

Shaping Europe's Future

The European Commission at Work

by Stephen Davies

Directorate-General Maritime Affairs & Fisheries, European Commission

with Brussels Study Tour 2026, Public Affairs Council
25 June 2026



Outline

- The European Union – in brief
- Role of the European Commission in EU policymaking
- Priorities of the European Commission 2024 – 2029
- Putting into Action and Updating EU Policy Priorities
- Keep in Touch



A stage with blue curtains and a spotlight effect. The curtains are pulled back, revealing a dark stage floor. The text is centered on the stage.

BUT FIRST.....

**How well do you
know the EU?**

How many stars on the European Union flag?

A. 27

B. 4

C. 12

D. 15



How many stars on the European flag? **C. 12**



Image: Posted on X



See also Article 2 of [Treaty on European Union](#)

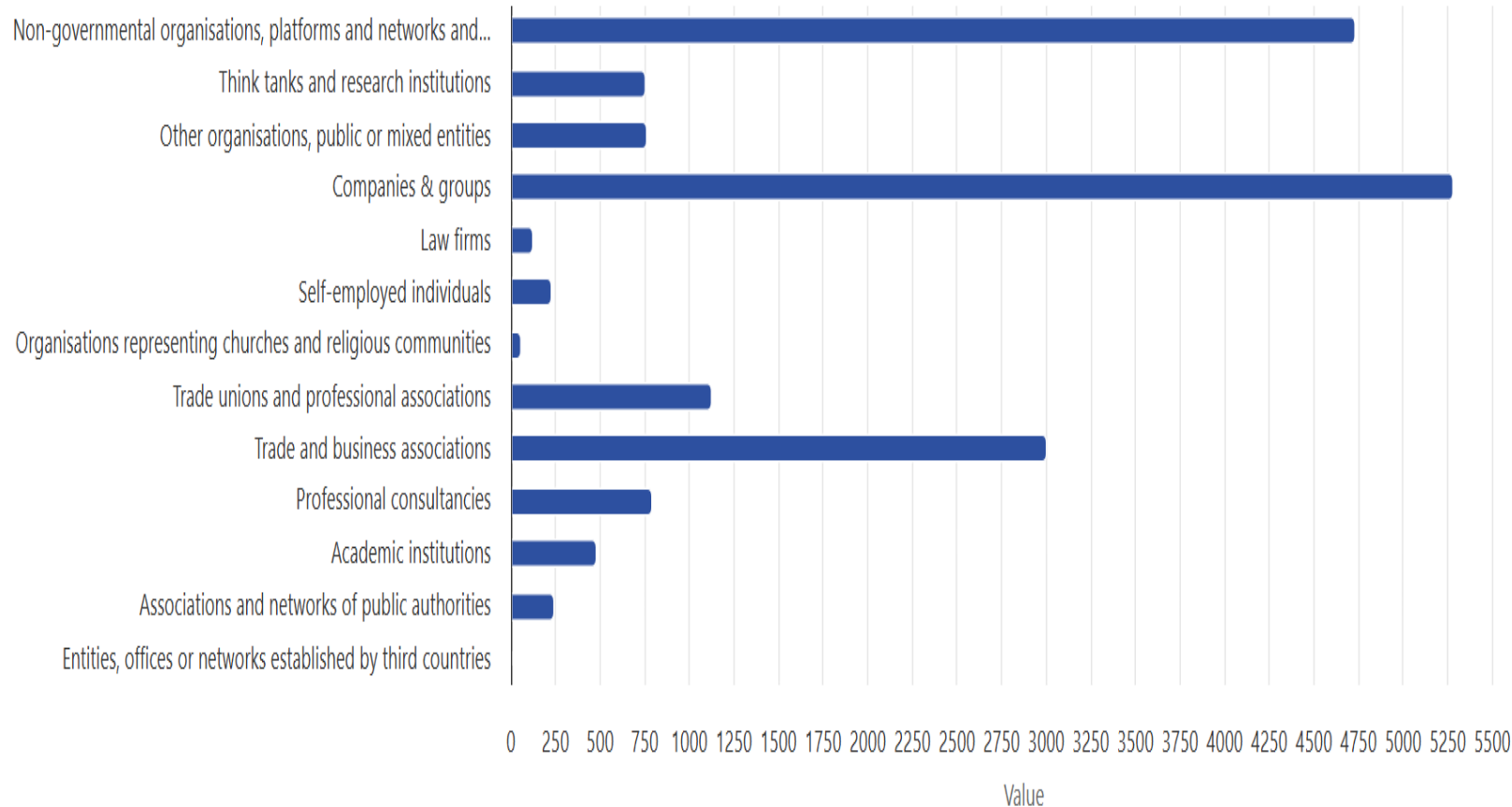
For the story of the EU Flag, see https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/flag_en



Approximately, how many organisations are in the EU's Transparency Register?

A. 175

B. 1 750



C. 17 500

D. 175 000

Source: https://transparency-register.europa.eu/index_en



Who is the current European Commission President?

A.



B.



C.



D.



E.



EU institution Presidents 2024-2029

A.



European Council:
António Costa (PT)

B.



European Central Bank:
Christine Lagarde (FR)

C.



European Parliament:
Roberta Metsola (MT, EPP)

D.



European Commission:
Ursula von der Leyen (DE)

E.



