

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE CYPRUS PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

January 1- June 30, 2026

[CY PCY MOTTO]

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[CY PCY PRIORITIES]

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General Affairs Council (GAC)

[Introduction]

In the current geopolitical environment, the General Affairs Council will defend the values on which the EU is founded, continue to advance a merit-based enlargement process and increase the EU's resilience by committing sufficient funding to respond to current and future challenges.

In this context, the negotiations for the **post 2027 Multiannual Financial Framework** will have a prominent role on the agenda of the Council, and the Cyprus Presidency aims to promote a balanced and forward-looking budget that delivers on the Union's strategic priorities and supports cohesion, competitiveness and sustainability.

The Council will also continue its efforts to promote **the simplification agenda**, in line with the strategic goal of boosting EU competitiveness through simpler and fit-for-future regulatory frameworks.

The Cyprus Presidency will seek to strengthen the rule of law and to promote and safeguard the **fundamental values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and human rights**.

The Presidency will remain committed to advancing the **enlargement** agenda, actively supporting the enlargement of countries on their path to accession, in line with the merit-based process.

The Cyprus Presidency will also work to strengthen the **EU's partnership with the United Kingdom** and to foster stronger cooperation with EFTA countries and other Western non-EU countries.

Promoting and safeguarding the EU's fundamental values

The Cyprus Presidency will prioritize the **rule of law** as a cornerstone of the EU's functioning and the well-being of its citizens. Building on existing tools and mechanisms such as the annual rule of law cycle, the Presidency will work to further strengthen the rule of law across the EU. Emphasis will be placed on safeguarding the EU's fundamental values, including respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and human rights, which are essential in reinforcing democratic resilience and addressing emerging challenges such as disinformation and misinformation. Also, engaging partners with a European perspective in discussions about promoting and maintaining the rule of law helps maximize this potential.

The Cyprus Presidency will continue the dialogue on the rule of law, seeking to enhance its monitoring mechanism and to ensure that it operates objectively and transparently, while respecting the equality of Member States. Through constructive dialogue, targeted and results-oriented discussions and exchange of best practices, the Cyprus Presidency aims to contribute in addressing shortcomings and preventing democratic backsliding.

Within the framework of the rule of law cycle, the Cyprus Presidency will organise country-specific dialogues and host a High-Level Conference on the Rule of Law.

EU Enlargement

Enlargement is a geopolitical investment and a necessity in preserving peace, security and stability of our continent and beyond. It is also a driver for improving the economic and social conditions of our Union and its citizens, through the expansion and strengthening of the internal market. Driven by geopolitical imperatives, the enlargement process has gained political momentum. An enlarged Union will be stronger and more prosperous, fostering the values and principles upon which it is founded, including democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights.

In this framework, the Cyprus Presidency will take forward the enlargement agenda, in line with the established methodology, fair and rigorous conditionality, as well as the principle of own merits and reversibility. It remains essential for all candidate countries to respect and commit to the values and principles on which the EU is founded, as well as to meet the obligations required for EU membership.

The aim of the Cyprus Presidency is to make further solid progress in the enlargement process of both the Western Balkan and Eastern candidate countries, supporting and encouraging their commitment and active engagement for EU integration, through reforms and tangible progress on the fundamentals. Turkey remains a candidate country and its relations with the EU will continue being assessed within the framework established by the European Council in April 2024, as well as previous Conclusions and established conditionalities.

An EU fit for enlargement

The Presidency will continue the work of previous Presidencies on the EU's **internal reforms**, aiming to ensure that EU policies, finances and institutions are fit for the future.

EU Relations with the UK

The United Kingdom remains a key trading and like-minded partner of the European Union in addressing a wide array of pressing security and geopolitical challenges. The Cyprus Presidency will work to further enhance the **EU–UK relationship** on the basis of the Common Understanding reached at the London Summit in May 2025, for a renewed agenda of the European Union–United Kingdom cooperation, while safeguarding also the implementation of the agreed framework underpinning our relationship: the full and faithful implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement in all its parts, as well as the proper enforcement of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Safeguarding the Union's interests, while preserving the unity among the Member States will be at the core of the Presidency's work.

EU Relations with EFTA countries, Andorra, Monaco and San Marino

The Presidency will work for further progress towards the adoption of the decision on the signing of the broad package of Agreements with the Swiss Confederation. The Presidency will further advance strengthening and enhancing cooperation with the **EEA – EFTA Countries**, as well as engage in efforts to advance

relations with **Andorra, San Marino and Monaco**, building on shared interests.

Multiannual Financial Framework

The Presidency is committed to ensuring that the post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) reflects the Unions' strategic priorities, addressing both new emerging as well as longstanding needs across the EU. The new EU Budget must be responsive to the current geopolitical landscape, including ongoing conflicts and economic uncertainties, while delivering solidarity, fairness, and tangible improvements in the quality of life for all EU citizens.

An agreement for the EU budget must balance Member States' fiscal constraints and economic challenges with the imperative to drive sustainable growth and resilience across the Union.

The Presidency will work in close cooperation with all the member states and, the President of the European Council and while maintaining the active engagement of the European Parliament, to pave the way for a timely and effective completion of the negotiations at the European Council. The Cyprus Presidency will aim to significantly advance the ongoing negotiations on the National and Regional Partnership Plans, the European Competitiveness Fund and the Global Europe Instrument, as well as all the other relevant legislative files and sectoral regulations. In parallel, negotiations in the ECOFIN Council will aim to introduce a fair and transparent own resources framework,

effectively corresponding towards achieving our shared objectives.

Enhancing economic, social and territorial cohesion

Through the National and Regional Partnership Plans, cohesion policy should continue to constitute an indispensable component of the Single Market and a key driver for European growth and competitiveness, reducing regional disparities and enhancing economic, social and territorial cohesion in line with the EU Treaty objectives. To this end, Cohesion Policy should continue to build on its strengths and its foundational elements while keep recognizing the diverse challenges faced by EU Regions and Member States.

The Cyprus Presidency will hold an Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Cohesion Policy in Cyprus, in May 2026.

Simplification and burden reduction

The Cyprus Presidency will support all efforts, to simplify regulatory, reporting and compliance requirements, in order to reduce administrative burdens for European enterprises, especially SMEs, farmers and other stakeholders. Building on the significant work of the two preceding Presidencies of our Trio, the Cyprus Presidency will continue to prioritize the simplification agenda, with the aim of

fostering a more business friendly environment and free up resources towards investments and innovation, serving to the overarching goals of boosting the EU's competitiveness and resilience. Towards this aim, the Presidency, intends to prioritise the discussion and examination of Commission's proposals on simplifying existing EU Regulations and cutting red tape, to the benefit of European businesses and the competitiveness of EU economy. Importantly, these simplification efforts are not intended to lead to de-regulation, but rather to ensure that rules are more effective, proportionate, and easier to apply.

Integrated Maritime Policy

The European Ocean Pact aims to ensure coherence across all policy areas linked to the oceans, support the oceans and coastal areas' resilience and health, promote the blue economy, manage the use of our seas and oceans coherently and develop a comprehensive agenda of marine knowledge, innovation and investment. Consequently, the Cyprus Presidency will continue efforts towards establishing effective and adequate implementation tools for the Pact, ensuring the good governance and sustainability of our oceans, in all their dimensions and thus contributing to the preparation of the Oceans Act.

Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)

[Introduction]

Against the background of global tensions, the Foreign Affairs Council in the first half of 2026, will focus on solidifying international partnerships to defend shared values and contribute to advancing peace and prosperity globally.

In light of the [recently launched] new Pact for the Mediterranean that demonstrates the EU's commitment to engage more deeply with countries across the Mediterranean region, the Presidency will reaffirm the importance of EU relations with its Southern Neighborhood and their valued role in promoting regional stability.

The Presidency will continue its support for Ukraine, for as long as it takes and within the broader objectives of promoting peace, security, stability, good governance and prosperity in the eastern neighborhood.

The Presidency will emphasize the importance of further enhancing the EU-Gulf Cooperation Strategic Partnership, looking forward to the next EU- GCC Summit in Saudi Arabia in 2026.

The Presidency remains committed to advancing cooperation with transatlantic partners, underscoring the importance of a continuous, mutually beneficial and resilient strategic partnership with the United States, based on our shared democratic values and common interests.

In an era of significant geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts, trade policy is a vital instrument in reinforcing the EU's strategic autonomy, enhancing economic resilience and increasing its competitiveness. In this context, the Cyprus Presidency will pursue an ambitious, open and sustainable trade agenda that safeguards the EU's strategic interests and values.

The Cyprus Presidency will cooperate closely with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to develop these priorities, anchored in respect for an international rules-based order fully respecting international law, including the United Nations Charter, international humanitarian law and the promotion and protection of universal human rights.

Foreign Affairs

Ukraine

The Cyprus Presidency will work, to ensure the EU's continued support to Ukraine for a just and lasting peace, reaffirming solidarity in the face of ongoing Russian aggression. This includes further political, diplomatic, economic, military and humanitarian support to Ukraine, and by making best use of all available means and instruments, including though EU's CSDP missions in Ukraine. Consistent with the EU's "peace through strength approach", the Presidency will promote work with a view to providing further comprehensive support to Ukraine and its people, as it exercises its inherent right to self-defence against Russia's war of aggression, in coordination with like-minded partners and allies and in support of the High Representative's efforts.

The most effective security guarantee for Kyiv, together with the country's EU accession process, is the establishment of strong, capable, and resilient Armed Forces that can effectively deter any future aggression. To this end, Cyprus Presidency will support the implementation of existing EU instruments such as funding through the EPF and the support of the Ukrainian Defence Industry. The Cyprus Presidency will also advocate for long-term strategic planning to ensure consistent EU engagement with Ukraine's security and recovery needs.

