EURO-NET

The Youth European Network

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Bimonthly newsletter:

- *to spread European opportunities and initiatives,*
- *to disseminate the respect of human rights and the awareness about the development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity,*
- *to fight discrimination against minorities, xenophobia, intolerance and racism,*
- *to help, with youth activities, the democratic stability and social inclusion in Europe,*
- *develop active European citizenship and civil society by giving impetus to the training of youth leaders and youth workers working within a European dimension;*
- *to promote European youth activities, such as exchanges, seminars, conferences, debates and training courses,*
- *to encourage exchange of ideas, proposals, experiences and good practises at international level.*

NEWSLETTER REALISED BY
THE ASSOCIATION EURO-NET
AS EUROPE DIRECT BASILICATA CENTRE

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Contents

1. An ambitious budget for a stronger Europe: 2028-2034

The European Commission presented its proposal for an ambitious and dynamic Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), amounting to almost EUR 2 trillion (or 1.26% of the EU's gross national income on average between 2028 and 2034).

This framework will equip Europe with a long-term investment budget matching its ambitions to be an independent, prosperous, secure, and thriving society and economy over the coming decade. Europe faces an increasing number of challenges in numerous areas such as security, defence, competitiveness, migration, energy and climate resilience. These are not temporary but reflect systemic geopolitical and economic shifts that require a strong and forward-looking response. The Commission therefore proposes a fundamental redesign of the EU budget, which will be more streamlined, flexible and impactful. It will significantly enhance the EU's capacity to deliver on core policies while addressing new and emerging priorities. This budget will continue to support people, business, Member States, regions, partners, and - above all - the EU's collective future. A modern EU budget requires modernised and stable sources of income. That is why the Commission is also proposing new own resources and adjustments to existing ones, which will ease pressure on national budgets, generating EUR 58.5 billion per year. *President **von der Leyen** stated: "Our new long-term budget will help protect European citizens, strengthen Europe's social model and make our European industry thrive. In a time of geopolitical instability, the budget will allow Europe to shape its own destiny, in line with its vision and ideals. A budget that supports peace and prosperity and promotes our values is the best tool we can have during these uncertain times."*

Key features of the new MFF

- **More flexibility** across the budget, so Europe has the **capacity to act and react fast** when circumstances change unexpectedly or when new policy priorities need to be addressed.
- **Simpler, more streamlined and harmonised** EU financial programmes, so that citizens and companies can **easily find and access funding** opportunities.
- A budget tailored to local needs, with **National and Regional Partnership Plans** based on investments and reforms, for **targeted impact where it matters most** and ensuring a faster and more flexible support for more economic, social and territorial cohesion across our Union.
- A powerful **competitiveness boost**, for Europe to secure supply chains, scale-up innovation and lead the global race for clean and smart technology.
- A **balanced package of new own resources** that ensures adequate revenues for our priorities while minimising pressure on national public finances.

The Commission's proposal is designed to ensure that EU funding is steered by the EU's political priorities, delivering results that national budgets cannot achieve alone.

Investing in people, Member States and regions

The new long-term budget will bring together EU funds implemented by Member States and Regions under one coherent strategy, with cohesion and agricultural policy at its core. This strategy will be implemented through National and Regional Partnership Plans, simpler and more tailored, to maximize the impact of every euro. Having one single plan per Member State integrating all relevant support measures - whether for workers, farmers or fishermen, cities or rural areas, regions or the national level - ensures a much stronger impact, and a much more efficient use of European funding. It is the most effective way to support the Union's territories and communities. It brings genuine simplification, both for public authorities and for direct beneficiaries. The Plans will foster convergence and reduce regional disparities. They will identify investments and reforms to better address tomorrow's challenges for the Member States and our Regions. These Plans will be designed and implemented in close partnership between the Commission, the Member States, regions, local communities and all other relevant stakeholders. In addition, there will be a mandatory minimum amount for less developed regions, as well as a safeguard ensuring that these will receive overall at least as much funding as under the current cohesion envelope. Income support to farmers and fishermen will be ringfenced, including environmental measures, on-farm investments, support to young farmers and risk management tools. Funding rules for agriculture and rural communities will be simpler, including on payments, controls and audits. The new Partnership Plans will support quality employment, skills and social inclusion across all Member States, regions and sectors. They will contribute to promote equal opportunities for all, to support strong social safety nets, foster social inclusion, intergenerational fairness and fight poverty. 14% of the National allocations will have to finance reforms and investments that enhance skills, fight poverty, promote social inclusion and foster rural areas. Respect for the Rule of Law will remain unconditional. The Conditionality Regulation will continue to protect the entire EU budget from breaches on the rule of law. The National and regional partnership plans will contain further safeguards to ensure that Member States respect the principles of the rule of law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Transparency on and screening of the beneficiaries of the EU budget will be reinforced. Information on the recipients of EU funds will be published in a centralised database.

Foster education and democratic values

Stepping up investment in skills is fundamental to help EU students and workers embrace opportunities. At the same time, investing in people means supporting a vibrant civic space and protecting artistic and cultural freedom. The long-term budget will continue to invest in the areas of skills, culture, media and values. A reinforced Erasmus+ programme will be the backbone of the Union of Skills. Education mobility, solidarity and inclusiveness will remain the core of the programme. A strong AgoraEU programme will promote shared values, including democracy, equality and the rule of law and support the European cultural diversity, its audiovisual and creative sectors, media freedom and civil society involvement.

Driving prosperity via competitiveness, research and innovation

A new European Competitiveness Fund, worth EUR 409 billion, will invest in strategic technologies, to benefit the entire Single Market, as recommended in the Letta and Draghi Reports. The Fund, operating under one rulebook, and offering a single gateway to funding applicants, will simplify and accelerate EU funding and catalyse private and public investment. It will focus its support on four areas: clean transition and decarbonization; digital transition; health, biotech, agriculture and bioeconomy; defence, and space. The Fund will maximise the impact of every euro spent by drawing in private money. In close connection with the European Competitiveness Fund, the renowned EU research framework, with its flagship Horizon Europe worth EUR 175 billion will continue to finance world-class innovation. Horizon Europe and the Competitiveness Fund will offer support for the entire investment journey of a project (from conception phase to scale-up) and reduce both the cost for potential beneficiaries and the time for disbursement.

Protecting people and building preparedness and resilience to face new challenges

The long-term budget will equip Europe with faster, more efficient and flexible tools to withstand shocks and respond to new challenges. It will continue to build Europe's resilience by financing the Preparedness Union and prepare for all stages of crisis management: from prevention to response and recovery. The Commission is proposing a new dedicated crisis mechanism with a firepower of up to almost EUR 400 billion of loans to Member States, to be triggered when severe crises hit the Union. Furthermore, national and regional partnerships will support investments and reforms in all areas of preparedness and crisis management. An agriculture reserve will support farmers and stabilise markets if needed. The European Competitiveness Fund will also enhance the EU's preparedness and strategic autonomy in key sectors and technologies, by developing industrial capacities and funding cutting-edge technologies. Lastly, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and Union support for health emergency preparedness and response will be further strengthened integrating health preparedness activities.