**High Representative of the Union for
Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRVP):**
Kaja Kallas (EE)



The EU Institutions (in Schuman area of Brussels)

You are here
(Charlemagne)

1

European Commission

Represents the common interests of the EU



2

European Parliament

Represents the citizens, directly elected MEPs



3

Council of the European Union

Ministers who collectively represent the governments of the EU Member States



Other EU institutions:

- European External Action Service
- European Committee of the Regions
- European Economic and Social Committee





The European Union - in brief



The EU Member States

1951

Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Netherlands

1973

Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom (the UK left the EU in 2020)

1981

Greece

1986

Spain and Portugal

1995

Austria, Finland and Sweden

2004

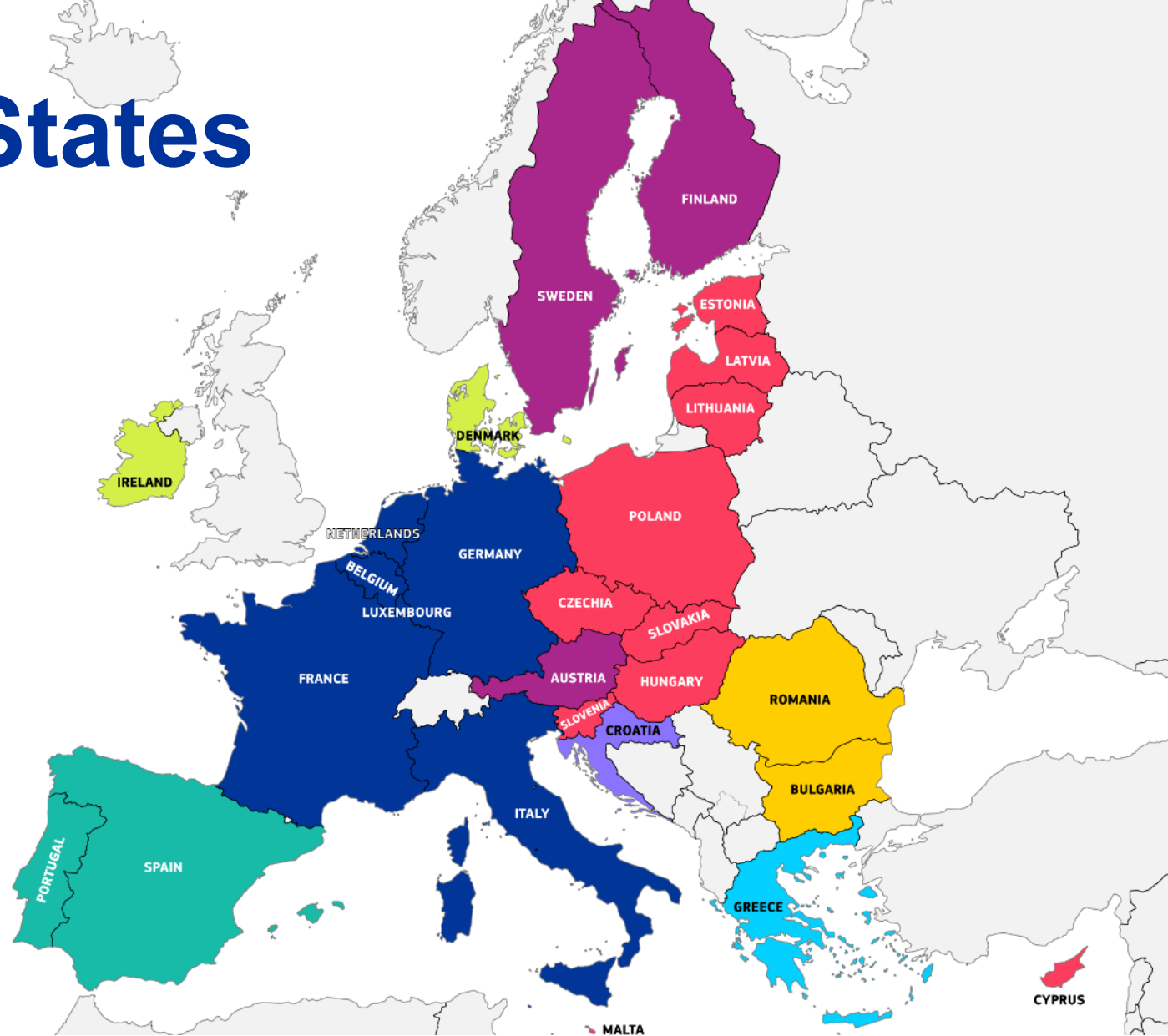
Czechia, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia

2007

Bulgaria and Romania

2013

Croatia



Source

Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat

Cartography: Eurostat – IMAGE, 10/2024



The EU: a unique project



Legal basis?

Treaties on the
(Functioning of)
European Union
(TEU & TFEU)

How many languages?

24 official languages

Main currency?

Euro
(for 21 Member States)

How many markets?

One Single Market



The role of the European Commission in EU policymaking

More info. <https://europa.eu/!tCbGth>

What is the European Commission and what does it do? European Commission Explained



The European Commission – Responsibilities and Competences

1

is the political
executive

2

acts as a
college

3

promotes
the general
interest of the
Union

More info. <https://europa.eu/!tCbGth>



The four roles of the European Commission

1. Right of initiative

2. Policy and budget implementation

3. Guardian of the Treaties

4. Represents the EU internationally



Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič
*Trade and Economic Security
Interinstitutional Relations and
Transparency*




College of Commissioners 2024-2029





Priorities of the European Commission 2024 - 2029

A photograph of Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, speaking at a blue podium in the European Parliament. She is wearing a light-colored, textured blazer and has her hands raised in a gesture. The background shows other members of the parliament seated at desks.