The Cyprus Presidency, in line with the European Council conclusions, remains ready to facilitate further steps aiming to increase pressure on Russia to engage in a meaningful way to peace negotiations. The Cyprus Presidency will work for strengthening sanctions enforcement and

address circumvention, ensuring the effectiveness of the EU's measures to weaken Russia's ability to continue waging its war of aggression. The Cyprus Presidency will also aim to continue the close coordination and cooperation between the EU and the US on Ukraine also in the context of the diplomatic efforts for a peace agreement for Ukraine. The Presidency will also work for accountability, supporting all established legal instruments, such as the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, given our strong commitment in upholding the principles of international law.

Southern Neighbourhood

The EU and its Southern Neighbourhood share geography and historical ties and face common challenges. The Cyprus Presidency, in close cooperation with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, will promote an ambitious EU agenda with the Middle East and Gulf partners, working towards reinforcing and further developing the strategic partnership built on a shared geography and history. In this context, the Presidency looks forward to the implementation of the New Pact for the Mediterranean as a key policy instrument in advancing EU's engagement with the region. The Presidency will also engage more actively in promoting regional cooperation and beyond in the context of interconnectivity initiatives like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), which includes GCC partners.

The Cyprus Presidency will work to ensure consistent and strengthened EU support for the Southern Neighbourhood as part of a renewed EU approach in the region aiming for stability and prosperity and to facilitate

overcoming the challenges that also directly impact the European Union as a whole. Towards this end, the Cyprus Presidency is keen to further deepen comprehensive partnerships with individual Southern Neighbourhood countries and will work towards expanding the number of countries with which the EU enjoys strategic comprehensive partnership agreements. We will work on apt deliverables to showcase the importance and the strength of the EU's Southern Neighbourhood Policy, also in view of the discussions for the adoption of the new MFF.

Building on the historic first European Union-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit in 2024, the Cyprus Presidency will work towards advancing EU-GCC relations, a linchpin in our shared vision for peace, security and stability in the EU and the Middle East. Acknowledging the particular importance of this partnership in view of the serious challenges facing the two regions, the Cyprus Presidency will strive for a successful EU- GCC Summit in 2026.

Through the European Peace Facility (EPF) and other relevant policy areas, the Presidency will continue reinforcing the EU's support to the Southern Neighbourhood within the CFSP spectrum. It will focus on introducing new assistance measures and expanding existing ones, while bringing the Southern Neighbourhood and Gulf countries closer to the EU. In this way, a more balanced geographical approach across different regions will be ensured safeguarding fairness and equity. A key criterion in this process will be the potential partners' respect of the security interests of all EU Member States.

The Cyprus Presidency remains dedicated to fostering intercultural and interfaith dialogue as a vital element in promoting mutual understanding, social cohesion, and regional stability within the European Union's Southern Neighborhood.

Western Balkans

The strategic importance of the Western Balkans region is indisputable, in light of a new geopolitical environment and changed dynamics in Europe. The Cyprus Presidency will look to enhance the EU's role and visibility in the Western Balkans, as we continue to work closely with our transatlantic partners to increase the region's resilience vis-à-vis the influence of third actors. The enlargement policy is one of the most effective tools of the EU to this end and a geostrategic investment in peace, security and stability. At the helm of the Council, Cyprus Presidency will actively support the Western Balkans partners on their path to EU accession.

Transatlantic Relations

The Cyprus Presidency remains firmly committed to strengthening the transatlantic relationship through renewed engagement, ensuring it remains a pillar of stability and progress for both sides of the Atlantic and the world. Enhancing EU-US ties is of great importance. The Presidency will actively promote a constructive, inclusive and mutually beneficial transatlantic dialogue across all key areas of cooperation, including commerce, technology and innovation, security and defense, coordination on Ukraine, energy, and connectivity. Emphasis will also be placed on the further strengthening of the EU-Canada Strategic Partnership based on shared values and common interests.

Africa

The Cyprus Presidency will pursue a closer and more meaningful cooperation with Africa, fostering greater mutual understanding and approaching the relationship on the basis of equal partnership, with full respect for each other's sensitivities as well as national and collective interests.

Amid growing instability and conflict across Africa, the Cyprus Presidency will advocate for a more active and constructive role for Europe in mediating ongoing crises. As these efforts must be African-led, inclusive, and shielded as much as possible from malign external influence, the Cyprus Presidency will promote the full and effective use of the EU's political, security, and development tools to achieve these goals. At the same time, it will highlight the intrinsic link between Europe's prosperity with the stability of sensitive regions of the continent, such as the Horn of Africa, and will work closely with all relevant EU bodies to enhance maritime security, ensuring freedom of navigation and the uninterrupted flow of trade.

Asia and Indo-Pacific

The Cyprus Presidency will work to further strengthen the EU's engagement with the countries in the Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. The Presidency on the basis of EU's threefold approach towards China, will support constructive dialogue to address issues of concern, and cooperation on areas of shared interest.

The Cyprus Presidency will support promoting the EU-India relations, including by advancing our strategic partnership and supporting the finalisation of the EU-India Free Trade Agreement. At the same time,

the Presidency will actively support the advancement of our partnerships with Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines, the ongoing negotiations for Free Trade Agreements with the countries in the region as well as the enhancement of EU-ASEAN relations, working towards a more structured partnership.

Multilateralism-International Law-Human Rights

Attaching great importance to multilateralism and to a rules-based international order, grounded in the UN Charter and International Law the Presidency, together with the EU HRVP, will support and promote close EU-UN cooperation on the basis of International Law, including International Humanitarian Law, protecting and promoting human rights for all, advancing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and all relevant processes (Agenda 2030, Our Common Agenda, Pact for the Future).

During its Cyprus Presidency, Cyprus will seek to promote the EU agenda and policies concerning the advancement of human rights of all, including children, women, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, including in the framework of its current membership of the UN Human Rights Council. The Cyprus Presidency will also encourage cultural dialogue as a means to foster understanding and defying the obstacles of discrimination and misunderstanding, as well as the protection of cultural heritage.

Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid

The Cyprus Presidency, with the valuable leadership, support and guidance of the

HRVP and the European Commission, will promote the Team Europe Approach, in order to advance the leading role of the EU and its Member States as the global leader in provision of Official Development Assistance (ODA). The effective usage and implementation of EU Global Gateway projects, with the participation of more Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) from all EU Member States would be a valuable tool in this direction.

Special attention will be given to Ukraine, the Middle East, the European Southern Neighborhood and to Africa, in order to tackle current and ongoing development and humanitarian challenges, including food security, nutrition, issues related to climate change, water, oceans, health, as well as security and migration. The Presidency will also promote the relations of the EU with Small Island Developing States, in order to advance them to the extent possible, especially in relation with their development and humanitarian needs.

The Presidency will prioritise the security and support of humanitarian operations, with a focus on enhancing the EU's capacity for rapid and effective crisis response. Special attention will be given to the Eastern Mediterranean, a region with significant humanitarian needs.

Concerning the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the Cyprus Presidency will closely follow-up on the achievements under the Danish Presidency to ensure that the External Financial Instruments included in the MFF, in the context of the Global Europe pillar, will promote the interests of our Union and effectively deal with current global challenges.

Strategic Autonomy

Strengthening the EU's Strategic Autonomy, enhancing the EU's political and diplomatic footprint within the multilateral system, solidifying its defence position by implementing strategies, in line with the EU Readiness 2030 objectives, and reducing strategic dependencies, will be key aims of the Presidency, while pursuing mutually beneficial and reinforcing partnerships with the UN, NATO, OSCE, and AU, in line with the EU's decision-making autonomy.

Non-Military Security and Resilience-Protection of Critical Infrastructure

At the same time, the Cyprus Presidency will work to strengthen both the Union's and Member-States' resilience, countering hybrid and cyber threats and pursuing mutually beneficial partnerships with International Organisations and like-minded third countries.

As hybrid and cyber threats are increasing in numbers and sophistication, the Presidency will focus on reinforcing, enhancing, and streamlining our collective EU response mechanisms. Threats against one EU Member State should be considered as threat against the entirety of the European Union and all its Member States. In this regard, the Cyprus Presidency will contribute to further secure the well-functioning and continuous implementation of the frameworks adopted through the Strategic Compass, such as the EU Hybrid Toolbox, the FIMI toolbox, actor-specific frameworks, the Hybrid Rapid Response Teams and the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox.

The Cyprus Presidency will prioritise raising awareness of the growing threats posed by malign state and non-state actors, in full cooperation with like-minded partners to mitigate risks, exchange information and good practices, in order to protect our shared interests.

The Cyprus Presidency aims to ensure the smooth implementation of the EU Preparedness Union Strategy and Protect EU, our Internal Security Strategy, and the proposals stemming from the European Democracy Shield, to strengthen EU's collective resilience, safeguard the EU's and its Member States' electoral integrity and ensure the security of critical infrastructure.

The Cyprus Presidency will work to promote the strengthening of the EU's rapid response capacity, as well as the security and support of humanitarian operations in particular Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) in the broader MENA region.

Defence and Security

Defence

In the face of rising threats and security challenges in Europe's neighbourhood and beyond, the Cyprus Presidency will prioritize strengthening the EU's ability to respond, by advancing the implementation of the EU Defence Industry Strategy (EDIS), taking also into account the ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2030 and the SAFE (Security Action for Europe) Regulation. It will therefore promote defence capabilities, including joint programs and procurements, to reduce dependencies on third countries and enhance European strategic autonomy.

Particular focus will be placed on supporting defence industries, especially SMEs engaged in research and innovation, as well as collaboration with larger European companies through targeted incentives.

The Presidency will also strive to support initiatives aimed at increasing EU investment in defence infrastructure, with an emphasis on securing the necessary technology and know-how.

Consequently, the Cyprus Presidency is attributing great importance to the swift implementation of recently launched Strategies, such as the Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030 and the Preparedness Union Strategy, aiming at increasing the resilience of the EU and the Member States.

The Cyprus Presidency will aim to strengthen cooperation between the EU and NATO, ensuring that it continues to be carried out in an inclusive, reciprocal, transparent and mutually beneficial manner across all levels. In this context, the Presidency will contribute to ongoing efforts to finalise the EU-NATO roadmap, which is expected to crystallise the objectives of this strategic cooperation.

