

Brussels, 8 June 2026
(OR. en, fr)

9663/26
PV CONS 31
AG 82
PARLNAT

DRAFT MINUTES
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
(General Affairs)
26 May 2026

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Council adopted the agenda set out in document 9372/26.

2. Approval of "A" items

a) **Non-legislative list** 9481/26

The Council adopted all "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) 9482/26

General affairs

1. **Council Decision amending the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage** [S] 8707/26 + ADD 1
6708/26
AG

Adoption of the legislative act

Approved by Coreper, Part 2, on 20.05.2026

The Council adopted a Council Decision amending the act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage (legal basis: Article 223(1) TFEU and Article 106a(1) Euratom), with Germany abstaining. Statements to this item are set out in the Annex.

2. **Council Directive on mobile voters in municipal elections** [S][C] 8354/1/26 REV 1
+ REV 1 ADD 1
REV 1
8338/26 + COR 1
AG
INST

Adoption of the legislative act

Approved by Coreper, Part 2, on 20.05.2026

The Council adopted the Council Directive on mobile voters in municipal elections (legal basis: Article 22(1) TFEU). A statement 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** [S][C] 9146/26
Policy debate

The Council held a policy debate.

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

4. Any other business

- a) **Outermost regions and overseas countries and territories in the next MFF** **SC** 9638/26
Information from France

The Council took note of the information provided by France on outermost regions and overseas countries and territories in the next MFF.

Non-legislative activities

5. Preparation of the European Council on 18-19 June 2026: 7872/26
annotated draft agenda
Exchange of views
6. EU-UK relations
State of play
7. Annual rule-of-law dialogue: country-specific discussion 5019/26
Exchange of views
8. Any other business
- a) The rule-of-law situation in Hungary in the context of the 9636/26
ongoing Article 7(1) TEU procedure
Information from Hungary

S Special legislative procedure

C Item based on a Commission proposal

Statements to the legislative A items set out in doc 9482/26

Ad "A" item 1:

Council Decision amending the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage
Adoption of the legislative act

STATEMENT BY SWEDEN

“Depending on how childcare responsibilities for newborn children are shared within a family, both male and female Members of the European Parliament may find their ability to participate in parliamentary work impeded. Sweden would therefore have preferred a broader amendment that, in addition to mothers who have recently given birth, also covers the other parent of a newborn child. Nonetheless, Sweden welcomes today's decision as a positive step towards promoting gender equality and family-friendly working conditions for Members of the European Parliament.”

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE NETHERLANDS AND DENMARK

“The Netherlands and Denmark underline the importance of establishing an arrangement that enables Members of the European Parliament to participate in plenary voting during pregnancy and in the months following childbirth. In this context, the Netherlands and Denmark welcome today's adoption of the Council decision amending the Electoral act, which will allow Members to temporarily delegate their vote so that they may focus on their private and family life.

At the same time, the Netherlands and Denmark would have preferred a broader scope for the proposal, notably covering situations such as paternity leave and long-term illness. In addition, the Netherlands and Denmark note that a temporary replacement scheme would have the potential to capture the full scope of the duties of a Member of the European Parliament.

The Netherlands and Denmark therefore regard today's proposal as a positive first step and stand ready to continue working with the European Parliament, Council and Commission on further steps related to parental leave arrangements for members of the European Parliament.

The Netherlands and Denmark also note that the principle of a free mandate and voting without binding instructions is firmly embedded across the European Union and in the EU Electoral Act. It is essential that elected representatives are not bound by voting instructions and are able to vote freely. The Netherlands and Denmark wish to emphasise that the proposal on the transfer of voting rights does not entail any derogation from the principle of the free mandate, as laid down in the second sentence of Article 6(1) of the EU Electoral Act.”

Ad "A" item 2: Council Directive on mobile voters in municipal elections
Adoption of the legislative act

STATEMENT BY FRANCE

“La France salue la finalisation de la refonte initiée en 2021 des deux directives du Conseil relatives au droit de vote des citoyens mobiles aux élections européennes et aux élections municipales. Le texte de refonte relatif aux élections européennes (adopté le 24 juin 2025), comme le présent texte de refonte relatif aux élections municipales, permettront de faciliter la participation à ces deux élections des citoyens de l’Union européenne qui résident dans un autre Etat membre que celui dont ils ont la nationalité.

S’agissant de la faculté pour l’Etat de résidence d’exiger que l’électeur mobile atteste ne pas être déchu du droit de vote dans son Etat d’origine, cette possibilité n’est pas directement mentionnée dans le texte relatif aux élections municipales alors qu’elle l’est dans celui relatif aux élections européennes. Même s’il est établi que les Etats membres qui le souhaitent peuvent exiger une telle attestation lors des élections municipales sur la base de leurs seules dispositions nationales, la France considère cependant qu’il pourrait être opportun, dans un souci de clarté juridique et à l’occasion d’une prochaine révision, d’harmoniser la rédaction des deux directives à ce sujet.”