Protecting Europe

The long-term budget will help build a European Defence Union, that can shield itself, stay connected, and act fast whenever needed. The defence and space window of the European Competitiveness Fund will allocate EUR 131 billion to support investment in defence, security and space, five times more funding at EU level compared to the previous MFF. Member States and regions will have the possibility to support on a voluntary basis and according to the regional needs and priorities, defence-related projects in their national and regional partnership plans. The military mobility strand of the Connecting Europe Facility will be multiplied tenfold. It will support dual-use infrastructure investments alongside civilian ones and contribute to a major boost for cybersecurity, infrastructure, and defence development overall. To enhance energy security, the Connecting Europe Facility will provide financing to cross-border energy and transport projects. The new budget also foresees increased funding for migration management, to strengthen the EU's external borders and to bolster internal security. EUR 74 billion will be allocated, which triples funding in the previous MFF. Member States will receive Union support to rapidly and effectively respond to developments on the ground. The funds will help Member States boost law enforcement capabilities online and offline, equip our border guards with the right tools to protect the external borders and implement a fair and firm migration management system under the Pact for Migration and Asylum.

Building partnerships for a stronger Europe in the world

This new Multiannual Financial Framework foresees reinforced external action to match a more strategic, values-driven and impactful approach to enlargement, partnerships and diplomacy, in alignment with the EU's strategic interests. To simplify external action financing, a Global Europe, worth EUR 200 billion for 2028-2034 will maximise impact on the ground and improve visibility of EU external action in partner countries. It will allow the EU budget to step up support to candidate countries and prepare for their accession This instrument will have a dedicated reserve capacity of EUR 15 billion to respond to emerging crises and unforeseen needs. To underpin the Union's unwavering support for Ukraine, EUR 100 billion may be mobilised for Ukraine over 2028-2034. Support for Ukraine will benefit from a degree of flexibility given the magnitude and unpredictability of the needs. Support for operations with military aspects will continue to be covered by the European Peace Facility. The proposed new budget will also continue financing Common Foreign and Security Policy actions for a total amount of EUR 3.4billion, to continue contributing to the EU's objectives of preserving peace, strengthening international security, promoting international cooperation and developing and consolidating democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

New own resources to match our common ambition

To give itself the means to act, Europe must also equip itself with a modern and diversified revenue stream. In turn, this will create means to fund its priorities while repaying what the EU has borrowed under NextGenerationEU and limiting the national contributions to the EU budget. To that end, the Commission presents five new own resources:

- **EU Emissions Trading System (ETS):** targeted adjustment of the revenues generated from ETS1 go to the EU budget. Expected to generate around EUR 9.6 billion annually, on average.
- **Carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM):** targeted adjustment of the revenues generated from CBAM go to the EU budget. Expected to generate around EUR 1.4 billion annually, on average.
- **An own resource based on non-collected e-waste** through the application of a uniform rate to the weight of non-collected e-waste. Expected to generate around EUR 15 billion annually, on average.
- **A tobacco excise duty own resource**, based on the application of a rate on the Member State-specific minimum excise duty rate levied on tobacco products. Expected to generate around EUR 11.2 billion annually, on average.
- **A Corporate Resource for Europe (CORE)**, amounting to an annual lump-sum contribution from companies, other than small and medium-sized companies, operating and selling in the EU with a net annual turnover of at least EUR 100 million. Expected to generate around EUR 6.8 billion annually, on average.

Combined, these five new own resources and other elements of the own resources package put are estimated to generate revenue of approximately EUR 58.5 billion per year (in 2025 prices).

Next steps

The decision on the future long-term EU budget and revenue system will be discussed by Member States in the Council. Adoption of the MFF Regulation requires unanimity, following the consent of the European Parliament. Some elements of the revenue side (notably the new own resources) require unanimity in the Council and approval by the Member States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements. The Commission will do everything in its power to support a swift agreement.

2. The 2025 Rule of Law Report

The Commission published its sixth annual Rule of Law Report, examining rule of law developments in all Member States.

This is the first report under the Commission's new mandate. It consolidates the successful engagement with Member States based on a preventive and dialogue-based approach to strengthen the rule of law, and it is an important incentive for reform. The Rule of Law Report and the annual rule of law cycle contribute to the resilience of Europe's democracy, security and economy in a global environment where the respect for fundamental rights and democratic systems are increasingly under pressure. It is therefore essential for the EU to reaffirm its commitment to the rule of law and to take concrete steps to promote and defend it, on our continent and across the globe. As it did in 2024, the Report does not only cover 27 Member States but also includes four country chapters dedicated to developments in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. This year's Report confirms that there is a positive trajectory in many Member States, as important reforms have been taken forward across the four key areas covered by the report – justice, anti-corruption, media freedom and institutional checks and balances. While challenges remain in some Member States, and in a few cases the situation is serious, the overall engagement with the process remains strong, and Member States have addressed a substantial number of the 2024 recommendations, in full or in part. Respect for the rule of law is also essential for delivering policies that promote competitiveness through the Single Market and empower citizens to actively participate in both society and the economy. The rule of law is an important consideration for companies operating across borders. Businesses, in particular, small and medium-sized enterprises, need a stable and predictable economic environment. As set out in President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines, this year's report puts a particular emphasis on issues that have a direct link with the proper functioning of the Single Market, such as sound lawmaking, public procurement rules and the stability of the regulatory environment. The Report looks ahead to an evolving European Union. The new generation of EU spending instruments, to be presented as part of the next multiannual financial framework, will ensure that compliance with the principle of the rule of law remains a must for EU funds. EU financial support for investment and reforms to promote the rule of law can offer real added value. This can feed into a broader effort to track the effective implementation of recommendations issued in the Report.

Key findings this year:

- **Justice systems**
  Many Member States have advanced on justice reforms over the last year. Measures include strengthening the independence of Councils for the Judiciary, additional safeguards for judges' appointments and autonomy of prosecutors, as well as for the quality and efficiency of justice systems. Nevertheless, reforms are progressing at a slower pace in some Member States, and serious concerns remain in certain cases. Although efforts are being made across the board, there is a strain on resources for the justice systems in many Member States, impacting on the quality and efficiency of justice. In the enlargement countries, efforts to implement judiciary reforms, to strengthen accountability, and to improve efficiency have continued, but undue influence and attempts to undermine judges' independence need to be addressed.
- **Anti-corruption frameworks**
  The fight against corruption remains essential for maintaining the rule of law and preserving citizens' trust in public institutions. Most Europeans consider corruption to be unacceptable, according to the results of the **2025 Eurobarometer** surveys on citizens' and businesses' attitudes towards corruption in the EU. The Report shows that several Member States have developed new anti-corruption strategies and strengthened their institutional capacity, including by increasing the resources for law enforcement, prosecution services and the judiciary. At the same time, further action is needed to strengthen preventive frameworks, such as those related to lobbying and conflicts of interest, as well as to ensure the effective investigation, prosecution and final judgments of corruption cases. In the enlargement countries, legal and institutional frameworks were strengthened, showing resilience to undue pressure in some cases, while the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of corruption cases - including high-level cases - need to be further improved.
- **Media freedom and pluralism**
  Media freedom and pluralism are central elements of a society based on the rule of law and to ensuring democratic accountability. Reforms are under way in Member States to align national laws with the new rules under the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA). Many Member States are undertaking reforms to strengthen the independent functioning and financing of public service media and to improve fairness and transparency of state advertising allocation. Additionally, several national media regulators are expanding their competences to also comply with the Digital Services Act (DSA). Increasing attention is given to the safety and protection of journalists, amidst continuing threats, with Member States setting up or continuing to operate support structures or strengthening the legal protection of journalists. At the same time, further action is needed to address concerns regarding the safety of journalists as well as improve safeguards for the independence of some media regulators and public service media, increase the transparency of ownership and ensure better fairness and transparency in the allocation of state advertising. In the enlargement countries, there are also concerns in relation to the politicisation of media regulators and the financial sustainability of public broadcasters, as well as with the appointment of the broadcasters' leadership.
- **Institutional checks and balances**
  Reforms are underway in a number of Member States to strengthen checks and balances, including by better including stakeholders in the legislative process and improving the quality of legislation. Yet, unstable, fast-changing laws - sometimes drafted without stakeholders' input - create legal uncertainty for businesses and citizens alike. While the report finds that a majority of Member States continue to ensure an enabling and supportive framework for civil society, obstacles remain in a number of Member States related to funding or registration requirements.