Relations with partners across the Atlantic remain a cornerstone of European security. In this context, the Presidency will prioritise greater transparency and coherence in transatlantic engagement, reinforcing the commitment of Member States to deepen cooperation with like-minded partners.

Maritime Security

The Cyprus Presidency will prioritise the security of critical maritime routes as a key element of EU resilience and supply chain protection. Efforts will focus on enhancing

situational awareness in vulnerable maritime regions and supporting the effective implementation of the EU Maritime Security Strategy. The Presidency will engage in high-level discussions to reinforce the EU's maritime posture and ensure that maritime security remains integral to the Union's external action.

In this context, the Presidency will promote the strategic role of EU naval operations in ensuring maritime stability. It will highlight the geopolitical importance of the Eastern Mediterranean, the regional and European impact of the tensions in the Red Sea, the relevance and importance of UNCLOS and the protection of critical maritime infrastructure (including undersea cables and pipelines). Other issues to be considered are the emerging hybrid and cyber threats, the CSDP Naval Operations and the concepts of Maritime Areas of Interest (MAI) and Coordinated Maritime Presences (CMP).

Climate and security

The current climate crisis and security are inextricably interconnected, with climate change acting as a threat multiplier that exacerbates existing trends, tensions, and instabilities. Rising temperatures, water scarcity, extreme weather events, and sea-level rise can trigger displacement, disrupt critical infrastructure, and increase tensions and conflicts for access to natural resources, thereby increasing the risk of instability both regionally and globally. The broader Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East region is a climate change hotspot as reported by the IPCC. Addressing these interconnections is of vital importance. The Presidency considers the nexus between climate change and security as a priority, and will promote integrated policies, cooperation frameworks, and early-

warning systems to safeguard stability in a rapidly changing climate landscape.

EU Economic Security Strategy

The increasing geopolitical tensions and the growing geostrategic competition, as well as the turbulence caused by recent events, have highlighted the risks inherent in certain economic dependencies. The Presidency will continue guiding the ongoing discussions, in the framework of the EU's Economic Security Strategy, seeking to strike a balance between openness and the urgent need to address the Union's strategic vulnerabilities. Given the challenges faced by businesses of all sizes, any restrictive policy measures must be evidence based, targeted and proportionate

Additionally, the Presidency will continue discussions with the aim of finalising certain legislative files, including the revision of the FDI Regulation.

Trade

The Cyprus Presidency will promote a balanced, ambitious, reciprocal and forward-looking trade agenda, combining traditional and alternative, more flexible forms of trade and investment agreements. These efforts aim to deliver tangible benefits to EU citizens and businesses, especially SMEs, which are central to the EU's economic fabric.

Emphasis will be given to ongoing trade negotiations with strategic partners such as India and the United Arab Emirates countries. The Presidency will also prioritise efforts to modernise and revitalise the existing cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council, recognising the

geopolitical and economic importance of the region in light of global energy shifts, critical raw materials and emerging green and digital technologies.

The Cyprus Presidency will also support the Commission's efforts in monitoring the implementation of existing trade agreements, ensuring that their benefits are fully realised and accessible to businesses and that they are consistent with the EU's sustainability objectives.

The Cyprus Presidency will actively support the EU's efforts to modernise and reinforce the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as the cornerstone of the multilateral trading system. A significant objective of the Presidency will be to finalise the EU's preparation and coordination for the 14th Ministerial Conference of the WTO. The Presidency will actively support the EU's efforts for concrete progress in revitalising the WTO, with a particular focus on restoring the dispute settlement mechanism, reinvigorating negotiations in key areas and reinforcing the organisation's ability to respond to global economic changes.

Despite recent challenges, the transatlantic relationship remains a strategic one, rooted

in shared values, common interests and deep economic ties. The Cyprus Presidency will actively support the strengthening of this partnership by fostering constructive dialogue and assist in advancing practical, mutually beneficial solutions to common concerns. At the same time, it will ensure that the EU's strategic and economic interests are promoted and safeguarded in all transatlantic engagements.

Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN)

[Introduction]

The Economic and Financial Affairs Council will work towards effectively addressing the challenges posed by the EU's current economic and financial situation, by prioritizing and advancing efforts in key policy areas which can better serve to strengthening EU's long-term competitiveness and productivity, while promoting sustainable and inclusive growth.

To this end, the Cypriot Presidency will continue efforts to advance the legislative work on the **Savings and Investment Union (SIU)**, by making rapid progress on the **Capital Markets Union** agenda, in line with the identified priorities, and completing the **Banking Union**. Furthermore, the Presidency aims to progress legislative work in **Customs Union**.

In the area of **Taxation**, the Cypriot Presidency will focus on promoting the EU tax decluttering and simplification agenda as part of the broader efforts to strengthen competitiveness.

Economic Policy Coordination and Governance

The Cypriot Presidency will work actively to ensure smooth coordination of Member States' economic and fiscal policies, within the framework of the European Semester, and in view of the final year of the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF).

The Cyprus Presidency will strive for the effective implementation of the Economic Governance Framework to ensure sound public finances and promote sustainable economic growth, also in light of the decision of the majority of the member states to request the activation of the national escape clauses for meeting increased defense financing needs.

The Cyprus Presidency will place special emphasis on statistics and in this context will strive to conclude work on the proposal for a Regulation on non-financial statistics on commercial real estate, in order to assist in monitoring systemic risk and guiding macro-prudential oversight. It will also seek to conclude negotiations for adopting a Council Regulation concerning the collection of statistical information by the European Central Bank

The Cyprus Presidency aims to follow closely the developments in relation to the implementation of the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) instrument, while in parallel intends to facilitate exchanges with the European Investment Bank (EIB) to address the financing needs for security and defense projects, given its vital role in enhancing Europe's defense industry through an array of financial instruments.

Economic Support to Ukraine

The Cyprus Presidency will continue to work on ensuring the ongoing support to Ukraine, as part of the implementation of the Ukraine Facility and the G7-led Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration (ERA) loans, providing Macro-financial assistance, while remaining ready to facilitate discussions towards the country's future reconstruction needs. In addition, Cyprus Presidency intends to monitor the economic and financial impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, especially if the conflict continues, including the proper implementation of sanctions against Russia and Belarus.

Global economic cooperation

The Cyprus Presidency will aim to adopt the joint Terms of Reference (ToR) for the G20 meetings of finance ministers and central bank governors, as well as the common EU Statement to the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), hence contributing to the work of developing and presenting a unified EU position on key areas of economic policy, that will effectively serve to safeguard EU's interests and enhance the Union's strategic role in the context of the global economic cooperation.

Financial Services

The Cyprus Presidency will focus on legislative initiatives that will increase the efficiency of the European capital markets that are fundamental for financial stability, market integrity and growth, as well as the competitiveness of the Union, and which will optimize the Single Market. The rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape, specifically in the fields of security and defense and the

challenges of the digital and sustainable transitions will require appropriate public and private funding options, as a matter of utmost priority, reflecting the ambition of the Cyprus Presidency to reinforce the Union's economic resilience.

An essential element of the Savings and Investment Union (SIU) is the objective of channeling more savings to productive investments which will be substantial in the development of EU capital markets. In this context, the Cyprus Presidency will focus on possible measures that will increase the efficiency of capital markets by simplifying and improving EU rules, while at the same time, ensuring a high level of investor protection. At the same time, efforts will be directed towards finalizing the Banking Union to ensure a more integrated and resilient European banking system. Steps will be taken in reducing regulatory complexities and administrative burdens and ensuring that EU legislation is effective, providing more funding opportunities by allowing EU entities especially SMEs and start-ups to innovate, grow and compete across borders, while at the same time meeting the objective of SIU in boosting the Union's global competitiveness.

Cyprus Presidency will prioritise the Retail Investment Strategy (RIS) as a key component in advancing and delivering the SIU agenda. In line with the Cyprus Presidency's commitment to simplification and burden reduction, the Presidency will seek to ensure that the framework is both effective and proportionate, while maintaining a strong focus on retail investor protection and fostering retail participation in capital markets. Cyprus Presidency stands ready to engage constructively with the European Parliament in order to ensure

a balanced conclusion of the trilogue negotiations.

On the Market Integration/Market Infrastructure Package, the Cyprus Presidency is committed to advancing a constructive and collaborative dialogue among Member States, during Council negotiations, in order to achieve as much progress as possible in this file. The Cyprus Presidency will focus on striking the right balance between various objectives, as well as recognizing the differences between various market players and infrastructures and the need to have an inclusive Savings and Investments Union.

One of the priorities of the Cyprus Presidency will be the finalisation of the Single Currency Package, acknowledging that the introduction of the digital euro represents a step towards the digital age, and will assist the provision of a secure and efficient means of payment, while strengthening EU's competitiveness in the global financial markets. The Cyprus Presidency will continue to work on the introduction of the digital euro.

An important part of our work will be the progress of the negotiations on the Securitization review, with a focus on simplifying due diligence, aligning the rules, and introducing proportionality, with the view to allow less sophisticated participants and smaller markets to participate in a revitalized EU securitization market. It is important to draw lessons from past experiences and ensure that the new framework will not introduce additional cost, complexity, or unnecessary barriers, neither reduce transparency.

The Payment Services Market Package (PSD3/PSR) is a key priority, aiming to

modernize EU payment rules in response to technological advances and emerging risks. The Cyprus Presidency will seek to conclude the negotiations on this dossier that represents an evolution in the European Union's payments landscape.

Regarding the Financial Data Access (FiDA) Regulation, Cyprus Presidency will aim to take forward trilogue negotiations, depending on progress achieved under the Danish Presidency. Cyprus will seek to promote a balanced framework that facilitates data sharing while safeguarding consumer protection and data security.

The Cyprus Presidency intends to take over discussions on the legislative proposals for the review of the IORP II Directive and the PEPP Regulation. Discussions will focus on increasing the take-up of supplementary pensions across Europe, improving the long-term performance of pension products, and enabling pension funds to contribute more effectively to the real economy – including through investments in innovation and the green transition. The Cyprus Presidency will aim to foster a constructive dialogue on how to strengthen cross-border pension provision and enhance consumer trust, while respecting national differences in pension systems.