*“This is the vision I have set out in my **Political Guidelines**. A vision of a **stronger Europe** that delivers **prosperity**, that **protects people** and that **defends democracy**. A stronger Europe that **delivers social fairness** and **supports people**. A stronger Europe that **implements what it agrees in a fair way**. ”*

in speech to the European Parliament, 18 July 2024, presenting Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024-2029

Political guidelines

for the European Commission 2024-2029



A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

A new era for European Defence and Security

Supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model

Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature, incl. preparing for a changing climate

Protecting our democracy, upholding our values

A global Europe: Leveraging our power and partnerships

Delivering together and preparing our Union for the future



A global Europe: leveraging our power and partnership



Objectives



Enlarging the European Union
to increase our influence on the global stage



Focusing on our wider neighbourhood
to promote peace, partnerships and economic stability

More info.: https://commission.europa.eu/priorities-2024-2029/global-europe_en



Pursuing a new economic foreign policy
to boost our prosperity, trading power, and mutually beneficial partnerships



Reforming the international system
to make it fit for today's world

A global Europe: leveraging our power and partnership



A new economic foreign policy

For Europe's prosperity, we will establish a new economic foreign policy that focuses on economic security, trade and investment in partnerships. For this, we will

- boost our competitiveness at home and **invest in research into strategic technologies**
- protect our economy from technology leakage and security concerns
- complete the review of foreign direct investment screening, build a coordinated approach to export controls, and address risks from outbound investments
- **deepen our free and fair-trade links** with growth centres and partners around the world
- **develop new clean trade and investment partnerships** and deepen our relationships on critical minerals and raw materials
- improve rules-based trade, including through a **reformed and strengthened World Trade Organization**
- enforce our trade agreements and use all of our trade defence instruments where and when needed
- take **Global Gateway**, our initiative to invest in infrastructure projects worldwide, to the next level through a Team Europe approach
- propose a **new strategic EU-India agenda** and strengthen our **cooperation with ASEAN**
- work with Japan, Korea, New Zealand and Australia
- drive investments in infrastructure, renewable energy generation, and raw material value chains in Africa
- deepen the **cooperation between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean** through Global Gateway investment



Container ship in Hamburg harbour

More info.: https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/index_en

Commissioners' responsibilities 2024-2029



 Commissioners' collegiality for A global Europe: Leveraging our power and partnerships



Putting into Action and Updating EU Policy Priorities



Who and What informs policy priorities?

Political Guidelines and Mission Letters

European Council conclusions (Heads of state/government)

European Parliament Resolutions and Own Initiative (INI) Reports

Consultative Committees Opinions (CoR, EESC)

National Parliaments of EU Member States

Public consultations, EU citizens (e.g. European Citizens' Initiative, Citizens' Engagement Panels, (Youth) Policy Dialogues), **Stakeholder(s) concerns.**

Commission's own or requested analysis of economic, social, environmental, international, legal challenges, etc.

Latest (geo)political developments



State of the Union

10 September 2025



Key topics

Ukraine

Defence

Gaza

Competitiveness & jobs

Housing & cars

Cost of living & affordability

Defending European democracy

Health, migration & preparedness

More info.: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/state-union/state-union-2025_en

See also: [The EU in 2025 — General Report on the Activities of the European Union](#) and [The policy priorities of the von der Leyen II Commission: State of play in March 2026](#)



State of the Union 2025

Proposed initiatives

In her speech, President Ursula von der Leyen outlined the main priorities and flagship initiatives for the year to come.

Competitiveness

- Single Market Roadmap to 2028
- Industrial Accelerator Act
- Omnibus packages
- **28th Regime** and European Innovation Act
- European Grids Package
- EU Cloud and AI Development Act

Defence and security

- Eastern Flank Watch initiative
- Roadmap for European Defence Readiness and European Defence Semester
- Amendment of the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation
- New rules on fighting organised crime and new sanctions regime for targeting smugglers and traffickers
- Revision of the Europol Regulation

European social fairness

- Strategy for Outermost Regions and Agenda for Cities
- Skills portability initiative
- Affordable Housing Plan
- European Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Quality Jobs Act
- Gender Equality Strategy

Quality of life

- European Climate Adaptation Plan
- Initiative on the Generational Renewal of Farming
- Livestock strategy including elements on animal welfare
- Omnibus package on food
- Ocean Act

Democracy and our values

- European democracy shield
- Digital Fairness Act
- Media Resilience Programme
- Anti-corruption strategy
- Action plan against cyberbullying

A global Europe

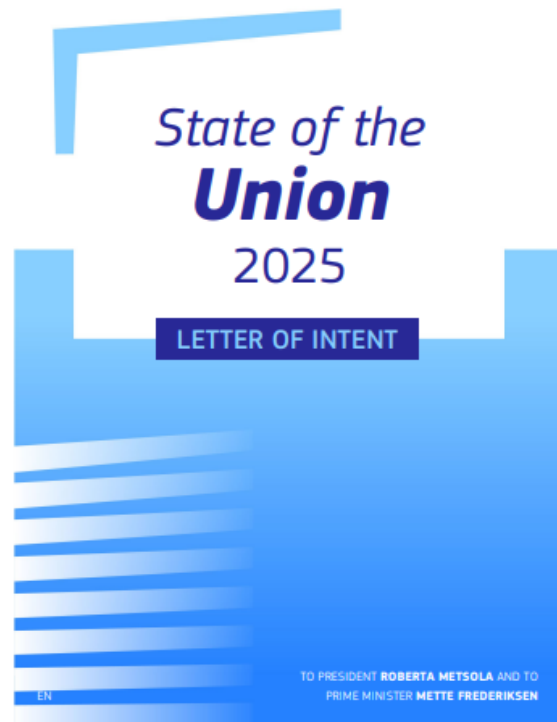
- Humanitarian Communication
- Pact for the Mediterranean
- EU-India Strategic Agenda

Letter of Intent

Initiatives are formalised & detailed further via Letter of Intent addressed to EP President and Head of Member State holding Presidency of Council of EU.