However, in some Member States civil society organisations are facing serious challenges, being subject to excessive financial restrictions or controls or inadequate protection. In the enlargement countries, challenges to legislative processes and ineffective public consultations limit inclusive governance. Challenges also remain regarding the systematic follow-up to recommendations of the Ombudsperson institutions and other independent bodies.

- **Single Market dimension**
  Across the four pillars, the Report emphasises the impact on the functioning of the Single Market and the operating environment for businesses. An effective justice system, the fight against corruption, good governance, legal certainty and sound lawmaking all have a significant economic impact, shaping the business environment and guiding investment decisions. Across the four pillars, the report emphasises how the issues identified impact the functioning of the Single Market and the operating environment for businesses. The country chapters report for example, on the specialisation of courts and judges to handle commercial cases; the mechanisms to enforce judicial decisions; measures to prevent corruption in public procurement; transparent funding for media; and the stable regulatory environment necessary for business to operate in predictable conditions

Next steps

The Commission now invites the European Parliament and the Council to continue general and country-specific debates on the basis of this report, also using the recommendations to further examine how concrete progress can be made. The Commission also calls on national parliaments, civil society and other stakeholders to continue the national dialogue on the rule of law, as well as at European level, with increased citizen engagement. The Commission invites Member States to address the challenges identified in the Report. It stands ready to assist them in their efforts to continue the implementation of recommendations. For enlargement countries, the Commission will continue to follow up on the issues identified, including in its next annual reports on enlargement. Additional enlargement countries may be included in the Rule of Law Report as and when they are ready. As President von der Leyen committed in her Political Guidelines 2024 – 2029, the Commission will continue to improve its monitoring and reporting, and to strengthen checks and balances, notably by tracking the implementation of recommendations.

Background

The annual Rule of Law Report is the result of close dialogue with national authorities and stakeholders. The Report covers all Member States and four enlargement countries on the basis of the same objective and transparent methodology, examining the same set of issues in each country. The 2025 Report includes a Communication examining the situation in the EU as a whole and 27 country chapters looking at significant developments in each Member State. It also includes four country chapters looking at developments in the selected enlargement countries. The Report also includes an assessment of last year's recommendations to the Member States, and, on that basis, once again provides specific recommendations addressed to all Member States. The Report is at the centre of the annual Rule of Law Cycle. This yearly cycle is preventive: it serves to promote the rule of law and aims to prevent the emergence or deepening of problems. It is separate from the other elements in the EU's Rule of Law Toolbox and complements, but does not replace the Treaty-based mechanisms allowing the EU to respond to more serious rule of law-related issues in Member States. These tools include infringement proceedings and the procedure to protect the founding values of the Union under Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union. Since 2020, several new EU initiatives have raised common standards in areas with direct relevance for the rule of law, drawing on the results of monitoring in the context of this report. This includes the European Media Freedom Act, which seeks to address a number of systemic gaps identified in the media regulatory landscape, and the Anti-Corruption Package, which includes proposals for new legislation to combat corruption in the EU and to strengthen the EU sanctioning regime for corruption in the EU's external dimension. The inclusion of enlargement countries in the 2024 Rule of Law Report supports these countries' reform efforts to achieve irreversible progress on democracy and the rule of law ahead of accession, and to guarantee lasting high standards after accession. Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia participate in the Rule of Law Report exercise, reflecting the progress made in their respective accession processes. As President **von der Leyen** announced in her Political Guidelines 2024 – 2029, other accession countries will be included in the Rule of Law Report as and when they are ready.

More information

- 2025 Rule of Law Report
- 2025 Rule of Law Report – the rule of law situation in the European Union
- 2025 Rule of Law Report - Country Chapter Abstracts and Recommendations

3. EU's Climate Law presents a new way to get to 2040

The European Commission proposed an amendment to the EU Climate Law, setting a 2040 EU climate target of 90% reduction in net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, compared to 1990 levels, as requested by the Commission Political Guidelines for 2024-2029.
It will give certainty to investors, innovation, strengthen industrial leadership of our businesses, and increase Europe's energy security. Just this week, the latest Eurobarometer showed strong citizens support for EU climate action, providing a solid mandate to stay the course of the EU's clean transition agenda. The EU is well on track to meet our 2030 target of 55%. This proposal builds on the EU's existing legally binding goal of reducing net GHG emissions by at least 55% by 2030, and sets out a more pragmatic and flexible way to reach the target, with a view towards a decarbonised European economy by 2050. Aligned with the EU Competitiveness Compass, Clean Industrial Deal and Affordable Energy Action Plan, the proposed 2040 climate target takes fully into account the current economic, security and geopolitical landscape and gives investors and businesses the predictability and stability they need in the EU's clean energy transition. By staying the course on decarbonisation, the EU will drive investment in innovation, create more jobs, growth, increase our resilience to impacts of climate change and become more energy independent. Commission President, Ursula **von der Leyen**, said: *"As European citizens increasingly feel the impact of climate change, they expect Europe to act. Industry and investors look to us to set a predictable direction of travel. We show that we stand firmly by our commitment to decarbonise European economy by 2050. The goal is clear, the journey is pragmatic and realistic."* This proposal is based on an in-depth impact assessment and advice from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change. The adoption follows substantial engagement with Member States, the European Parliament, stakeholders, civil society and citizens, launched with the Commission's recommendation on the target in February 2024. Based on these consultations, the proposal sets out a way to reach the 2040 goal in a different way that has been done in the past. One central element is flexibilities that the Commission will consider in designing the future legislative instruments to achieve this 2040 climate target. These include a limited role for high-quality international credits starting from 2036, the use of domestic permanent removals in the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), and greater flexibilities across sectors to help achieve targets in a cost-effective and socially fair way. Concretely, this could give a Member State the possibility to compensate for the struggling land use sector with an overachievement on reducing emissions on waste and transport. The Commission proposal emphasises the importance of accelerating and strengthening the right enabling conditions to support this 90% target. These include a competitive European industry, a fair transition that leaves no one behind, and a level playing field with our international partners. In addition, the proposal sets a clear frame for our post-2030 climate and energy legislation. National specificities will be taken into account. Cost-effectiveness, simplicity and efficiency will be guiding principles, together with ensuring technological neutrality and a transition that is fair and just for everybody.