The Cyprus Presidency will also aim to structure Council discussions on the proposal to review the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR). The focus will be tackling risks of greenwashing, addressing undue burdens, and simplifying and streamlining requirements for both market participants and end-investors.

EU Budget and Own Resources

In the area of EU Budget, the Cyprus Presidency will work on the preparation of a Council recommendation on the discharge to be given to the Commission in respect of the implementation of the EU budget for 2024 and the guidelines for the EU budget for 2027. Importantly, the Presidency aims to significantly progress discussions on the proposals for Own Resources, in the context of the new MFF 2028-2034.

Taxation

Cyprus Presidency is committed to continue taking action in combating tax evasion, aggressive tax planning and harmful tax competition. In the area of direct taxation, this will involve the updating the EU's list of non-cooperative jurisdictions, in line with the principles of tax good governance, reflected in the Council Conclusions of February 2026. The Presidency will start the work on the tenth Directive on administrative cooperation in the field of taxation (DAC 10 Directive), a proposal that is expected by the Commission in the first half of 2026.

The Cyprus Presidency will continue advancing the approach of the four Tax Decluttering Principles, across both direct and indirect taxation.

It will also continue work on promoting the European Commission's recommendations in the tax area of the Clean Industrial Deal and provide support on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures. Furthermore, the Presidency will monitor closely any tax developments for an inclusive Savings and Investments Union.

The Presidency will also continue work on the revision of the Tobacco Taxation Directive (Directive 2011/64), a legislative proposal on the structure of taxation and excise rates applicable to tobacco products and substitute products.

The Presidency will be ready to begin negotiations on other upcoming initiatives of the Commission including the proposal on the revision of the Regulation for administrative cooperation and combating fraud in the field of value added tax.

In addition, efforts will be undertaken during the Cypriot Presidency to conclude the remaining open issues regarding the revision of the proposal of the VAT rules on distance sales of imported goods and import VAT and the discussions on the revision of the Energy Taxation Directive.

Customs Union

The reform of the EU Customs Union constitutes a priority for the Cyprus Presidency. The Presidency's key objective is to conclude the trilogue negotiations on the proposed regulation establishing the Union Customs Code and the European Union Customs Authority (Customs Reform Package), initiated in July 2025, with a view to reaching an agreement between the Council and the European Parliament within the first half of 2026.

The Cyprus Presidency will also continue the efforts to efficiently address the cross-sectoral subject matters relating to the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) Regulation, including preparatory work on the legal financial economic and political analysis of the feasibility of proposed solutions as well as, examination of any relevant proposals and initiatives.

Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA)

The Cyprus Presidency will work towards a secure, resilient, and united European Union, capable of protecting its citizens and uphold its fundamental values. Managing migration effectively will be a key priority. The Cyprus Presidency will focus on the operational implementation of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, ahead of its full application in June 2026 and will support efforts to ensure a more harmonised and effective asylum and return system. The Cyprus Presidency will aim to strengthen partnerships with countries of origin and transit, with emphasis on returns, readmission, legal migration, and tackling migrant smuggling and the instrumentalisation of migration.

Ensuring the safety and security of EU citizens remains a key objective and the Cyprus Presidency will prioritise adequate funding for EU law enforcement cooperation and advance discussions on strengthening Europol's operational role.

Addressing the misuse of technology by criminal actors will be a central theme. The Presidency will promote discussions on lawful access to electronic evidence, data retention, encryption solutions, and the fight against child sexual abuse both online and offline.

Additionally, it will seek progress on initiatives tackling firearms trafficking, drug-related crime, trafficking in cultural goods, and human trafficking.

Improving the EU's preparedness and response capacity will be another key area of focus. The Presidency will promote resilience of critical infrastructure, and enhance civil protection coordination, including civil-military cooperation.

The Cyprus Presidency aims to conclude important legislative work in criminal and civil justice and advance EU-level discussions on housing as a cross-cutting social and economic priority.

All actions will be guided by the principles of the rule of law, fundamental rights, and equal access to justice, ensuring that Europe remains both secure and true to its values.

Asylum and Migration policy

Our work plan within the crucial policy domains of **migration, asylum, and returns** will constitute a cornerstone of our six-month mandate, building upon the EU's established legislative acquis and ongoing policy deliberations. A primary objective for the Cyprus Presidency will be to steer the comprehensive and effective implementation of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. A key thematic priority will be advancing, and ideally concluding, negotiations on the new Returns Regulation proposal, with an emphasis on establishing a more efficient and coherent European system, while instituting a streamlined and harmonized framework. Equally important will be to conclude, if possible, the negotiations on the safe third country and the safe country of origin proposals.

The Cyprus Presidency is committed to significantly advancing the efficiency of the external dimension of migration. This strategic imperative will promote sincere cooperation and strategic partnerships with key international partners, on a “more for more” basis. Among the key objectives are the effective dismantling of criminal networks, the introduction of new, orderly migratory channels, as well as the improvement of the Union's return policy.

The Cyprus Presidency will be committed towards the effective translation of strategic objectives into applicable outcomes, in line with the comprehensive approach for a holistic and truly common European migration management.

Preparedness and Resilience

The implementation of the EU Preparedness Strategy and its accompanying Action Plan will be a core priority of the Cyprus Presidency. Strengthening the EU's and Member States' preparedness and resilience is vital, especially in light of recent crises such as the COVID 19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the crisis in Middle East, as well as climate-related and man-made disasters. The Cyprus Presidency will build on the work of the previous Presidencies to ensure that the EU is better equipped to address future challenges, while taking into account specific concerns and needs of all Member States.

Priority will be given to enhancing the EU's crisis preparedness and response capacity, with a particular focus on civil protection and the resilience of critical infrastructure. In view of increasingly frequent natural disasters, evolving hybrid threats, and heightened geopolitical instability in the EU's neighborhood, the Cyprus Presidency will seek to advance strategic dialogue on enhancing Union-wide coordination mechanisms and long-term preparedness planning. Particular attention will be given to ongoing discussions on the future of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and the potential reinforcement of the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC).

The Cyprus Presidency will also support efforts to improve civil-military cooperation in emergency response, including through the exchange of best practices on mass evacuation planning. Building on Cyprus' regional experience in contingency planning and crisis management, the

Presidency will encourage structured cooperation among civil, military, and private-sector actors, contributing to enhanced resilience in an increasingly complex risk environment.

In parallel, the Presidency will promote the implementation of the Directive on the Resilience of Critical Entities, with a focus on protecting vital infrastructure across key sectors such as energy, food, health, transport, space and telecommunications. It will support progress on relevant EU initiatives, including the protection of underwater infrastructure and the possible development of horizontal stress-testing frameworks across sectors.

EU internal security

The Cyprus Presidency will prioritize a robust and secure EU internal space. In line with the **ProtectEU Strategy**, which provides an integrated and ambitious, yet achievable framework for addressing the current internal security challenges that the EU is facing, it will focus on advancing the defined key actions to strengthen EU security capabilities, and to combat organised crime, illegal migration, terrorism and violent extremism.

The Presidency underlines the need for stronger operational cooperation in fighting transnational crime and will therefore support initiatives, in the context of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) cycle 2026-2029, to **maximise EMPACT's potentials**. In this regard, the Presidency will support the increasing EMPACT funding during negotiations on the Internal Security

Fund under the post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework.

The Presidency will also be ready to advance negotiations on the forthcoming proposal to **transform Europol** into a truly operational law enforcement agency.

In pursuing the goal of reinforcing security capabilities in the fight against crime in all its forms, the Cyprus Presidency will promote efforts to equip law enforcement authorities with the necessary legal powers to access readable data and electronic evidence, in full respect of fundamental rights. Therefore, the Presidency will steer discussions on the Roadmap setting out the way forward on **lawful and effective access to data** and on the anticipated technology Roadmap on encryption and the negotiations for a new legal framework on **data retention**.

Furthermore, the Cyprus Presidency will promote actions to tackle organised crime and its root causes. It will place special emphasis on **combatting migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, drug and firearms, as well as combating terrorism and radicalisation**.

The Cyprus Presidency will continue to place special emphasis on **combatting migrant smuggling** by making progress on pending legislative files. In terms of fighting human trafficking, the Cyprus Presidency will prioritize the initiation of the implementation of the new **EU Strategy on combatting trafficking in human beings**.

Given the increasing use of **firearms** in serious crimes, the Cyprus Presidency will discuss the implementation of the EU Action Plan against firearms trafficking, open and advance negotiations on the Directive on criminal law standards on illicit

firearms trafficking, and support measures to strengthen the legal framework on pyrotechnics and civil explosives.

Drugs policy will also be a key priority. The Cyprus Presidency will initiate discussions on the implementation of the new **EU Drugs Strategy** and the new **EU Action Plan** against drug trafficking. It will also open and advance negotiations on the proposal to revise the **legal framework on drug precursors**. The aim will be to address drug trafficking and supply reduction, as well as public health concerns related to demand and harm reduction, including measures to improve the safety of personnel working on opioid overdose prevention.

[The **fight against trafficking of cultural property** will feature prominently on the agenda of the Cyprus Presidency, with a focus on strengthening EU CULTNET, promoting the ratification of the Nicosia Convention, and organising a CULTNET meeting in Cyprus.]

Terrorism and radicalization remain significant threats, exacerbated by instability in neighboring regions and by social polarization linked to external interferences and Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI). The Cyprus Presidency will therefore focus on the implementation of the **new EU Agenda on preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism** and facilitate additional measures as needed. In this context, it will also advance discussions on the proposal to revise the Regulation on the marketing and use of explosive precursors, which are frequently misused in terrorist attacks.

Schengen matters

The Cyprus Presidency places priority on consolidating a well-functioning and resilient Schengen area, ensuring that citizens can move freely and feel secure within the EU. It will contribute to accelerating the digitalisation of procedures and systems, enhancing the preparedness of large-scale IT systems, strengthening the resilience of the EU's external borders, and improving the effectiveness of returns.