See <https://link.europa.eu/W8W6mX> (all EU languages)

From Letter of Intent to Commission's Annual Work Programme



For Commission Work Programmes,
see: <https://link.europa.eu/ndgQky>



Example of Next steps from Work Programme: EU Inc. (28th Regime)

Choose EU Inc.



- ❖ Informed by **Draghi and Letta Reports**.
- ❖ **Announced** in the **political guidelines** for 2024–2029 and **SOTEU 2025** speech.
- ❖ A **legislative proposal** from the Commission for a **new single set of corporate rules** to make it easier for businesses to start, operate and grow across the EU.
- ❖ It **aims to reduce fragmentation, boost EU competitiveness**, and **respond to the needs** of innovative companies.
- ❖ The **proposal** was formally **adopted by the Commission** on 18 March 2026.
- ❖ Commission has called for EP and Council of EU to **reach an agreement** by the end of 2026.
- ❖ More info.: <https://link.europa.eu/vCTbqw>.

Development & Consultation

Call for evidence

(launched by Commission, to inform also Impact Assessment)

Public consultation

Feedback and consultation period

08 July 2025 - 30

September 2025

Feedback: Closed

(Responses at <https://link.europa.eu/9NQ8Qb>)

Upcoming

Commission adoption

(18 March 2026, now with EP & Council of EU)





Keep in Touch

Keep in touch

The EU across Europe, and beyond

Commission offices in EU capitals and regions



Europe Direct and other info points in your region



Globally we also have Diplomatic Representations across the world, see https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-world-0_en

Experience Europe

Interactive exhibition in Brussels

5 minute-walk from the Visitors' Centre
Schuman roundabout, Brussels

More information: [Experience Europe](#)



European
Commission



**FREE
ADMISSION**

EXPERIENCE EUROPE

THE EUROPEAN
COMMISSION'S
EXHIBITION
CENTRE

OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK

(+32) 2 296 5555
EC-experienceeurope.brussels@ec.europa.eu

1 RUE ARCHIMEDE
1000 BRUSSELS
BELGIUM



BY METRO SCHUMAN 11 12
BY BUS SCHUMAN 12 21 30
BY TRAIN BRUSSELS-SCHUMAN

Keep in touch



[European Commission](https://ec.europa.eu)



[@EU_Commission](https://twitter.com/EU_Commission)



[@europeancommission](https://podcasts.apple.com/eu/podcast/european-commission/id145082920)



[Visitors' Centre](https://visitorscentre.ec.europa.eu)



[europeancommission](https://www.instagram.com/europeancommission)



ec.europa.eu



[Experience Europe](https://experience.ec.europa.eu)



[@EuropeanCommission](https://twitter.com/EuropeanCommission)



[@ec.europa.eu](https://twitter.com/ec.europa.eu)



[@EuropeanCommission](https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanCommission)



[EUTube](https://www.youtube.com/EUTube)



[European Commission](https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-commission)



[EU Spotify](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/37i9ZQZEVXbM5YVnY0t1t0)

For **daily update** of latest **Commission initiatives**, etc., see <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/home/en>

For **Press Conferences / (Midday) Briefings**, see <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/ebs/>





Your feedback



Please complete the survey sent to you, or your group leader, by email.



Many Thanks!



© European Union 2026

Unless otherwise noted the reuse of this presentation is authorised under the [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the EU, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective right holders.

Unless otherwise stated, images used come from official Commission sources, including <https://commission.europa.eu/>, or from other EU institution sites.

Some examples of how the EU is improving the life of its citizens



Free movement of people



Healthcare abroad



No roaming charges



Strict standards for safe and healthy food



Common charger



Strong toy safety rules

See also https://europa.eu/stories/10-ways-easy-life/index_en.html and https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/achievements_en



Europe for its citizens



What Europe
does for you

EU projects taking place in your
region

&

EU funding & me mobile App

The European
Social Fund Plus

More details also in **2025 Annual Report on Activities**: <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/general-report-2025/en/>





