidency

The Council took note of the information provided by the Presidency about the ongoing work on financial services legislative proposals.

Non-legislative activities

5. EU budget 5749/26
Council Recommendation on the discharge to be given to the Commission in respect of the implementation of the budget for 2024
(Legal basis: Article 319 TFEU)
Adoption
Approval of a letter
+ ADD 1-2
6. Conclusions on the budget guidelines for 2027 5754/26 + ADD 1
Approval
Approval of a letter
7. Economic and financial impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine
Exchange of views
8. Economic recovery in Europe 5756/26
Council Implementing Decisions under the Recovery and Resilience Facility
(Legal basis: Article 20 Regulation (EU) 2021/241)
Adoption
+ ADD 1 REV 1
9. European Semester 2026 5732/26
Council Recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area
Approval
5991/1/26 REV 1
10. Implementation of the economic governance framework:
Defence financing
Council Recommendation allowing Austria to deviate from the maximum growth rates of net expenditure
(Legal basis: Regulation (EU) 2024/1263)
Adoption
5733/1/26 REV 1
11. Any other business

- ❶ First reading
 - ❷ Item based on a Commission proposal
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Statements to the legislative "A" items set out in doc. 5903/26**STATEMENT BY POLAND**

“As a result of negotiations on the Directive on priority substances in water, amending the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and its two related specific Directives, 2006/118/EC and 2008/105/EC, key elements for Poland have been retained in the text, such as the 22 December 2039 deadline for achieving good water status in relation to new substances, a transposition period of more than 18 months, linking the revision of the annexes containing the lists of priority substances to the six-year planning cycle, and maintaining the level of involvement of Member States in this revision by ensuring that changes are introduced through the ordinary legislative procedure, as well as not introducing ecological status for groundwaters and maintaining a limited number of substances on watch lists.

However, Poland continues to have concerns about several specific issues in the text, including, above all, the failure to adapt the environmental standard for the sum of 24 PFAS after adding TFA, the lack of sufficient scientific justification for the indicated 0.2 standard for the sum of pesticides in the case of surface waters, the lack of an available methodology for effect-based monitoring (EBM) which would enable research to be conducted in all Member States with adequate comparability of results, and the incorrect interpretation of the provisions regarding the determination of the limit of quantification under footnote 33 to Annex V, amending Annex I to Directive 2008/105/EC, as not fully consistent with the provisions of Directive 2009/90/EC. In the case of groundwaters, there are concerns about introducing microplastic monitoring, as it is impossible to determine whether microplastics detected in groundwater samples actually came from the aquifer or the sample was contaminated during sampling due to the plastic components of the monitoring and sampling equipment. Then there is the introduction of provisions for additional ad-hoc monitoring to verify ex-post negative impacts on water status under Article 4(7a). Poland considers this excessive regulation, which is not reflected in other provisions of the Water Framework Directive.

Poland also reiterates its previous position regarding the provisions in the preamble to the Directive introducing the possibility of testing bisphenol-B, bisphenol-S, and other bisphenols as substances specific to river basins. Poland is of the opinion that the appropriate tool for testing for the presence of these substances at EU level should be a watch list for surface waters.

Poland also emphasises that the implementation of the Directive will entail a significant increase in the costs of monitoring surface waters and groundwaters. In the case of surface waters, the estimated cost increase will be approximately 70 % compared to current expenditures.

In view of the above, Poland is abstaining from voting.”

STATEMENT BY HUNGARY

“We would like to thank the presidencies involved in the negotiations for their efforts and hard work in reaching an agreement. We broadly agree with the objectives of the legislative amendment package to improve water quality and support the compromise text. At the same time, we would like to recall that during the negotiations we repeatedly expressed our concerns about the financial and human resources required for implementation, and we therefore wish to reiterate the importance of establishing the Joint Monitoring Instrument without delay. Hungary believes that the new rules can only be successfully implemented if the Joint Monitoring Instrument is available to support Member States in their implementation efforts.”

STATEMENT BY LITHUANIA

“Lithuania supports the final compromise text on priority substances in the field of water policy and welcomes its objectives of strengthening water quality and environmental protection.

However, while we recognise the importance of updating monitoring standards and aligning them with scientific progress, we note that implementation may require considerable administrative and financial efforts at national level.”

STATEMENT BY LATVIA

“Latvia **supports the final compromise text proposal** for a Directive on Priority Substances amending the Water Framework Directive, the Groundwater Directive and the Environmental Quality Standards Directive (EQSD).

It is in Latvia’s interest to **safeguard surface and groundwater** from the impact of chemical substances and other micropollutants, while **assessing chemical water quality** against harmonised EU environmental quality standards. Throughout the negotiations, Latvia has consistently expressed support for updating the requirements of these three directives and has engaged in a constructive and cooperative manner.

At the same time, we acknowledge that the **transposition and implementation** of the proposed amendments **will be complex** and **will impose significant financial and administrative burdens** on Member States.

Latvia **remains concerned about the expected scale and cost of monitoring**. Many EQSD priority substances are not detected in our waters using testing methods that meet the required quality standards, yet the Directive continues to obligate regular monitoring of these substances.

Latvia considers the **inclusion of DDT, para-para DDT and cyclodiene pesticides** in the priority substances list to be unjustified, as it **increases monitoring obligations without corresponding environmental benefits**. These substances have long been banned from use, and the proposed change in status would require substantially more frequent sampling and testing, escalating costs that we consider disproportionate. We believe that these substances relevant in certain Member States could instead be designated as river basin-specific pollutants with EU-level environmental quality standards.”