The Presidency will monitor the operation of the European Entry/Exit System (EES), the progress towards the launch of the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), and will support the full implementation of interoperability within the agreed timeline.

Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs with EU's partners

The Cyprus Presidency will support efforts to strengthen existing partnerships and explore new ones with like-minded states to reinforce the effective implementation of actions related to migration, preparedness and resilience, and the fight against organized crime.

The Cyprus Presidency will hold the established meetings with the USA, both at the Ministerial and Senior Officials level, and will organise a preparatory Senior Officials' meeting with the Western Balkans ahead of the autumn Ministerial Meeting. In addition, under the newly established eighteen-month collaboration cycle with Latin America through the EU – CLASI multidisciplinary approach, the Cyprus Presidency will plan the next

interinstitutional meeting to review progress achieved and prepare the program for the next Ministerial Meeting.

Criminal justice cooperation

In the field of **criminal justice** cooperation, the Presidency will accelerate the work on the pending legislative files that are currently under the trilogue procedure. Therefore, the Cyprus Presidency will aim to conclude negotiations on the **Directive on the fight against corruption** and the **Directive on the protection of victims** and stands ready to continue the negotiations on the Directive on smuggling of migrants.

Protecting minors from sexual abuse and exploitation, online and offline, is of paramount importance for the Cyprus Presidency, which remains committed to supporting legislative efforts to **combat child sexual abuse** and protect children's rights. Thus, the Presidency aims to conclude a long-lasting and efficient agreement on the Regulation laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse, in view of the expiration of the Interim Regulation in April 2026. At the same time, it aims to conclude negotiations on the Directive on child sexual abuse.

[The Cyprus Presidency will also prioritize discussions on the **future of criminal law and justice.**] It will continue work on the drafting of modernized model provisions for EU criminal law, with the aim of delivering non-binding guidelines. The Presidency will be prepared to promote any forthcoming proposals related to the future of criminal law and justice.

Civil Justice cooperation

Regarding **civil judicial cooperation**, the Cyprus Presidency will strive to conclude negotiations with the European Parliament on the proposed Regulation on the protection of adults and the proposed Directive on harmonising certain aspects of insolvency law.

Fundamental rights

The protection of **fundamental rights** and freedoms is a priority objective of the Cyprus Presidency and in this regard, the Presidency will aim to promote the efforts towards EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The Presidency will follow developments regarding the Commission's request for an Opinion to the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) on the compatibility of the draft agreement with the Treaties and will seek to advance and conclude the discussions concerning the internal rules that will enable the adhesion.

The Presidency will discuss the results of the mid-term review of the Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and will aim to adopt Council Conclusions on issues related to this review at the Justice and Home Affairs Council meetings in March 2026.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)

The Cyprus Presidency will place people and social justice at the core of its vision for a fair, inclusive, and forward-looking Europe. Guided by the principles of solidarity, equality, and cohesion, the Cyprus Presidency will promote a strong European social model capable of addressing the challenges and opportunities arising from the green and digital transitions.

In an evolving world of work shaped by technological innovation and demographic change, the Cyprus Presidency will advance policies that promote quality employment, equitable mobility and the objectives of the Union of Skills, while supporting the full implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, through the upcoming New Action Plan.

A strong emphasis will be placed on social protection and the fight against poverty, and to this effect the Cyprus Presidency will support and advance the forthcoming EU Anti- Poverty Strategy. Key priorities include the well-being of children, the empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities, long-term care, and active ageing.

In the field of health, where Europe and the world confront new and complex challenges, a more resilient and integrated approach to the EU health care sector is necessary. The Cyprus Presidency is committed to steering this ambition by advancing a bold and integrated vision for the future of health in Europe aiming to deliver measurable improvements to European citizens while reinforcing the foundations of the European Health Union.

Promoting gender equality and combating cyber violence against girls will feature prominently, alongside efforts to address Europe's housing challenges and promote affordable, sustainable homes for all.

Through these efforts, the Cyprus Presidency aims to strengthen Europe's social cohesion and solidarity, ensuring that economic growth and innovation contribute to a more inclusive, fair, and united European Union that delivers tangible benefits to all its citizens.

Social Justice for Fair Employment

The Cyprus Presidency will highlight social justice as a key principle of fair and inclusive employment across the EU. In a labour market reshaped by digitalisation and the rise of artificial intelligence, we will promote policies that harness technological progress to improve job quality, reduce inequalities, and support just transitions. Fair wages, safe working conditions, and equal opportunities must remain central to ensure that innovation serves all workers.

The Cyprus Presidency will promote dialogue on how labour market policies can evolve to support fairness and inclusion in a rapidly changing world of work. We will encourage approaches that reflect the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and are consistent with the International Labour Organisation's longstanding commitment to social justice as a foundation for peace and prosperity.

[In this context, the Cyprus Presidency will support efforts that contribute to more resilient, inclusive labour markets, reinforcing social cohesion and balanced development across Member States].

Collective responsibility for the Union of Skills

Recognising that the active participation and collaboration of social partners and stakeholders is of paramount importance to achieve significant and responsive results, the Cyprus Presidency will place a significant emphasis on **promoting collective responsibility to achieve the objectives of the Union of Skills**. This will aim to enhance the skills and competencies of the European workforce to ensure

competitiveness and social cohesion across the EU and respond to the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transition.

Labour Mobility

The Cyprus Presidency will highlight fair labour mobility as a vital element of a resilient and cohesive European labour market. In an era marked by demographic changes, skills shortages, and the transition to the green and digital age, promoting equitable mobility among Member States is a key driver of competitiveness while simultaneously safeguarding workers' rights. Having as reference the Labour Mobility Package, the Cyprus Presidency will promote a coordinated European approach that protects workers' rights, enhances social cohesion, and contributes to a modern and fair framework for labour mobility.

Social Policy

Leaving no one behind and ensuring a better future for all relies on strengthening the EU's social Model and Agenda. This means enhancing social protection and targeting poverty reduction by concurrently addressing the challenges of a just, green and digital transition. At the same time to ensure fairness in the digital age, Artificial Intelligence systems must be inclusive and accessible to everyone, especially groups that risk being left behind.

The implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** is essential in ensuring a strong social Europe. The Cyprus Presidency will thus support the upcoming New Action Plan, which will enhance the

implementation of the Pillar. Further, the forthcoming first-ever **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy** stands as a major priority, reaffirming the commitment to ensuring access to essential services and protections and to advancing the fight against poverty across the Union. A strong social Europe depends on targeted policies and investments that support social development.

Protection and well-being of children

The protection and wellbeing of children is a main priority for the Cyprus Presidency. In this regard, the Presidency aims at reinforcing the **European Child Guarantee** enabling every child to thrive and reach its full potential and enhancing visibility to efforts aimed at tackling child poverty, social exclusion and ensuring the well-being of children such as improving the high-quality **early childhood education and care (ECEC)**, in line with the Barcelona targets. Key initiatives include the adoption of Council Conclusions on "The Protection and Wellbeing of the Child" and a High-Level Conference on the protection and well-being of the Child to be held in Nicosia in May 2026.

Empowerment and Support of Persons with Disabilities

In line with the second phase of the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030) and the principles and values embedded in the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) the Cyprus Presidency will focus on advancing disability rights, active participation, full inclusion and high-quality, community-based and person-centered services.

Flagship initiatives include a High-Level Conference on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities: empowerment and support in a community for all, a Disability Platform meeting and the Annual General Assembly of the European Disability Forum to be held in May 2026 in Cyprus.

Strengthening Long-Term Care (LTC) and Active Ageing

The ageing population is one of the most significant demographic and social challenges within the EU with far-reaching implications for health systems, labour markets and welfare and care systems. Promoting a shared vision for ageing and care that reflects dignity, solidarity and intergenerational balance is a priority for the Cyprus Presidency and reflects a broader commitment which is included in the European Care Strategy and the principles enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Strengthening Long-Term Care (LTC) and Active Ageing, will be central to the discussions during the informal EPSCO Council on 12-13 February 2026.

Health

In the field of **health**, the Presidency will focus on advancing the negotiations on a robust funding for Health programmes within the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework.

The Cyprus Presidency will also place particular emphasis on promoting mental **health** and ensuring the active engagement of all stakeholders involved in the development of relevant policies, with a focus on youth and inclusiveness. This issue

will be addressed during an Informal EPSCO Health Council meeting to be held on 25-26 February.

In the field of **pharmaceuticals**, the Presidency will concentrate on further advancing the legislative work, aimed at improving access to, availability of, and supply of medicinal products in all Member States. [The Cyprus Presidency will aim to conclude the work on the revision of Pharmaceutical Package.] It will also aim to finalize negotiations on the Critical Medicines Act, which complements the set of regulatory measures within pharmaceutical reform.

Additionally, the Cyprus Presidency will initiate discussions on the need to develop a European Centre of Clinical Excellence regarding pharmaceutical products.

Medical devices will also be an important legislative priority for the Cyprus Presidency, with a focus on potential legislative changes to ensure the safety and effectiveness of medical devices on the EU market. The aim is to guarantee the availability of devices while supporting innovation and the development of new medical technologies.

Furthermore, the Cyprus Presidency will promote the effective implementation of the European Health Data Space as a means of integrating health systems and progressing towards the completion of the European Health Union. The Presidency will focus on supporting the creation of a unified, robust, and secure health data ecosystem within the EU, aimed at improving the delivery of health services through broader data exchange and fostering innovation in the health sector.

Gender Equality

The Cyprus Presidency will place **gender equality** high on the EU's political agenda, with a strategic focus on combating cyber violence against girls aged 13 to 18. In line with the Beijing Platform for Action, particularly the priority areas of "The Girl-Child" and "Violence Against Women", the Cyprus Presidency will pursue targeted measures to address online threats such as cyberbullying, sexual harassment, and image-based abuse. Key initiatives include the preparation of a comprehensive report by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), on the prevalence, effects, and current policy gaps regarding cyber violence against girls in EU Member States. Based on the findings, the Presidency will propose Council Conclusions on enhancing protection and rights for girls in the digital space to be adopted at the Council.