European Commission



President + 26 Commissioners



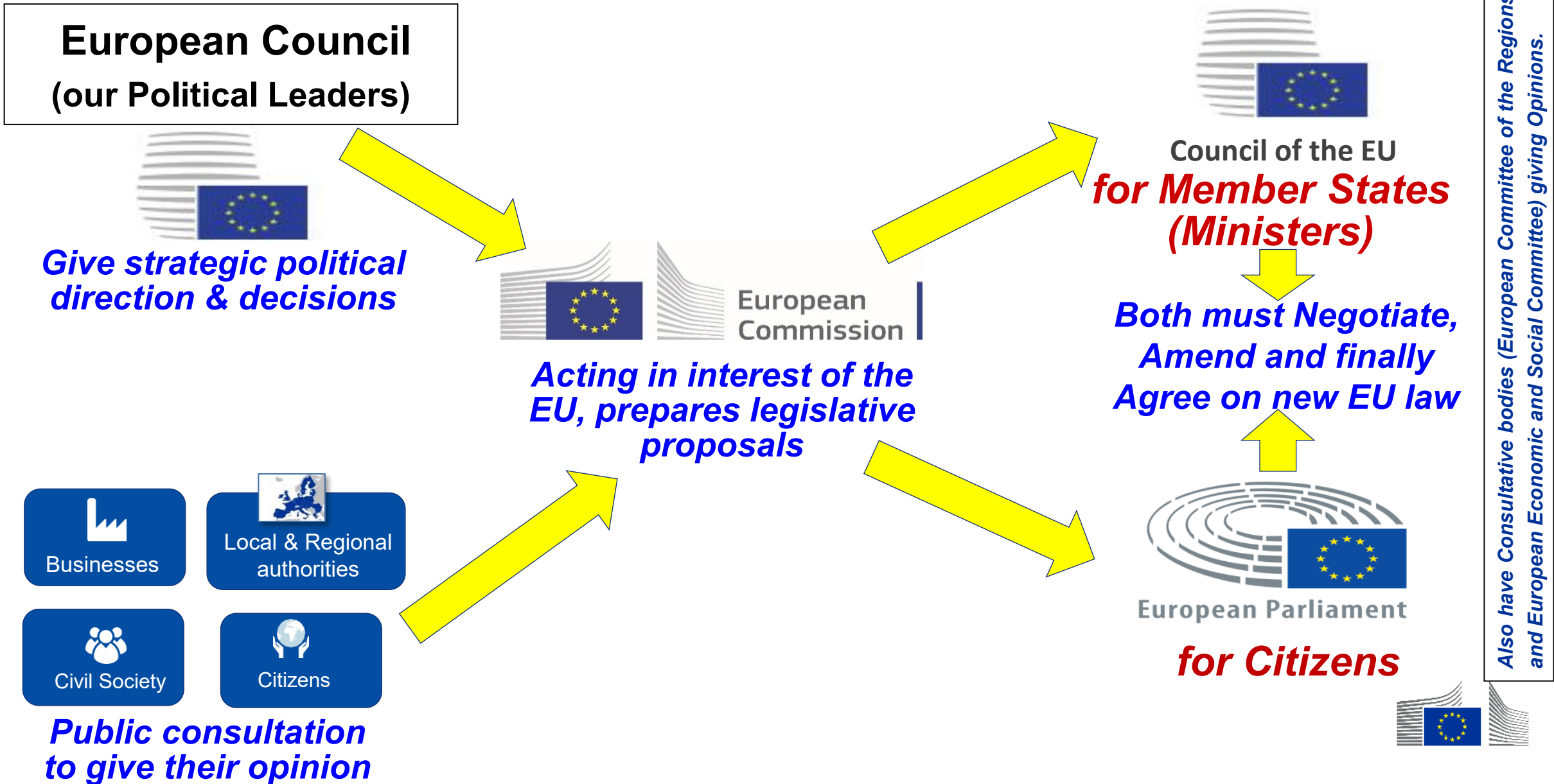
33 000 employees



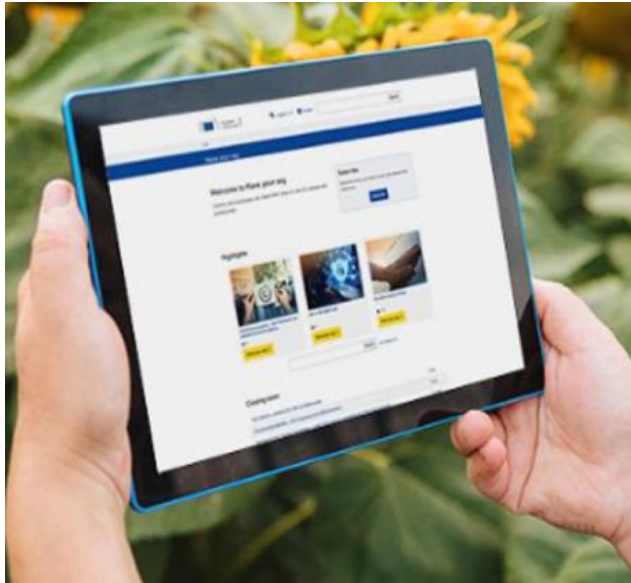
50 Departments (or Directorates-General, mostly organised by policy area) and 6 Executive Agencies



Proposing new laws and policies (outline)



Citizens' voices in the EU



Have Your Say portal

Share your views on new EU policies and existing laws



European Citizens' Initiative

Call on the European Commission to propose new laws



Citizens' Engagement

Get involved through Youth Policy Dialogues, Citizens' Panels and more



Video available at <https://youtu.be/GOeEjiNbeTI>

For more on How EU Laws are made, see <https://europa.eu/stories/how-EU-law-is-made/>.

And if you want to (virtually) be an MEP negotiating and voting on key legislation in the EU, as a Group try: <https://virtual-role-play-game.digital-journey.europarl.europa.eu/>, or

To negotiate and reach an agreement in the Council of the EU, try: https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/eucraft-digital-simulation-game_en.