Delivering the Clean Industrial Deal for the 2040 climate target

The Commission published a Communication on delivering the first proposals on the Clean Industrial Deal, only a few months after it was presented. As the EU's Compass for ensuring competitiveness and decarbonisation go hand in hand, its implementation is crucial towards the 2040 climate target. This Communication provides an overview of the first wave of actions delivered, progress made and remaining measures to come. One of the key deliveries is the Clean Industrial Deal State Aid Framework, adopted last week, to further support investment in the clean energy transition. The simplification of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) was also agreed, exempting 90% of importers, thus reducing red tape and ensuring smooth implementation. This simplification is the first step before a more general CBAM review at the end of the year, accompanied by legislative proposals to strengthen the mechanism. Today's Communication outlines the results of the Commission analysis on how to provide a solution to the export carbon leakage. Complementing the State aid framework and this Communication, the Commission also issued the Recommendation on Tax Incentives to encourage investments in clean technologies and industrial decarbonisation, through measures like accelerated depreciation and tax credits. It also presented a recommendation and guidance documents for optimising the use of new EU renewables rules aiming at expanding renewables and cutting energy costs. Measures on affordable energy to scale up manufacturing of grid components and support Power Purchase Agreements, the pilot for the upcoming Industrial Decarbonisation Bank, the forthcoming Chemicals Industry Action Plan and the sectorial dialogues with stakeholders are among the actions that will help deliver the Clean Industrial Deal. Expected later this month, the proposals for the next Multiannual Financial Framework will also set out how the future EU budget will support the clean transition.

Setting 2040 EU climate target to deliver international climate commitments

With the proposed 90% target, the EU is also sending a signal to the global community: it will stay the course on climate change, deliver the Paris Agreement and continue engaging with partner countries to reduce global emissions. Ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém (Brazil) in November, the Commission will now work with the Council Presidency to finalise the communication of the EU's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

Next Steps

The Commission's proposal setting a 2040 climate target will now be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council for discussion and adoption under the ordinary legislative procedure.

A future agreed EU climate target will also serve as a benchmark for the post-2030 EU policy framework that will be developed thereafter.

Background

The European Climate Law, which entered into force in July 2021, enshrines in legislation the EU's commitment to reach climate neutrality by 2050 and the intermediate target of at least 55% net GHG emissions reduction by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. To meet its agreed decarbonisation objectives, the EU has since adopted a 2030 legislative package known as 'Fit for 55' and its implementation by EU Member States – essential for delivering on 2040 – is ongoing. The Commission's assessment of the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), presented on 28 May, showed that the EU is closing in collectively on the 2030 climate target of 55% GHG emissions reduction. The Climate Law legally requires an intermediate 2040 climate target to set the pace towards climate neutrality – a proposal that is needed within six months of the first Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement, achieved in December 2023.

4. Key actions launched to advance the circular economy

The Commission launched several initiatives to accelerate the EU's transition to a circular economy and prepare the ground for the Circular Economy Act, expected in 2026.

Circular economy enhances competitiveness and economic growth by promoting the reuse, recycling and remanufacturing of materials. The forthcoming Act will support the EU's goals under the Competitiveness Compass and the Clean Industrial Deal to double the share of recycled material in EU's economy and become a global leader in circular economy by 2030. The initiatives adopted include the rules on waste shipments and an evaluation of electronic waste legislation. In addition, new rules to improve recycling efficiency and material recovery from waste batteries will be published in the next days. The dialogue will also kick off a public consultation with stakeholders and call for evidence to be launched soon. These new actions touch on different dimensions of the circular economy and will help to boost the transition and strengthen implementation of existing legislation.

Digitalisation and classification of waste shipments

The Commission will implement a Digital Waste Shipment System. This will enable companies to move from paper to digital procedures for shipping waste across the EU single market, reducing administrative burden and contributing to competitiveness. This will streamline cross-border shipments of waste within the EU, while protecting human health and the environment. From 21 May 2026, digital systems will fully replace paper procedures, simplifying operations, improving traceability, and curbing illegal shipments. By digitalising these procedures, waste will be recycled at the most efficient facilities across Member States. In parallel, the Commission launched a public consultation on harmonising the classification of certain waste types (so-called "green-listed" waste) to facilitate their shipments across borders. The consultation is accessible through the 'Have Your Say' portal until 31 October 2025.

Evaluation of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive

The Commission published an evaluation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive. The WEEE is critical to address the growing challenges in e-waste management and to better align EU rules with the objectives of a competitive circular economy. Key gaps were identified, such as the fact that nearly 50% of all e-waste remains uncollected, and recycling falls short of collection targets in EU Member States. Electronic waste is one of Europe's fastest-growing waste streams, increasing by about 2% annually. There is a lot of potential to better make use of e-waste, for example by recovering and recycling critical raw materials and strengthening the circular economy. The evaluation moreover highlights the need for a new approach to improve collection, treatment, and market incentives, and will help prepare the Commission's proposal to revise the WEEE Directive. This revision will be a central component of the future Circular Economy Act.

Next steps

Feedback from this dialogue, the consultations, and the WEEE Directive evaluation will guide the development of the Circular Economy Act and advance the EU's shift toward a circular economy. In addition, later this week, the Commission intends to adopt new rules to improve recycling efficiency and the recovery of materials from batteries. Further consultation with stakeholders will be undertaken through a public consultation process.

Background

EU manufacturing companies typically spend more than twice as much on materials as on labour or energy. Many EU businesses also rely on imports of critical materials from third countries, making them vulnerable to price volatility and supply shortages. Circular practices that promote resource efficiency, design, and recycling can reduce these risks while lowering costs. Moreover, circular solutions are vital to achieving climate neutrality by 2050, as they can deliver 20-25% of the necessary greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

5. New State aid framework enables support for clean industry

The European Commission has adopted a new State aid framework supporting the Clean Industrial Deal (CISAF), to enable Member States to push forward the development of clean energy, industrial decarbonisation and clean technology.