The Presidency will foster intergovernmental collaboration through key events such as a High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming meeting (Nicosia. February 2026) and, a flagship Conference on Preventing and Combating All Forms of Cyber-Violence Against Girls (Nicosia May 2026), bringing together policymakers, civil society, youth representatives, and the private sector. At the international level, the Cyprus Presidency's work will focus on the 70th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in March 2026.

Housing

Against the backdrop of intensifying housing challenges across Europe and growing political momentum at EU level, housing is a key priority for the Cyprus

Presidency recognized as vital for social cohesion, economic stability and supporting communities in rural and vulnerable areas.

In this regard, the Cyprus Presidency aims to build on the Strategic Framework for Affordable Housing in view of the forthcoming European Affordable Housing Plan, which is expected to be presented by the European Commission before the end

of the year. Housing will be addressed as a cross-cutting issue, linked to energy efficiency and the fight against energy poverty.

The Informal Ministerial Meeting on Housing, to be held in Cyprus in May 2026, will serve as a platform for strategic dialogue, experience-sharing, and consensus-building.

Competitiveness Council (COMPET)

In light of the geopolitical changes and threats that are significantly impacting global trade, economic policies, energy security and critical raw materials, the Competitiveness Council will pursue actions to strengthen the EU's economic resilience, bolster strategic autonomy and unlock sustainable and inclusive growth, while promoting a competitive European research and innovation landscape.

The Presidency will seek to advance a forward-looking competitiveness agenda, one that drives innovation and investment, supports long-term prosperity, and delivers tangible benefits for citizens, businesses and Member States. Through this agenda, the Cyprus Presidency aims to reinforce the Union's economic sovereignty and enhance its global standing in an increasingly complex international environment.

The Cyprus Presidency is committed to effectively advance the simplification efforts as well as discussions targeting at better law making, with the aim to improve the business environment as well as to facilitate and promote productive investments that will enhance EU's global competitiveness.

The Cyprus Presidency will advance a balanced and competitive European research and innovation landscape that fosters excellence, closes innovation gaps, and strengthens the Single Market. It will support negotiations on the next EU research framework under the MFF and the European Innovation Act, while promoting international R&I partnerships and open innovation ecosystems. It will also prioritise work on the EU Space Act and sustained funding for Space-related activities in the next Multiannual Financial Framework to strengthen strategic autonomy, security, and competitiveness.

Internal market and industry

The Cyprus Presidency will prioritise strengthening the integrity and depth of the Single Market by actively supporting the timely and effective implementation of the Single Market Strategy. Particular emphasis will be placed on both removing unjustified barriers and reducing administrative burdens that hinder investment, innovation, and the full realisation of Europe's entrepreneurial potential.

The Cyprus Presidency will place Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are integral to Europe's economic and social landscape, high on the agenda. It will promote initiatives to facilitate cross-border operations, improve access to finance, accelerate digital adoption and support business growth and scaling. Equally important, the Presidency will encourage systematic application of competitiveness and SME impact assessments in all new EU legislation, with due consideration given to cumulative effects and territorial specificities of Member States.

These efforts will be closely linked to broader measures aimed at boosting Europe's industrial competitiveness, essential to the EU's long-term resilience, strategic economy, and global leadership, while also supporting the green and digital transitions. In this framework, the Cyprus Presidency will advance negotiations on the Industrial Accelerator Act and ensure that EU's climate ambition is underpinned by concrete enabling measures. Following the Clean Industrial Deal, the Presidency will aim at strengthening strategic value chains and ensuring regulatory

predictability to foster innovation and support business planning.

The Presidency will also support the structured application of the Competitiveness Compass, as proposed by the Commission, to help ensure that industrial, climate, and social objectives are balanced across EU policymaking. Particular attention will be given to the needs of SMEs and energy-intensive industries, to ensure that the green transition is both fair and economically sustainable.

In the field of technical harmonisation, the Cyprus Presidency will seek to advance discussions on the revision of the Standardisation Regulation. At the same time, the Cyprus Presidency will continue to advance the Textile Labelling Regulation, with a view to providing greater clarity for both consumers and businesses.

The Cyprus Presidency will support efforts to simplify and harmonise the EU's **intellectual property** frameworks. It will seek to advance discussions on the Patent package, coordinate the EU's position at the World Intellectual Property Organization, promote a robust copyright framework, and monitor the impact of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, on intellectual property rights.

In the area of **company Law**, the Presidency will initiate work on the 28th Regime and support Commission's effort to streamline regulation and reduce the administrative burden for European companies.

The Cyprus Presidency will also promote consistent and effective enforcement of **EU Competition rules** to ensure a level playing field and foster innovation. It will support modernisation of the competition

legislative framework, with emphasis on merger control and antitrust competitive practices. Regarding **state aids**, priorities of the Cyprus Presidency include revising the General Block Exemption Regulation, advancing discussions on support for affordable and social housing, and simplifying key concepts and definitions with the aim of establishing greater legal certainty.

Public Procurement

The Cyprus Presidency is committed to advancing a collaborative dialogue on the **Public Procurement Directives**, facilitating the procedure towards their balanced and effective revision to address challenges and opportunities to better support resilience, transparency, efficiency, sustainability and innovation. The Presidency will continue to debate over the need to streamline the sectoral files with public procurement provisions that jeopardize simplification of rules, reduction of administrative burden and legal certainty.

Better Regulation

The Cyprus Presidency will continue the work towards streamlining and **improving the regulatory framework** aimed to boost entrepreneurship, investment and support of European competitiveness. In particular, the Cyprus Presidency will follow up on initiatives to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens and simplify existing EU legislation, with an emphasis on eliminating obligations that create disproportionate compliance costs, especially for SMEs.

The Cyprus Presidency will also maintain focus on ensuring that Better Regulation tools, such as impact assessments and

stakeholder consultations, will effectively reflect the real-world challenges faced by entrepreneurs and small businesses in new EU policies and rules that fit-for-future. In this context, the Cyprus Presidency will contribute to ongoing discussions on how digital solutions can further support regulatory quality and help unlock the full potential of the Single Market.

Consumer Policy

In the field of **consumer protection**, the Cyprus Presidency will actively promote the New Consumer Agenda 2025–2030. Concurrently, safeguarding vulnerable consumers and upholding high standards of protection and information will remain paramount priorities.

Tourism

The Cyprus Presidency will promote a forward-looking agenda to enhance the competitiveness, resilience and sustainability of the EU tourism ecosystem. Building on the EU Transition Pathway for Tourism, the report on the Tourism Agenda 2030, and the upcoming sustainable Tourism Strategy, the Cyprus Presidency will highlight policies fostering balanced, inclusive and sustainable tourism models that benefit both communities and the environment, while meeting visitors' needs. The Informal Meeting of EU Tourism Ministers that will be held in April 2026, in Cyprus will be a key opportunity to advance the tourism agenda.

Research

Research and innovation are essential to strengthening the EU's global competitiveness, resilience and strategic autonomy. The Cyprus Presidency will work to advance a balanced EU R&I landscape that fosters excellence, reduces innovation gaps across Member States, and drives single market integration.

Within the pivotal context of the negotiations on the next EU funding framework for research and innovation under the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the Cyprus Presidency will promote sufficient support for cutting-edge research across all technology readiness levels. It will also be prepared to advance discussions on key proposals, including the European Innovation Act.

The Cyprus Presidency will prioritise initiatives that facilitate the scaling of innovative enterprises, improve access to finance, and promote more favourable conditions for startups and SMEs. Efforts will also focus on simplifying EU funding instruments to maximise impact and support Europe's long-term competitiveness.

The Cyprus Presidency will further highlight the importance of international R&I partnerships, advancing science diplomacy in line with the EU Global Gateway, the Strategic Agenda 2024–2029. The Presidency will also promote open innovation ecosystems, underpinned by advanced digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, high-performance computing, and data infrastructures, fostering synergies across European partnerships and initiatives.

Space

The space sector is a strategic asset for the European Union, acting as a key driver of competitiveness, technological innovation, and strategic autonomy. It delivers critical services that support a wide range of Union policies—ranging from climate action and environmental protection to security and defence, connectivity, and crisis management—while fostering economic growth, high-skilled employment, and industrial development.

Under the Cyprus Presidency, the Council will prioritise safeguarding adequate funding for Space in the framework of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), including for the activities of the European Union Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA). The Presidency will aim to secure sustained investment in core EU space capacities, including Copernicus, Galileo, EGNOS, and GOVSATCOM, as well as in strategic initiatives such as [the European Quantum Communication Infrastructure (EuroQCI)] and the IRIS² satellite constellation. These efforts are vital to ensuring the Union's leadership in cutting-edge, secure space infrastructure and services.

Moreover, the Cyprus Presidency will advance discussions on the proposed EU Space Act, aiming to establish a coherent, future-oriented regulatory framework, addressing priorities such as space traffic management, the protection of critical space infrastructure, and the long-term sustainability of space activities. This framework should foster innovation,

security, safety, and operational consistency, enhancing the EU's capacity to respond to an evolving and increasingly competitive global space environment.

The Cyprus Presidency will also emphasise inclusion of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and start-ups by tackling market barriers, improving access to finance and procurement, and promoting a diverse and resilient industrial base.

Through this targeted, innovation-driven approach, the Cyprus Presidency is committed to reinforcing the EU's role in the global space economy, strengthening strategic autonomy, and advancing a sustainable, secure, and competitive European space sector.

Transport, Telecoms and Energy Council (TTE)

The Cyprus Presidency will focus on boosting the EU's competitiveness, resilience and strategic autonomy across the transport, telecommunications and energy sector. Safeguarding sufficient funding for these sectors through the relevant instruments of the post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework will be a priority. In transport, the Presidency will work towards an integrated, well-connected European transport network that supports seamless intermodal mobility.