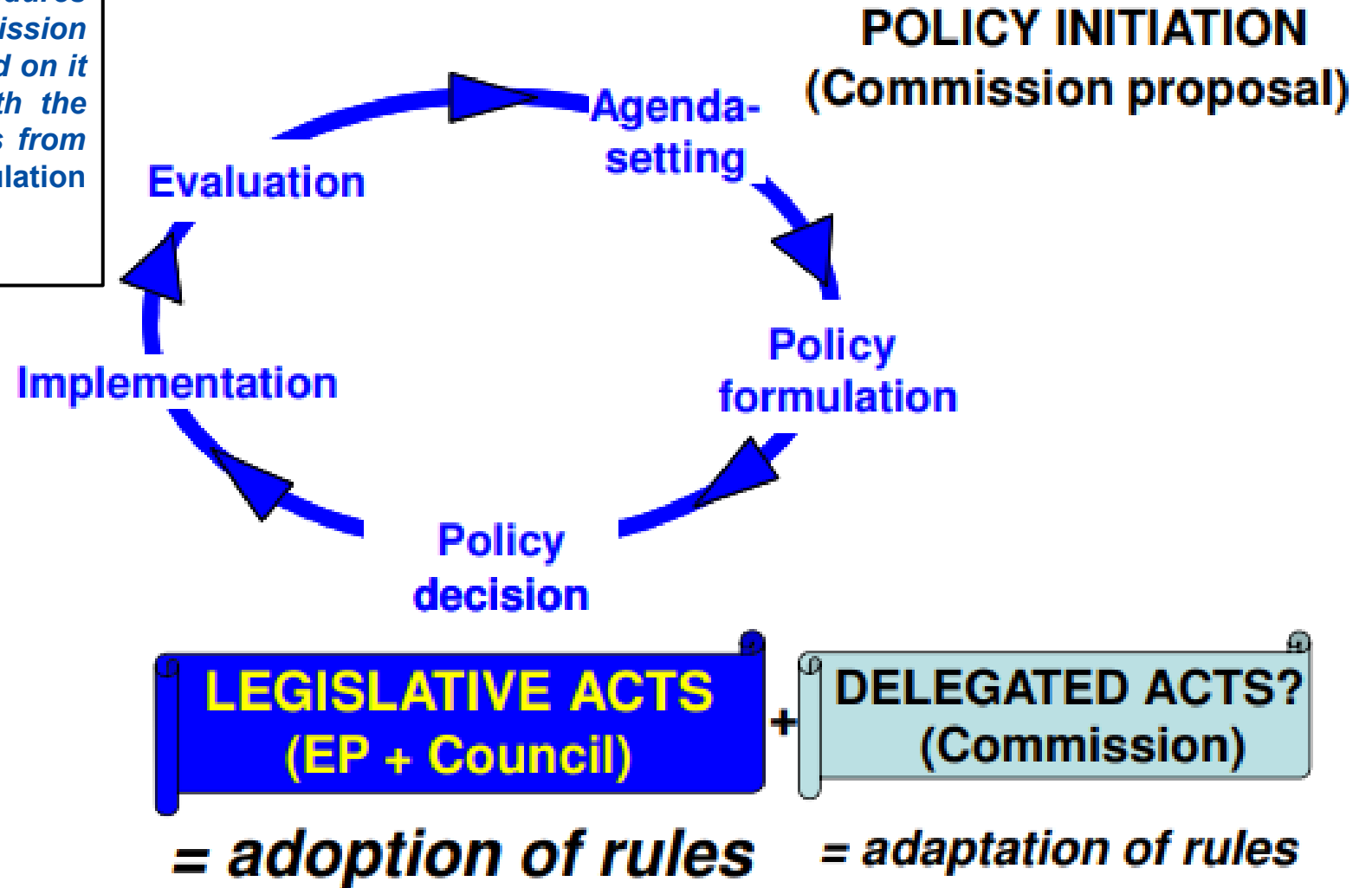


Delegated and Implementing Acts

Comitology refers to the “set of procedures through which the European Commission exercises the implementing powers conferred on it by the European Union (EU) legislator, with the assistance of committees of representatives from EU Member States” as laid down in Regulation (EU) No 182/2011.

IMPLEMENTING ACTS (Commission)

= uniform implementation of rules with Comitology



Delegated Acts



EU LEGISLATOR



conditional delegation
by the EU legislator of powers
to *modify* non-essential
elements of a legislative act



consultation with experts +
ex post control by the
Council and Parliament

Implementing Acts with Comitology



EU LEGISLATOR



NB

- used for all 'legally binding acts'
- Council may also adopt implementing acts in CFSP and other specific cases



empowerment to adopt legally
binding EU acts where
uniform conditions are
required to *apply* rules



consultation + *ex ante* control
by the Member States
(*'comitology committees'*)



EU MEMBER STATES

Source: *Understanding EU Decision-Making* by Edward Best, EIPA,
<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-22374-2>



2. Policy and budget implementation

EU budget

Where does it come from?

- National contributions
- Custom duties
- Value-added tax
- Non-recycled plastic packaging waste contribution
- Fines imposed when businesses fail to comply with EU rules

More info.: https://commission.europa.eu/funding-and-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes_en and, for an **explanatory video**, <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/media/video/l-275850>

Where does it go?

The EU's 2021-2027 long-term budget

	Amounts in € billion
Cohesion, Resilience and Values	426.7 (+776.5 from NGEU*)
Natural Resources and Environment	401 (+18.9 from NGEU*)
Single Market, Innovation and Digital	149.5 (+11.5 from NGEU*)
Neighbourhood and the World	110.6
European Public Administration	82.5
Migration and Border Management	25.7
Security and Defence	14.9
Total budget	2 018 billion

* Next Generation EU, see <https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/>