The CISAF sets out the conditions under which Member States can grant support for certain investments and objectives in line with EU State aid rules. Under the Framework, the Commission will authorise aid schemes introduced by Member States to boost clean industry, enabling the swift roll-out of individual aid. The CISAF will be in place until 31 December 2030, giving Member States and businesses long-term predictability. The CISAF replaces the Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework (TCTF), which was in place since 2022. The framework simplifies State aid rules in five main areas: the roll-out of renewable energy and low-carbon fuels; temporary electricity price relief for energy-intensive users to ensure the transition to low-cost clean electricity; decarbonisation of existing production facilities; the development of clean tech manufacturing capacity in the EU, and; the de-risking of investments in clean energy, decarbonisation, clean tech, energy infrastructure projects and projects supporting the circular economy. In more detail, the framework allows for the following:

- **A “fast-track” for the rollout of clean energy**. The new framework covers support for both renewable energy and low-carbon fuels. Renewables are essential for achieving the decarbonisation goals of the Clean Industrial Deal. The CISAF introduces simplified procedures to enable the quick roll-out of renewable energy schemes. Low-carbon fuels, such as blue and green hydrogen, also play a key role in reducing emissions. They support the transition for companies in ‘hard-to-decarbonise' sectors, where more energy or cost-efficient options are not yet viable.
- **New rules on flexibility measures and capacity mechanisms** give Member States additional tools to integrate intermittent renewable electricity sources (i.e. wind and solar power) into the energy supply, while ensuring consumers benefit from reliable electricity supply. The CISAF defines ‘target model' capacity mechanisms, where Member States pay electricity providers to maintain standby capacity, which can qualify for ‘fast-track' approval. Other designs will be assessed under the Climate, Environmental protection and Energy Aid Guidelines (CEEAG).
- **Support for electricity costs for energy-intensive users.** Member States may provide electricity price support for companies operating in sectors particularly exposed to international trade, and heavily dependent on electricity for their production (energy-intensive users). This will allow Member States to reduce the electricity costs of energy-intensive users that face higher costs than competitors in regions with less ambitious climate policies. In return for receiving price support, companies will be required to invest in decarbonisation.
- **Flexible support for investments in all technologies leading to decarbonisation or increased energy efficiency**

The framework allows for support for a wide array of decarbonisation technologies such as electrification, hydrogen, biomass, carbon capture utilisation and storage. Support can be granted based on: predefined aid amounts (for support up to €200 million); the funding gap; or a competitive bidding process.

- **Support for clean tech manufacturing**
  The framework allows Member States to support investments in new manufacturing capacity for: all manufacturing projects concerning technologies covered by the Net-Zero Industry Act in the form of schemes, and; manufacturing projects in net-zero technologies on an individual basis when needed to avoid such investments being diverted away from Europe. The framework also allows for support for the production and processing of critical raw materials necessary for clean technologies. To safeguard cohesion between different regions in Europe, Member States will be able to provide more support for projects in less advantaged regions, which are defined in regional aid maps. In addition, the framework allows Member States to stimulate demand for clean technology products by offering tax incentives, such as allowing companies to deduct the cost of clean technology investments from their taxable income more quickly.
- **Measures to de-risk private investments in projects supporting the Clean Industrial Deal**
  Public and private investments must work in tandem to drive the transition to a decarbonised economy. Member States can take measures to de-risk private investments in projects covered by the framework, including energy infrastructure and circular economy. Support may take the form of equity, loans and/or guarantees provided to a dedicated fund or special purpose vehicle that will hold the portfolio of eligible projects.

Background

EU State aid rules exist to prevent government support leading to a company gaining a distortive advantage over its competitors. Other State aid rules relevant to the Clean Industrial Deal (that is, the Climate, Environmental protection and Energy Aid Guidelines – the CEEAG) continue to apply in parallel and may be used by Member States for different and more complex support measures. Member States will also continue implementing State aid measures in this field under the General Block Exemption Regulation, without the need to notify them to the Commission. nThe Commission has consulted Member States and stakeholders on the draft State aid framework. This was preceded by a Member State Survey on the use of the TCTF. The Commission took into account all contributions it received for the final version of the framework. The details of this consultation and the contributions received are available online.

6. Commission launches review of Foreign Subsidies Regulation

The European Commission has launched its first review of the Foreign Subsidies Regulation ('FSR'). As a first step of this review, the Commission is seeking feedback from interested parties, with a deadline of 18 November 2025.

The Commission aims to collect feedback through:

- a **public consultation** to gather views on specific elements of the implementation and enforcement of the FSR from all interested parties, like companies, law firms, Member States, business associations, individuals or research community and
- a **call for evidence** seeking more general feedback from all interested parties on the main aims of the FSR review report, its scope and context.

The review report would focus on: the assessment of foreign subsidies that distort the internal market, the application of the balancing test (i.e. whether positive effects of the foreign subsidy counterbalance its distortive effects), the review of foreign subsidies with a possible distortive effect in the internal market on the Commission's own initiative, the notification thresholds and, more generally, the level of complexity of the rules and the costs incurred by businesses.

Next steps

All parties who have an interest in the matter can submit their views on the Call for Evidence and respond to the questionnaire in any official EU language on the Commission's Have your say portal until 18 November 2025. The Commission will use this feedback in the FSR review report that will be presented to the European Parliament and the Council.

Background

The Foreign Subsidy Regulation started to apply on 13 July 2023. This new set of rules enables the Commission to address any distortions to competition caused by foreign subsidies in the internal market. It allows the EU to ensure a level playing field for all companies, while remaining open to trade and investment. Foreign subsidies can reach the internal market through participation in any economic activity and in any sector. This includes acquisitions of control, participation in public procurement procedures and other forms of direct investments. The FSR requires the Commission to review its practice of implementing and enforcing the Regulation by July 2026 and every three years thereafter and to present a report to the European Parliament and the Council, accompanied, if appropriate, by relevant legislative proposals. More information will be available on the Commission's competition website and on the Commission's **"Have your say" portal**.

7. EU-US trade deal explained

On 27 July 2025, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and US President Donald J. Trump agreed a deal on tariffs and trade.

The transatlantic partnership is a key artery of global trade and is the most significant bilateral trade and investment relationship in the world. EU-US trade in goods and services has doubled over the last decade, surpassing €1.6 trillion in 2024, with €867 billion of trade in goods and €817 billion of trade in services. That is over €4.2 billion of goods and services crossing the Atlantic every day. This deep and comprehensive partnership is underpinned by mutual investment. In 2022, EU and US firms invested €5.3 trillion worth in each other's markets. This political agreement restores stability and predictability for citizens and businesses on both sides of the Atlantic. The deal secures continued access for EU exports to the US market preserving deeply integrated value chains – many of which rely on SMEs – and effectively safeguarding jobs. It also provides the basis for continued collaboration between the EU and US. In the political agreement of 27 July 2025, Presidents von der Leyen and Trump agreed on the key parameters of the EU-US trade relationship. It is the first step in a process that will be further expanded over time to cover additional areas and continue to improve market access. The key commitments of both sides include:

- **Establishing a single, all-inclusive US tariff ceiling of 15% for EU goods.** As of 1 August, the US will apply this maximum tariff on the vast majority of EU exports. It is an all-inclusive tariff rate and represents a ceiling, including the US most favoured nation (MFN) tariff that was previously stacked on top of additional tariffs the US introduced. The 15% ceiling applies to nearly all EU exports currently subject to reciprocal tariffs (except where the US MFN tariff exceeds 15%, in which case only the MFN tariff applies with no additional tariffs on top). The 15% ceiling applies also to cars and car parts, currently subject to a tariff rate of up to 25% tariff with an additional MFN tariff of 2.5%, providing immediate tariff relief. The 15% ceiling will also apply to any potential future tariffs on pharmaceuticals and semiconductors, including those based on Section 232. Until the US decides on whether to impose additional tariffs on these products pursuant to Section 232, they will remain subject only to US MFN tariffs.
- **Providing special treatment for strategic products.** As of 1 August 2025, US tariffs on EU **aircraft and aircraft parts**, **certain chemicals**, **certain drug generics** or **natural resources** will go back to pre-January levels. This will provide immediate tariff relief for key EU industries, while the EU and US agreed to **keep working to add more products** to this list.
- **Joining forces to protect the steel, aluminium and copper sectors from unfair and distortive competition.** Global overcapacity threatens EU and US industry alike. Together, the EU and the US will establish **tariff rate quotas for EU exports at historic levels**, cutting the current 50% tariffs, while jointly ensuring fair global competition.
- **Liberalising certain trade that is of mutual interest from the US into the EU.** EU importers and consumers will save around €5 billion in duties each year, while core EU industrial and agricultural sensitivities remain protected. Elimination of already low duties on industrial goods. EU MFN tariffs on industrial goods are generally low; the EU will now eliminate these remaining low-level duties on industrial goods from the US. Better access to the EU market for limited quantities of US fishery products. This additional market opening on US products including Alaska pollock, Pacific salmon, and shrimp – all subject to tariff rate quotas (TRQs) - benefits the EU processing industry. Better market access for certain non-sensitive US agriculture exports worth €7.5 billion. Products such as soya bean oil, planting seeds, grains or nuts, as well as processed food stuff such as tomato ketchup, cocoa and biscuits, will have improved access to the EU market - all subject to TRQs -, reducing costs on certain inputs for our farmers and processors while protecting the EU's agricultural sensitivities.

- **Reducing non-tariff barriers,** including via cooperation on car/automotive standards and SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary) measures, and by facilitating mutual recognition of conformity assessments in additional industrial sectors.
- **Strengthening cooperation on economic security.** The EU and US will enhance supply chain resilience and address non-market policies and practices. They will also continue to cooperate on investment screening and export controls.
- **Ensuring reliable access to critical energy and future-oriented supplies.** The EU intends to procure US liquified natural gas, oil, and nuclear energy products with an expected offtake valued at $750 billion (ca. €700 billion) over the next three years. This will contribute to **replacing Russian gas and oil** on the EU market. The EU also intends to purchase €40 billion worth of AI chips essential to maintaining the EU's technological edge.
- **Promoting and facilitating mutual investments on both sides of the Atlantic.** EU companies have expressed interest in investing at least $600 billion (ca. €550 billion) in various sectors in the US by 2029, further boosting the already significant €2.4 trillion in existing investment.

The political agreement reached between President von der Leyen and President Trump serves the EU's core economic interests in stable and predictable trade and investment relations between the EU and the US. At the same time, it fully respects the EU's regulatory sovereignty and protects sensitive areas of EU agriculture, such as beef or poultry. The political agreement of 27 July 2025 is not legally binding. Beyond taking the immediate actions committed, the EU and the US will further negotiate, in line with their relevant internal procedures, to fully implement the political agreement.

8. Commission sets the launch date for the Entry/Exit System to 12 October

The Commission has set 12 October 2025 as the launch date for the progressive start of operations of the EU's Entry/Exit System (EES).

The EES is an advanced technological system that will digitally record the entries and exits of non-EU nationals travelling to 29 European countries, including Schengen Associated ones, for short stays. It will capture biometric data, such as fingerprints, facial image, and other travel information, gradually replacing the current system of passport stamping. The EES will modernise and improve the management of EU external borders. It will provide reliable data on border crossings, systematically detect over stayers as well as cases of document and identity fraud. The EES will thus contribute to preventing irregular migration and protecting the security of European citizens. Additionally, with the increased use of automated border checks, travelling will become smoother and safer for all. The new system meets the highest standards of data and privacy protection, ensuring that travellers' personal data remain protected and secure. From 12 October onwards, Member States will start introducing the EES gradually over a period of six months. Border authorities will progressively register the data of third country nationals crossing the borders. At the end of this period, the EES will be fully deployed at all border crossing points. The aim of the gradual start of EES is to allow Member States to start benefitting from the new system, whilst ensuring that border authorities, the transport industry and affected travellers have time to adjust to the new procedures. With the launch of the EES in October, the EU is taking a significant step towards achieving its goal of creating a more secure and efficient border management system.

Next steps

Over the coming months, the Commission, along with the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA), will keep working closely with Member States to ensure a smooth and effective deployment of the system. As the launch date approaches, travellers can expect information campaigns and awareness-raising activities at border crossing points, including airports across the EU.

Background

The EES is part of the EU's Smart Borders package, which aims to improve the management of the EU's external borders by using state-of-the-art technology and innovative solutions. The package includes the EES, the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), and an extended and more harmonised use of the Automated Border Control (ABC) systems utilised by the Member States. Together these systems will facilitate a more efficient, secure, and convenient travel experience for all travellers to and from the EU.

9. The Commission has presented guidelines on the protection of minors

The Commission has presented guidelines on the protection of minors, as well as a prototype of an age-verification app under the Digital Services Act (DSA).

They will ensure that children and young people can continue to enjoy the opportunities the online world offers, such as learning, creativity and communication, while minimising the risks they face online, including exposure to harmful content and behaviour.

Guidelines on the protection of minors

The guidelines on the protection of minors ensure children enjoy high levels of privacy, safety and security on online platforms. This follows an inclusive and extensive consultation period, including with young people. Among other things, the guidelines provide recommendations to address:

- **Addictive design:** Minors are particularly vulnerable to practices that can stimulate addictive behaviour. The guidelines suggest reducing minors' exposure to such practices, and disabling features that promote the excessive use of online services, like 'streaks' and 'read receipts' on messages.
- **Cyberbullying:** The guidelines recommend empowering minors to block or mute users, ensuring they cannot be added to groups without their explicit consent. They also recommend prohibiting accounts from downloading or taking screenshots of content posted by minors to prevent the unwanted distribution of sexualised or intimate content.
- **Harmful content:** Some recommender systems put children in harmful situations. The guidelines give young users more control over what they see, calling on platforms to prioritise explicit feedback from users, rather than relying on monitoring their browsing behaviour. If a young user indicates they do not want to see a certain type of content, it should not be recommended again.
- **Unwanted contact from strangers:** the guidelines recommend that platforms set minors' accounts that are private by default – that is, not visible to users that are not on their friends' list – to minimise the risk that they are contacted by strangers online.

The guidelines adopt a risk-based approach, like the DSA, recognising that online platforms may pose different types of risks to minors, depending on their nature, size, purpose and user base. Platforms should make sure that the measures they take are appropriate and do not disproportionately or unduly restrict children's rights.

Age verification solution

The prototype of the age verification app is user-friendly and protects privacy setting a 'gold standard' in age assurance online. It will, for example, allow users to easily prove they are over 18 when accessing restricted adult content online, while remaining in full control of any other personal information, such as a user's exact age or identity. No one would be able to track, see or reconstruct what content individual users are consulting. The verification app will be tested and further customised in collaboration with Member States, online platforms and end-users. The frontrunners - Denmark, Greece, Spain, France and Italy - will be the first to engage with the Commission on the technical solution with the aim of launching national age verification apps. This prototype can be integrated into a national app or remain a free-standing app. The guidelines on the protection of minors outline when and how platforms should check the age of their users. They recommend age verification for adult content platforms and other platforms that pose high risks to the safety of minors. They specify that age assurance methods should be accurate, reliable, robust, non-intrusive and non-discriminatory.