In telecommunications, the Presidency will prioritise secure and resilient connectivity, advancing the EU's digital autonomy and competitiveness. It will support efforts to simplify data and digital frameworks, foster innovation in areas like AI and cloud, and strengthen cooperation on cybersecurity to protect critical infrastructure and enhance collective resilience across the Union.

In the context of energy, the Cyprus Presidency will contribute in building a resilient, self-sufficient and efficient Energy Union, with citizen empowerment as a core principle. Key priorities include improving grid infrastructure and interconnections, including with neighbouring countries, promoting a more digitalised and cyber-resilient energy sector, and lowering energy prices and reducing energy poverty by promoting renewables and energy efficiency.

Transport

The development of a reliable and sustainable transport system – both environmentally and socioeconomically – is essential for the EU's future. The Cyprus Presidency aims to enhance the capacity and the efficiency of the transport infrastructure by completing missing links, resolving bottlenecks and improving resilience of existing infrastructure with the support of digitalisation and smart transport solutions.

The Presidency will prioritise work on **air and sea connectivity**. Affordable air connectivity is a vital element for the territorial and social cohesion of the Union, as well as a fundamental enabler for the mobility of European citizens. Notably, emphasis will be placed on the unique challenges encountered by island and peripheral regions. Thus, the Cyprus Presidency will organise an Aviation Summit with emphasis on Air Connectivity, sustainability and competitiveness.

Furthermore, acknowledging that Europe's ports serve as vital gateways to the continent and key nodes in our supply chains, their strategic and critical importance continues to grow. Ensuring well-connected and unrestricted access to these ports, where modern supply chains can thrive under the principles of free trade will also be priorities during the Cyprus Presidency. In this context, the Cyprus Presidency will work on the adoption of Council Conclusions on the **EU Port Strategy**, which is anticipated at the beginning of 2026. Particular emphasis will

be given to connectivity, security, and the infrastructure needed to achieve decarbonisation goals, while also advancing the development and realisation of the European Maritime Space. Against this background, enhancing Europe's maritime connections through the European Transport Corridors, will also be addressed during the Cyprus Presidency.

The implementation of fast and effective multimodal connections between ports/airports and land transport, –serving both freight and passengers will enhance transnational coordination and will support the development of an **integrated passenger transport system**. This will help reduce existing disparities and creating opportunities for smart transport solutions and services. [In this context, Cyprus will prioritize the completion of the negotiations with the European Parliament for the Passenger's Rights Regulations].

Military mobility

Strengthening **military mobility** across the European transport network has become increasingly vital to enable rapid and coordinated responses to emerging security challenges, an aspect that will be addressed during the upcoming Cyprus Presidency. Investments in strategic ports, airbases and logistic hubs are required to integrate Member States into the broader military mobility network.

As part of this effort, the Cyprus Presidency will host a High-Level Meeting on the Trans-European Transport Network focusing, inter alia, on military mobility.

Road transport

The Cyprus Presidency will also place focus on **Road Safety** and sustainable development of road transport. Consequently, the Presidency will work on legislative proposals such as the Roadworthiness Package which align with broader EU strategies like Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy.

In this context, Cyprus Presidency will host a meeting of the High-Level Group on Road Safety to review progress on the EU's Road Safety Policy Framework and exchange best practices on reducing road fatalities and serious injuries. Through this meeting the Presidency aims to facilitate constructive dialogue and foster coordinated efforts towards achieving the EU's Vision Zero objectives.

Maritime transport

The **EU maritime** cluster, comprising shipbuilding, equipment manufacturing, maritime transport, and offshore energy, faces significant challenges from international competition, as well as from high capital costs and aging workforce. The Presidency will work on the new **Industrial Maritime Strategy** to strengthen the competitiveness, sustainability and resilience of Europe's shipping, shipbuilding and maritime manufacturing sector, with the goal of reaching Council Conclusions.

Given the objectives of EU's Competitiveness compass, the Cyprus Presidency will also support an inclusive and holistic approach and the urgent need to ensure the international competitiveness

of the EU shipping sector and a global level-playing field, while securing a strong positioning on new decarbonization technologies.

The reinforcement of actions for investing in the up-skilling and re-skilling of seafarers, the familiarization with new green and sustainable technologies, as well as the promotion of actions for attracting and supporting more women in the shipping industry, will be an important component of the work of the Cyprus Presidency.

The Cyprus Presidency will work towards a Declaration aiming to strengthen seafarers' well-being and education and to promote and enhance women inclusivity in the shipping industry.

Digital and Telecommunications

The European Union is well positioned to advance the development of a secure, competitive, resilient, and innovative digital ecosystem—one that empowers citizens, strengthens business competitiveness, and fosters an inclusive, future-ready digital society.

The Cyprus Presidency will prioritize strengthening secure connectivity frameworks, stimulating investment in next-generation infrastructure and addressing current and emerging challenges in the digital landscape to support the evolution of a more **integrated and efficient digital economy**.

The Cyprus Presidency is committed to leading discussions on the digital component of the **Multiannual Financial**

Framework (MFF), acknowledging its strategic role in enabling the EU to meet its long-term digital objectives.

The Presidency will thus advance negotiations on the Digital Networks Act (DNA), supporting efforts to reinforce **Europe's digital autonomy, connectivity, and resilience in the digital age**.

In parallel, the Cyprus Presidency will promote technological leadership and strategic innovation, particularly in the fields of cloud computing and artificial intelligence in line with digital sovereignty, trust, and ethical principles.

Simplifying administrative processes remains a key objective. The Cyprus Presidency will support the advancement of the **European Business Wallet**, as part of broader efforts to reduce administrative burdens, streamline business operations, and enhance cross-border interoperability—key enablers for unlocking the full potential of the Digital Single Market.

The Cyprus Presidency will also work on the simplification of existing data legislation, given the growing importance of data in the digital economy.

Finally, the Presidency will advance digital diplomacy by prioritising strengthened bilateral and multilateral digital cooperation to support the EU's long-term digital ambitions. Engagement with both established and emerging partners will focus on promoting inclusion, resilience, and a secure, rights-based global digital order.

Cyber

The Presidency will place strong emphasis on **enhancing the EU's overall cyber resilience**, with a particular focus on the protection of critical infrastructure (essential and important entities) and the security of essential digital services.

Ensuring a high common level of cybersecurity across Member States is vital for the security of citizens, businesses, and the internal market, and indeed resilience of our societies as a whole. The Cyprus Presidency will advance discussions on the amendment to the Cybersecurity Act, aiming to support a more coherent and robust EU framework and to update the ENISA mandate.

The Cyprus Presidency also will support advancing cooperation among member states and relevant stakeholders to build capabilities and share best practices, especially through the operations of the CSIRTs Network and CyCLONE. Strengthening the role of ENISA and promoting cybersecurity innovation and capacity building across the Union will remain key priorities. The Presidency will support ongoing efforts to **strengthen trust, cooperation, and coordination across the EU's cybersecurity landscape**. In addition to this, the Presidency will continue to encourage dialogue, knowledge exchange, and joint preparedness activities to improve collective cyber resilience across sectors and borders.

Energy

The energy sector is vital for the EU amid current geopolitical challenges. Securing diverse and reliable energy sources strengthens the Union's strategic resilience and boosts its global competitiveness.

The urgent need for **energy grids to be able to adapt to a more decentralized, digitalized and flexible electricity system** is primarily driven by the increasing demands of the energy transition and the need to build a more efficient and resilient energy infrastructure. Increased digitalization could enable better integration of renewable energy generation by increasing the stability and reliability of the energy supply. Furthermore, the management of the complexity caused by decentralized resources requires automation through digitalization, including AI solutions. The Cyprus Presidency, building upon the existing initiatives, and facilitate discussions in relation to the **strategic roadmap for digitalization and AI in the energy sector**.

Moreover, strong and resilient interconnected energy systems can solve the existing dependence from fossil fuels, unlock integration of a high percentage of renewable energy sources from regions where they can be found in abundance, play a key role in ensuring energy security of energy supply through sources and routes diversification, as well as contributing significantly to the EU decarbonization efforts. For these reasons, the Cyprus Presidency will give special priority to enhancing interconnections between Member States but also with neighbouring countries. The Presidency will also work towards advancing energy

storage solutions, which are equally important, as they help address the intermittency of renewables, enhance grid flexibility, and enable greater demand-side response. Together, **enhanced interconnections and energy storage are critical enablers of the clean energy transition**. The Cyprus Presidency will be ready to advance negotiations on the forthcoming proposals of the European Grids Package, as well as the revision of the architecture of the Security of Supply for our Energy Union.

While recognizing that electricity prices should reflect the real cost of electricity generation, therefore functioning as reliable investment signals, current conditions call for the EU to urgently focus on improving its global competitiveness. This requires reviewing how its internal regulations on competition and state aid might impact its standing in the international marketplace. Towards this goal, the Cyprus Presidency will work towards the implementation of the Action Plan for Affordable Energy and the Electrification Action Plan. At the same time, the Presidency will promote work on de-risking initiatives to shield EU businesses and households from the additional costs associated with the transition to clean energy.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH)

Agriculture and fisheries serve as fundamental pillars of Europe's rural and coastal economies, playing a crucial role in ensuring the sustainable prosperity and development of these regions. They are not only vital for maintaining the vibrancy and resilience of local communities but also for securing a stable supply of safe, high-quality food for all European citizens. These sectors are essential in preserving Europe's environmental heritage, supporting millions of jobs, and sustaining traditional livelihoods. Recognizing their significance, the Agriculture and Fisheries Council aims to adopt a comprehensive and inclusive approach to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The Council will focus on advancing robust legislative frameworks to create a fair, competitive, and resilient working environment for European farmers and fishermen. This collective effort is necessary in response to escalating challenges such as climate change, emerging animal and plant diseases, global trade disruptions, and rising input costs—all of which threaten the stability and sustainability of these critical sectors.

An agricultural policy that promotes the attractiveness and competitiveness of agriculture

The Cyprus Presidency will continue negotiations on the proposed CAP package 2028-2034. On the future CAP legislative framework, the Presidency will accommodate the improvement of the attractiveness and competitiveness of agriculture by providing the necessary incentives, adequate crisis management instruments and tools for achieving EU climate goals and promoting generation renewal. Solutions should be sought both for rural areas and agricultural production exploring synergies and possibilities for additional income to our farmers.