2. Policy and budget implementation

EU programmes and funds

2021-2027 long-term budget and NextGenerationEU



Funded by
the European Union



Co-funded by
the European Union

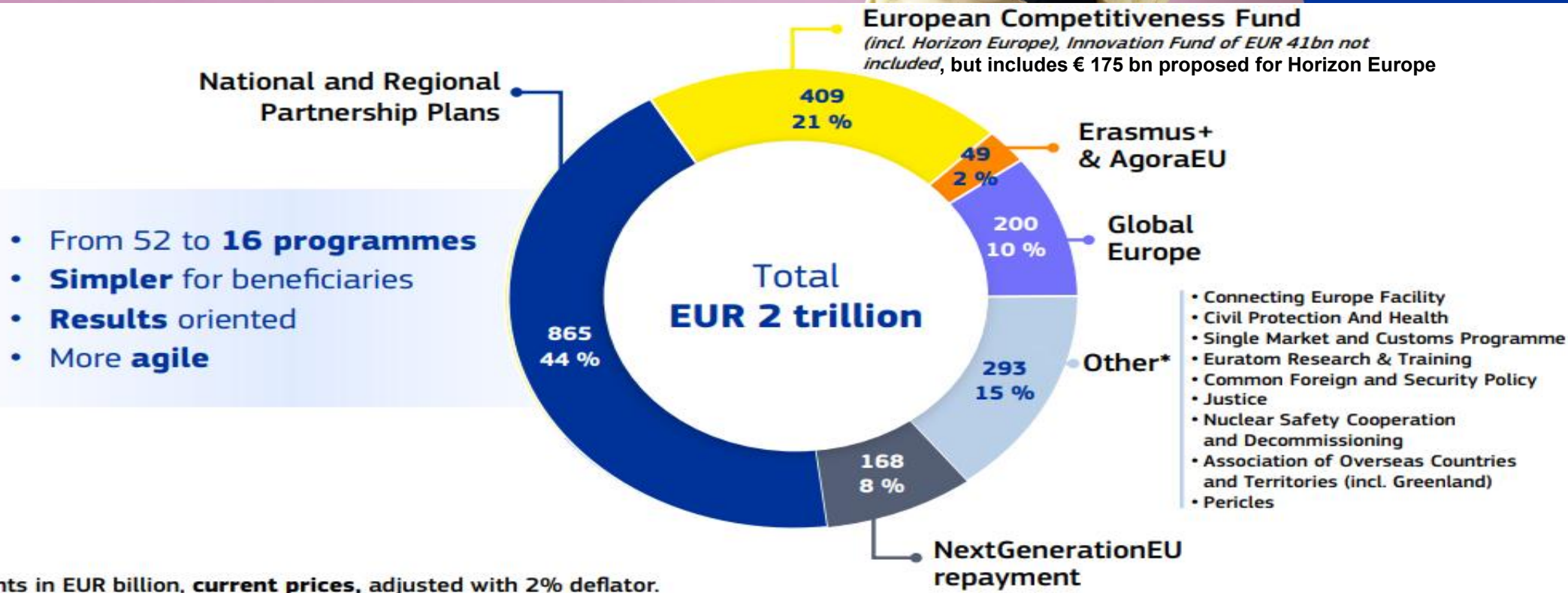
Erasmus+ Just Transition Fund InvestEU
EU4Health Sustainable Development
European Agricultural Guarantee Fund Horizon Europe
Space Programme Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
Recovery and Resilience Facility
Creative Europe European Defence Fund
European Maritime, Fisheries & Aquaculture Fund
Connecting Europe Facility
European Regional Development Fund European Social Fund+
Cohesion Fund



The 2028-2034 EU budget for a stronger Europe



EUROPE'S BUDGET
THE POWER OF TOGETHER



All amounts in EUR billion, **current prices**, adjusted with 2% deflator.
*Also includes Administration and decentralised agencies.

More info.: https://commission.europa.eu/priorities-2024-2029/eu-budget-and-reform_en



3. Guardian of the Treaties

What does it mean?

Making sure that everyone follows the same rules



INFRINGEMENT DECISIONS | Jun 4, 2026 | Brussels | 35 min read

June infringements package: key decisions

PAGE CONTENTS

[Top](#)

[Related topics](#)

[Print friendly pdf](#)

[Contacts for media](#)

Overview by policy area

In its regular package of infringement decisions, the European Commission takes legal action against Member States that fail to comply with their obligations under EU law. These decisions, covering various EU policy areas, aim to ensure the proper application of EU law for the benefit of citizens and businesses. The key decisions taken by the Commission are presented below and grouped by policy area. The Commission is also closing 59 cases where the issues with the Member States concerned have been solved.

PRESS RELEASE | May 28, 2026

Commission opens in-depth foreign subsidies investigation into JD.com's proposed acquisition of CECONOMY

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess, under the Foreign Subsidies Regulation ('FSR'), the proposed acquisition by JD.com, Inc. ('JD.com') of CECONOMY AG ('CECONOMY'). The Commission has preliminary concerns that JD.com may have been granted foreign subsidies that could distort the EU internal market.

4. International dimension

Represents the EU internationally

International agreements



International partnerships

Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations



Emergency Response Coordination Centre and EU Civil Protection Mechanism



The EU and its Member States

Who is responsible for what?

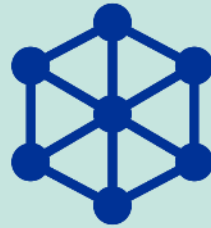
EXCLUSIVE
(EU)

e.g. trade, competition



SHARED
(EU and Member States)

e.g. single market, environment



SUPPORTING

(Member States with support of EU)