Background

The guidelines on the protection of minors were developed through a comprehensive process, including research, feedback gathered through a call for evidence, stakeholder workshops held in October 2024 and June 2025, engagement with experts and a targeted public consultation. The age verification blueprint began development in early 2025. It lays the groundwork for broader deployment of age-appropriate based services in the future and is built on the same technical specifications as the European Digital Identity Wallets (eID) that are to be rolled out before the end of 2026. This ensures compatibility between the two and enables the integration of the age verification functionality in the future eID Wallets. The guidelines and the age verification blueprint build further on discussions in working group on the protection of minors, which is part of the European Board for Digital Services. Both bodies further strengthen the Commission's work on the protection of minors online through the Better Internet for Kids Strategy, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive and upcoming initiatives, such as the Digital Fairness Act. For More Information: Find out more about the Guidelines on the Protection of Minors; Find out more about the age verification blueprint.

10. Travel agencies commit to refund within 14 days for cancelled flights

Following a dialogue with the European Commission and the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network of national consumer authorities, Expedia and Lastminute.com have committed to better inform consumers of their rights and ensure they receive ticket refunds within 14 days in case of a flight cancellation by the airline.

Overview of commitments

Following the dialogue, Expedia and Lastminute.com signed up to the following set of commitments:

- In case of cancelled flights, Expedia and Lastminute.com will transfer refunds from the airline on to the consumer within 7 days from the day the online travel agency receives the refund from the airline, resulting in **a refund in 14 days maximum for consumers**. In addition, they declared to have cleared any **backlogs** in reimbursements.
- The online **travel agencies' contact details,** such as telephone numbers and e-mail addresses, will be provided in or via the support or 'contact us' sections of their websites – so that consumers can easily get in touch with them.
- **Information on the specific benefits** linked to different service packages offered by the online travel agencies will be made clearer for consumers.
- Consumers will be **clearly informed about their statutory rights under** the Air Passenger Rights Regulation to rerouting or reimbursement in cases where the airline cancels their flights. They will also be clearly informed if the flight was cancelled.
- Consumers will be **clearly informed about the consequences** that specific services offered by airline intermediaries can have on the consumer's rights in the event of a flight disruption (e.g. when only one leg of a trip is cancelled, the second leg may still have to be paid where there is no interlink between the flights constituting the journey).

Lastminute.com has agreed to implement most of those commitments starting on 1 July 2025, with full implementation by 1 September 2025, while Expedia has declared that its practices are in line with the above commitments. This dialogue, led by the Swedish Consumer Agency, sought to encourage online travel agencies to voluntarily adopt practices that enhance consumer's protection and knowledge of their rights, as well as platform's compliance with EU legislation. It builds on the 2023 coordinated action led by the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network, which secured the same commitments from Edreams ODIGEO, Etraveli Group, and Kiwi.com. This brings the total to five major online travel agencies adhering to the same commitments.

Next steps

The network of European consumer protection authorities will monitor whether Expedia and Lastminute.com have correctly implemented the commitments by the agreed timeline. The network will also continue to monitor the implementation of the commitments by Edreams ODIGEO, Etraveli Group and Kiwi.com. The network will furthermore continue to promote these commitments to other online travel agencies.

Background

Lastminute.com was previously subject to a national enforcement action by the Swedish Consumer Agency, during which it agreed to the commitments for the Swedish market. By signing up to the commitments with the CPC Network, Lastminute.com has now declared that it will adhere to these commitments in the entire European Economic Area. Expedia voluntarily signed up to the commitments outside any enforcement actions at national or EU level. Under EU passenger rights, airlines cancelling a flight are required to refund tickets within 7 days once the passenger has opted to have the flight reimbursed. However, airline tickets can also be bought through an intermediary (an 'online travel agency'). The 2023 commitments to which Expedia and Lastminute.com have now signed up provide clarity for such cases: consumers will receive their refund within 14 days maximum. This step also helps create a fair and level playing field within the travel airline industry. In November 2023, the Commission proposed new rules as regards enforcement of passenger rights in the Union and on passenger rights in the context of multimodal journeys. The proposed rules foresee the same timeframe for reimbursement via intermediaries for cancelled flight costs (14 days maximum). These proposals, as well as the 2013 proposal on air passenger rights, are currently being negotiated by the co-legislators. The CPC Network is a network of authorities responsible for the enforcement of EU consumer protection laws. To tackle cross-border infringements of consumer law, those national authorities, assisted by the European Commission, coordinate their investigation and enforcement actions. The specific cooperation and coordination mechanism under which the network operates is governed by the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation.

11. European Union Prize for Women Innovators 2026

The European Prize for Women Innovators is jointly awarded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and the European Innovation Council (EIC). Through this collaboration, the EIT and EIC are showcasing a large pool of women innovators, offering more opportunities for trailblazers, and providing inspiring role models for women and girls everywhere. The European Prize for Women Innovators celebrates the women entrepreneurs behind Europe's most game-changing innovations. The prize awards women from across the EU and countries associated to Horizon Europe, whose disruptive innovations are driving positive change for people and planet. Since 2023, the European Innovation Council (EIC) and the European Institute for Innovation & Technology (EIT) have teamed up to create a bigger and bolder European Prize for Women Innovators, with no fewer than 9 prizes to be awarded. The call is launched in accordance with the 2025 European Innovation Council (EIC) Work Programme and is managed by the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). There are three prize categories:

- In the **EIC Women Innovators category**, three prizes of EUR 100 000, EUR 70 000 and EUR 50 000 are awarded to the three highest-ranked applications;
- In the **EIC Rising Innovators**, three prizes of EUR 50 000, EUR 30 000 and EUR 20 000 are awarded to the three highest-ranked applications from promising 'Rising Innovators' under the age of 35.
- The **EIT Women Leadership Award**, awarded to exceptional women leaders from the EIT Community. The winner is awarded EUR 50 000, and two runners-up are awarded EUR 30 000 and EUR 20 000 respectively.

Eligible applicants can only apply to one category. The winners are chosen by an independent expert jury. All applicants must comply with the following eligibility criteria to participate:

1. The applicant must be a woman (*Please remember you must apply as a natural person and not as a legal entity*);
2. The applicant must be legally established in an EU Member State, including overseas countries and territories (OCTs) or a country associated to Horizon Europe;
3. The applicant must be the founder or co-founder of the company or organisation;
4. The company or organisation must be established in an EU Member State including overseas countries and territories, (OCTs) or a country associated to Horizon Europe, and registered or incorporated at least two years before the call year (before 1 January 2023);
5. Applicants who have already received an EU or Euratom prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.

In addition to the above, those applying for the Rising Innovators category must be aged under 35 at the start of the call year. There is no age limit to apply for the Women Innovators category (or for the EIT Women Leadership category), though applicants eligible for several prize categories can only apply to one. **Deadline: 25 September 2025**, 17:00 CEST. For further information and to participate in the Award, please visit the following **link**.