Statements to the legislative B items set out in doc. 9372/26

Ad "B" item 3: Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034
Policy debate

JOINT STATEMENT BY BULGARIA, CZECHIA, ESTONIA, GREECE, SPAIN, CROATIA, HUNGARY, ITALY, LITHUANIA, LATVIA, MALTA, POLAND, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SLOVENIA AND SLOVAKIA

“The 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) is the strategic instrument for achieving our common objectives and the ambitious vision on the future of the EU. **A more competitive, prosperous, stronger and safer Europe requires sufficient financing to match our political ambition, adapted to the new geopolitical reality.**

The next MFF must continue to ensure **sufficient resources for policies stemming from Treaty obligations, such as Cohesion Policy, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)**, which play a fundamental role in promoting convergence, economic growth and food security. At the same time, the next MFF should **support boosting the EU strategic autonomy and continue strengthening EU's competitiveness**, climate and digital transition, security and defence, productivity and innovation, as well as ensuring a strong basis for a fully integrated Single Market. It must also **respond to new challenges** such as security risks, disruptions in global trade, the energy transition and security, migration, reflecting the geopolitical situation. Therefore, the MFF volume as proposed by the Commission is the basis to discuss how to effectively address the financial needs of the Union.

In the Commission's proposal, Cohesion Policy, CAP and the CFP are the only policies facing reductions in real terms, despite the overall increase in the size of the new MFF. These policies significantly contribute to the key EU objectives and their Treaty-based objectives remain fully relevant. **Cohesion Policy and CAP are the most visible EU policies for the EU citizens.**

In this context, **we call for an increase in the Member States allocations under Heading 1 for the Treaty-based policies.**

Programming of those allocations, particularly at the beginning of the programming period and at the mid-term review, should remain entirely the responsibility of the Member States. The proposed steering mechanism must not impact the programming prerogatives of the Member States. While shared management instruments can build on the proposed reference framework, recommendations should not be automatically translated into obligations, as it would run contrary to the shared management principle and the place-based approach.

To ensure the effective use of EU funds in shared management, **realistic and favourable implementing conditions are essential** to support long-term investments and a high quality of expenditures. This requires **maintaining N+3 rule** for decommitments, balanced commitment and payment profiles, as well as adequate **pre-financing and co-financing EU rates for CAP and CFP measures, Cohesion Policy including Cohesion Fund investments and Home Affairs funds**. At the same time, Cohesion Policy should not be turned into a systematic crisis tool, replacing other EU instruments to this purpose: the proposed 10% reserve for crises should be reduced; the reprogramming of ongoing measures in the Plan should remain a voluntary option for the Member State, while ensuring at the same time access to the reserve for crises and the EU Facility. Furthermore, Cohesion Policy should be endowed with appropriate and secured funding for all categories of regions.

We support the focus of the **Heading 2 on competitiveness**. As regards the **European Competitiveness Fund (ECF)**, **we recognize the centrality of the principle of excellence and the need to fully explore it across the EU**. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure effective and inclusive access to **strengthen the overall competitiveness throughout the EU**. To increase participation and foster capacity-building across the EU, specific measures should be introduced for improving the access of less experienced entities to competitive calls, with **special focus on SMEs**, the backbone of the EU economy. In addition, **more favourable implementing conditions**, such as 85% EU cofinancing rate for Member States with GNI per capita below EU27 average, should also be ensured for **Connecting Europe Facility**, considering its contribution to leveraging the Single Market and fostering EU resilience.

Friends of Cohesion are open to discussing proposals for **new own resources** that would effectively ease the pressure on the Member States' budgets. These discussions must be linked to the overall MFF negotiations. Any new own resources **must be genuine, fair, simple and not regressive**.

The **abolition of rebates linked to the GNI based own resource¹ is a must** – there is no political or economic rationale for re-introducing them on the revenue side of the EU budget. The added value of the single market and of the EU as a whole, as well as the spill-over effects of the EU budget, must not be overlooked.

A **more gradual repayment scheme of Next Generation EU and new joint borrowing for loan support** (such as Catalyst Europe) should be considered as options to finance investments and European public goods essential for long-term strategic autonomy, ensuring that the MFF can effectively address the Union’s evolving challenges and priorities.

Friends of Cohesion stand ready to contribute constructively to reaching a balanced compromise that benefits the entire European Union. Our shared objective is to achieve a budget that is **both modern and responsive to the varying needs of Member States and regions.**”

¹ The gross reductions in annual GNI-based contribution apply until the end of 2027, according to the current Own Resources Decision.