e.g. defence/civil protection, education

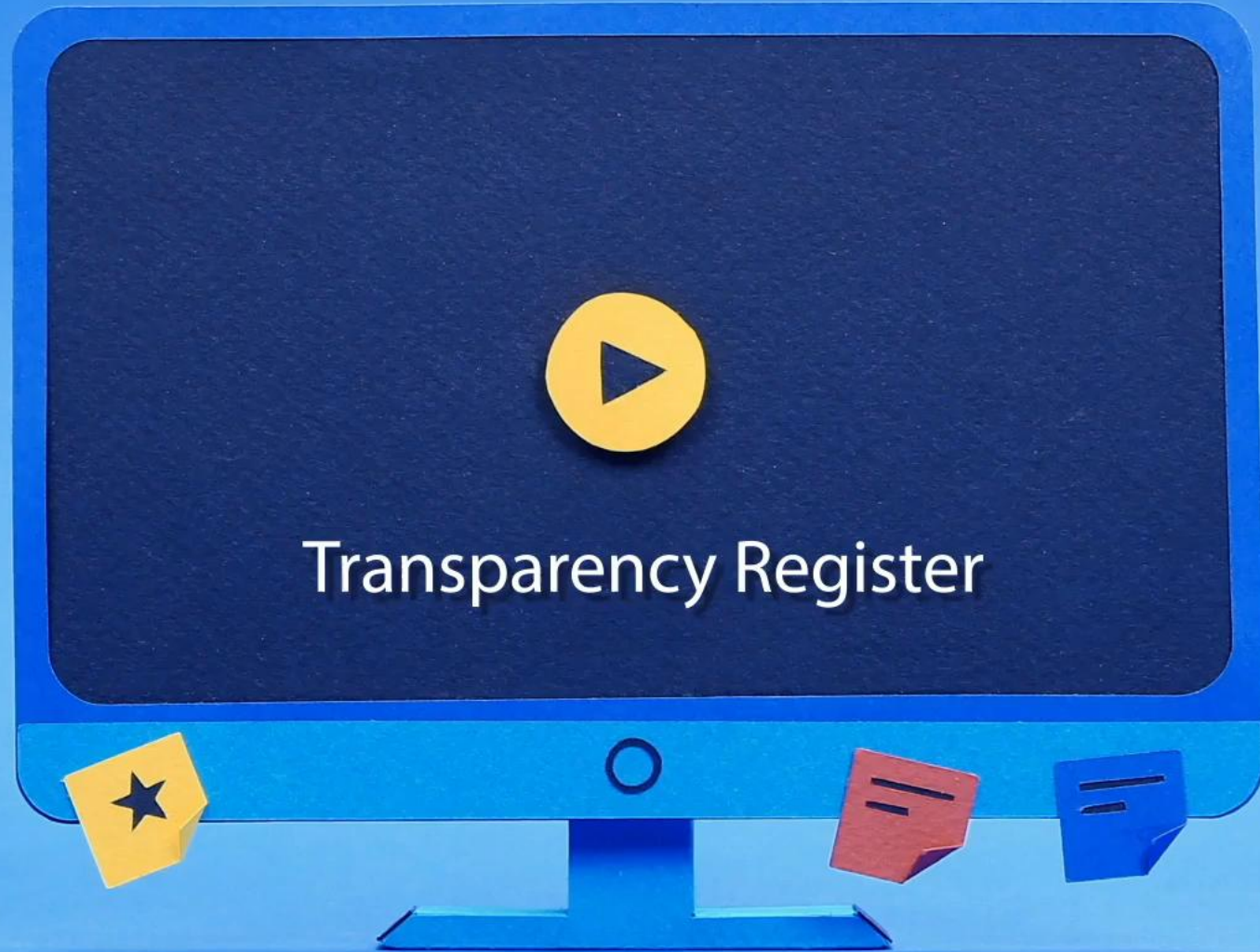


DIVISION OF COMPETENCES

More details at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/division-of-competences.html>



c. Transparency Register



Transparency Register



European
Parliament



Council of
the European
Union



European
Commission

- A database listing ‘interest representatives’ (organisations, associations, groups, etc.) who do activities to influence EU policy and decision-making.
- The rules and principles are in an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament, Council and Commission.
- Applicants must follow certain ethical and behavioural principles in their interest representation work with the EU institutions.
- These principles are set out in a code of conduct annexed to the interinstitutional agreement, e.g. identify themselves, declare interests, etc.
- Similarly, Commissioners and Commission staff must follow principles and rules that govern their conduct with regard to ethics and integrity (role of European Ombudsman to investigate).

More info.: <https://transparency-register.europa.eu>



Exclusive competence

- Trade
- Competition
- Monetary policy
- Conservation of marine environment
- And more...

Example:

The Eurozone

20 countries using the same currency



Shared competence

- Internal Market
- Agriculture and Fisheries
- Freedom, Security and Justice
- Research
- Environment and Energy
- And more...

Example:

Air passenger rights

The EU is the only area in the world where passengers are protected by a full set of rights





Supporting competence

- Industry
- Education and Culture
- Health
- Civil Protection
- Tourism
- And more...

Example:

Erasmus+

Programme for education, training, youth and sport

A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness



©Getty Images | Halfpoint Images

Objectives



Making business easier
to foster economic growth



A Clean Industrial Deal
to support EU's competitive
industries and create quality jobs
incl. Climate Actions



A more circular and resilient
economy
to transition to more sustainable
production and consumption
practices



Boosting productivity with
digital tech diffusion
to strengthen EU's
competitiveness and become a
leader in AI innovation

More info.: https://commission.europa.eu/priorities-2024-2029/competitiveness_en



Putting research and
innovation
at the heart of our economy



Turbo charging investment
to accelerate green, digital and
social transition



Tackling the skills and
labour gaps
to improve people's careers and
economic competitiveness

First 100 days of the mandate



Make Europe more competitive

- Competitiveness Compass
- Clean Industrial Deal
- Union of Skills
- AI Factories ...

Security Action for Europe

- REARM Europe
- White Paper on the Future of European Defence
- Vision for Agriculture and Food

Continue our unwavering support for Ukraine

Engage with the world in win-win partnerships

- Mercosur, Switzerland, Mexico, Malaysia, India ...



EU Solidarity with Ukraine

The EU stands united with Ukraine

More info.: <https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/>



EU actions



EU assistance to Ukraine

Learn about the EU's political, humanitarian and financial support for Ukraine



Ukraine's path towards EU accession

Supporting Ukraine in its efforts towards further EU integration



Reconstruction of Ukraine

How the EU is supporting the country's recovery efforts



EU sanctions against Russia

An overview of EU sanctions targeting sectors, entities and complicit actors



Holding Russia accountable

Ensuring Russia is punished for its war crimes and pays for the damage done



EU countries welcoming those fleeing Ukraine

How the EU is supporting Member States to meet the needs of those fleeing Ukraine