Moreover, the Presidency will advance discussions on the Common Markets Organizations proposal, to provide a robust and adaptive legislative response to market and self-sufficiency challenges and support the viability of farmers in a continuously changing local and international environment. CAP simplification will be also pursued in order to relief our farmers from unnecessary administrative burden.

An agriculture that ensures EU food production, strengthens trade, reduces dependencies and overcomes regional challenges

Preserving and improving food sovereignty and reducing critical dependencies from third countries is of strategic importance to the EU. The Cyprus Presidency will enable regular debates on agriculture-related trade issues and on the situation of agricultural markets. We will support the preservation of the robustness and

resilience of the internal market, by early identifying threats and providing insights on possible future challenges.

On trade policy, we will reflect on the need to ensure a level playing field for EU farmers, food safety, and high production standards for imported products. In addition, dependencies on critical food and feed production sectors should be reduced and sustainability of food production systems should be promoted. Farmers should be protected from market imbalances, natural disasters, adverse climatic events or other natural disasters by providing a fit for purpose safety net framework.

A single market with simplified solutions and sufficient tools to overcome both sectoral and market challenges

[The Cyprus Presidency will seek to conclude negotiations with the European Parliament on the wine package and the targeted amendments on the CMO.] These proposals are important to provide our farmers and the wine sector with the necessary simplified legislative tools to overcome both sectoral and market challenges and safeguard their position in the food supply chain. Support of long-term sustainability and competitiveness while enabling innovation and adaptation will be within the priorities of the Cyprus Presidency.

The Presidency will pursue to conclude the negotiations on the proposal regarding the plant reproductive material. The Presidency aims to provide a simplified framework to ensure that seeds and other plant materials marketed in the EU are high-quality, free

from pests and diseases, and traceable, while supporting biodiversity, innovation, and sustainable agriculture. On the expected proposal on [biopesticides], the Presidency will seek a possible agreement so that farmers can have alternative means for pests and diseases control. [On the proposal on New Genomic Techniques, the Cyprus Presidency will aim to advance the negotiations with the European Parliament.]

The Cyprus Presidency will also continue work on the proposal for the regulation on the protection of animals during transport to achieve the highest possible level of animal protection, taking into consideration the national and geographical specificities of the Member States, maintaining the viability of businesses and safeguarding the domestic production and the competitiveness of EU products. Progress on Simplification proposals on the EU animal welfare legislation will also be pursued.

A reinforced Common Fisheries Policy that Secures the Prosperity of Coastal Communities

The Cyprus Presidency will promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture to ensure the competitiveness of the sector and the long-term health of marine resources, in line with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

The Presidency will emphasize on the negotiations for the possible amendments of proposals for regulations regarding fishing opportunities for 2026-2027 as well as facilitate the discussions on the annual consultation for fishing opportunities for 2027-2028. The Presidency will rely on the best available scientific advice, outcomes from Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), consultations with third countries, and socio-economic factors.

The Presidency will work to adopt legislative acts that fall under the simplification process, such as the transposition of the omnibus RFMO recommendations and the proposal for a Regulation on European fisheries and aquaculture statistics.

The Cyprus Presidency will strive to advance proposals that safeguard EU interests and competitiveness, such as Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements and fishing protocols and the Autonomous Tariffs and Quotas in fisheries.

Cyprus will also initiate discussions on the evaluation of the CFP, assessing its effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement.

In the context of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034, the Presidency will also give priority to the sectoral CFP proposal.

Environment Council (ENVI)

[introduction]

The European Union needs to reinforce its actions to confront environmental threats, through coordinated action. The Cyprus Presidency will promote a sustainable, resilient, and competitive Europe that safeguards the environment, and leads by example on the global stage.

The Cyprus Presidency is committed to advancing the green transition and reinforcing the EU's strategic autonomy through leadership on climate action and climate adaptation, sustainable resource management, circular economic development and the promotion of environmental justice.

The Cyprus Presidency will seek to deliver legislative progress and ensure that Europe remains a global standard-bearer in climate diplomacy, environmental stewardship, and green innovation.

Sustainable, Resilient and Competitive Europe

In an era defined by environmental urgency and geopolitical transformation, the Cyprus Presidency will concentrate its efforts in moving forward the implementation of the European Green Deal policy initiatives. The Presidency will work on the urgent need to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

Use of Natural Resources

As water-related crises continue to multiply, the Cyprus Presidency will promote the implementation of the **Water Resilience Strategy**, focusing on the need for urgent action to improve water resilience across Europe by reducing water consumption, improving water efficiency and managing water stress. Discussions will elaborate on the utilization of natural and technological solutions on water management, the integration of conventional and non-conventional resources for the fulfillment of the different needs of Member States and the promotion of water sustainability through innovative and integrated strategies. The advancement of knowledge and expertise on water technologies and innovations, as well as the full exploitation of financial mechanisms will also be promoted.

Climate Action

The **fight against climate change** will be one of the main priorities of the Cyprus Presidency, promoting targeted action to tackle its adverse impacts, including the consequences from the more frequent and

more intense extreme weather events. We will work towards advancing the negotiations on the proposal on the Climate Law in relation to the interim target for 2040.

The Cyprus Presidency is looking forward to a European Climate Adaptation Plan, which will take into consideration the different aspects and conditions of Member States already been impacted from climatic conditions changes on biodiversity, human health, water sources, soil, as well as and the linked economic activities. Our aim is to create effective interlinkages and synergies between the anticipated Climate Adaptation Plan and the Water Resilience Strategy, envisioning to steer the necessary discussions at Council level. These exchanges will reflect on water issues within the framework of Climate Adaptation Plan, which will reflect worldwide the implementation of new strategies.

Additionally, a successful green transition greatly depends on incorporating the **circular economy** principle across all economic activities and throughout the life cycle stages of products and services. The Cyprus Presidency will contribute to the preparation of the new EU Circular Economy Act, expected to be published in 2026. This Act is seen as a pivotal effort to enhance resources management, remove obstacles for recycled materials and create market for circular products.

One of the main priorities of the Cyprus Presidency will be on advancing negotiations on the **Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation, and Restriction of Chemicals Regulation**

(REACH), aiming to the modernization of the legal framework on chemicals.

[The new EU Bioeconomy strategy which will be adopted by the end of 2025, will provide the opportunity for the Cyprus Presidency to discuss actions related to bioeconomy innovations, the generation of green jobs and growth, with emphasis on circularity, sustainability and the setting of the appropriate conditions to enable start-ups for entrepreneurs and new business models.]

The Cyprus Presidency will coordinate the European Union's collective engagement in international environmental negotiations aimed at addressing global and cross-cutting challenges. In this context, it will guide the Union's preparations and common positions for forthcoming multilateral processes, including the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (COP17), and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (COP15).

The Presidency will place particular emphasis on advancing the implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, achieving the 2030 targets on halting biodiversity loss and restoring ecosystems, and supporting progress towards a legally binding global agreement to end plastic pollution.

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS)

The Cyprus Presidency will advance European cooperation in education by focusing on skills for all, teacher empowerment, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and strengthening vocational and higher education, fully aligned with the European Education Area and the Union of Skills initiative. Emphasis will be placed on inclusive, learner-centered systems that support lifelong learning, social cohesion, and competitiveness.

In the area of youth, the Cyprus Presidency will steer discussions on the review of the European Youth Strategy, to conclude the 11th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue and promote more youth-friendly policies that build trust and participation.

In culture, the Cyprus Presidency will underline the strategic role of culture in safeguarding EU values, foster discussions on the New Work Plan for Culture beyond 2026, and support initiatives like the Culture Compass, Agora and protection of cultural heritage, including addressing illicit trafficking of cultural objects in times of crisis.

In sport, the Cyprus Presidency will highlight sport tourism, active ageing, and mental health in line with the EU Work Plan for Sport, while also promoting integrity and good governance in international sport.

Education, Skills and Training

The Cyprus Presidency will promote a comprehensive learner-centred approach to skills, fully aligned with the European Education Area and the Union of Skills. Emphasis will be placed on inclusion, lifelong learning, and strengthening competences for the digital and green transitions, including STEM. The Presidency will advance discussions on the Teachers' Agenda, supporting professional development, well-being, and career attractiveness. Vocational Education and Training will be reinforced through stronger links with labour market needs and the integration of new technologies, while higher education priorities will include mobility, internationalisation, and progress on the European Degree framework. In the context of the MFF, Cyprus will oversee Erasmus+ negotiations with a focus on inclusiveness and wider international outreach, including to the Southern Neighborhood and Gulf countries.

Youth

Ensuring the youth-friendliness of policies implemented at national and European levels.

The Presidency will strengthen dialogue between young people and policymakers, promoting youth-friendly policy design and implementation. It will contribute to the review of the European Youth Strategy by presenting a resolution on the 2025–2027 work plan and concluding the Trio's work through a resolution on the outcomes of

the 11th EU Youth Dialogue Cycle. In addition, Cyprus will stimulate debate on the future of European youth programmes and facilitate exchanges on the next phase of the Youth Strategy.

Culture

Cyprus will take forward Council work on the "Agora" proposal of the post-2027 MFF, the prolongation and revision of the European Capital of Culture initiative, and the preparation of a new Work Plan for Culture beyond 2026. Priorities will include cultural governance, cultural heritage protection, and addressing disinformation and ethics in the digital society. The Informal Ministerial Meeting will focus on the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property, particularly in situations of armed conflict.

Sport

The Presidency will highlight sport's role in sustainable development, proposing Council Conclusions on sport tourism as a driver for economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. It will also promote active ageing through integration of physical activity in healthcare, support mental health initiatives for athletes, and facilitate discussions on integrity in sport, including WADA policies. Cyprus will contribute to the strategic framework on EU sport policy, reinforcing sport's role in health, well-being and social cohesion.

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