12. International Poster and Short Film Competition on Digital Citizenship

The competition is promoted by the Council of Europe through its programme dedicated to the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025. The initiative is part of the activities of the Department of Education and Democratic Culture, which works to strengthen the active participation of young people in democratic processes in Europe. The competition aims to promote the values of democracy, active citizenship and human rights through art and visual creativity. In particular, participants are invited to reflect on the meaning of democratic citizenship education, civic engagement and the importance of youth participation, giving voice to a generation that wants to be part of change. The project involves participation in an international competition divided into two sections: **Poster:** creation of a visual poster in digital format. **Short Film:** creation of a short film (maximum 5 minutes) addressing the themes of democratic culture. Projects must be original, creative and focus on one of the four pillars of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship: human rights, responsibility, participation and diversity. The competition will take place entirely online. The winners will be announced in 2025 during one of the official events of the European Year of Democratic Culture. The selected works will be promoted through the Council of Europe's official channels and may be exhibited at institutional events. Young artists, video makers and creatives aged 18 to 30 from one of the 46 member states of the Council of Europe are eligible to participate. Participants may enter individually or as a group, and may apply for one or both sections. Participation is free of charge. All works must be unpublished, produced in 2024 or 2025 and submitted in digital format (.pdf for posters and .mp4 for videos). Materials may be in any European language, but must include an English or French version or subtitles. Winners will receive official recognition and symbolic prizes from the Council of Europe. Participants must submit their works using the link here, attaching all required documents. For further information please visit the following **link**. **Applications must be submitted by 14 September 2025**.

13. Blue Book traineeships at the European Commission

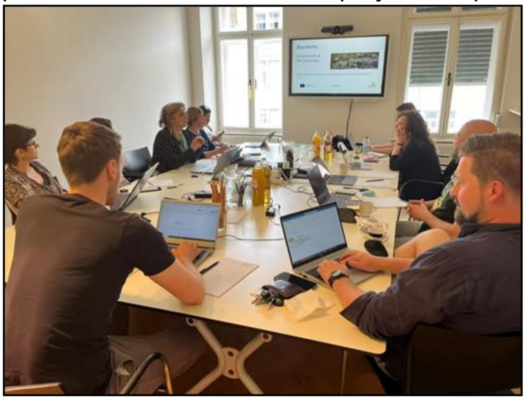
Twice a year, the European Commission organises traineeships for graduates who wish to gain professional experience in the administrative or translation field. The nature of the trainees' work will depend on the department to which they are assigned. They may, for example, work in the field of competition law, human resources, environmental policy, translation, etc. The traineeships aim to provide graduates with a unique opportunity and direct experience of the functioning of the European Commission in particular and the European institutions in general. The traineeship also aims to provide an opportunity to understand the objectives and achievements of EU integration processes and policies, enabling trainees to gain direct experience and learn about the day-to-day work of the Commission's departments and services. Selected trainees will have the opportunity to apply the knowledge acquired during their studies, particularly in their specific areas of expertise. Trainees work in all departments and agencies of the European Commission, which are mainly based in Brussels, but also in Luxembourg and in the agencies' offices throughout the European Union. Duration: from March to July for traineeships ending in August; from October to February of the following year for traineeships ending in March. In order to apply, candidates must: have completed the first cycle of a higher education course (university education) and obtained a first degree or equivalent qualification by the deadline for applications; have an excellent knowledge of at least two Community languages, one of which must be one of the working languages of the European Commission (English, French or German); not have worked for another EU institution or body for more than 6 weeks. For those applying for a translation traineeship: be able to translate into their mother tongue or main language from two official EU languages; the first language must be English, French or German; the second language can be any of the EU languages (minimum level B2). Trainees will receive an allowance of approximately €1,493.36 per month. Health and accident insurance will also be provided. Trainees with disabilities will receive a supplement to their grant. For the application procedure, please refer to the **dedicated section**. The next deadline **is 29 August 2025** at 10:00 a.m. CET.

14. Internships at the Committee of the Regions

Every year, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) offers a limited number of traineeships to young citizens from Europe and beyond, giving them the opportunity to gain work experience at a European institution. Two types of traineeships are available: CoR traineeships or short study visits. The aim of the internships is to: provide direct experience of the work of the CoR and European institutions in general; provide practical knowledge of the work of the various departments; work in a multicultural and multilingual environment; offer interns the opportunity to organise a study visit to a European or local authority, in connection with the Committee's political priorities; to enable trainees to develop and put into practice the knowledge acquired during their studies or personal career. Internships run from 16 February to 15 July (spring session) or from 16 September to 15 February (autumn session) for a period of 5 months. Candidates must: be citizens of the European Union (except in certain cases); hold a university degree or equivalent qualification at the time of application; have a thorough knowledge of one official language of the Community and a good knowledge of another EU working language (English or French). CoR trainees are entitled to a monthly allowance of approximately €1,493. Applications must be submitted online only. The online application form is **available here**. Applications for the spring session must be submitted by 12 on **30 September**. For further information please visit the following **link**.

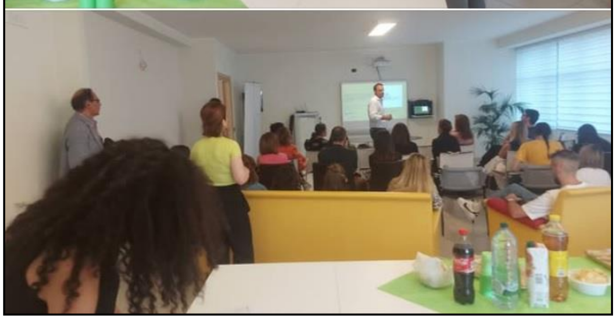
15. Second meeting of the “Justurbanities” project in Graz

Took place in Graz, Austria, the second meeting of the project "Eurbanities Game Based Learning for the Just Transition ofCities" (acronym "Justurbanities"), an initiative approved in Germany by the competent National Agency within the framework of the Erasmus Plus programme KA220-ADU - Cooperation partnerships in adult education. The meeting provided an opportunity for the various partners to take stock of the project's implementation developments and to define, after appropriate workshops and in-depth, participatory discussions, the next steps to be developed. The meeting was defined by Dr. Giulia Maria Provenzale (a member of the EURO-NET staff and delegated by the association for participation in the Austrian meeting) as incredibly productive and enjoyable: in fact, it made it possible to strengthen participative practices in the neighbourhoods involved, bringing out the collaborative spirit in an exceptional way and making the days of transnational meetings and team building exceptionally fruitful for the success of the entire Erasmus initiative. Significant progress was made during the Graz meeting through presentation of significant results on needs assessment interviews; collaboration on the development of empathy maps; participation in joint discussions; selection of good practices; definition of criteria for project reporting; and strategies to be adopted on key aspects of dissemination of activities. The meeting in Graz was attended not only by the association EURO-NET (Europe Direct Basilicata centre) but also by the other project partners, namely Comparative Research Network EV (Germany - coordinator of the entire Erasmus initiative), Almost There AB (Sweden) Stowarzyszenie NA Drodze Ekspresji (Poland), Stadtlabor Innovationen Fur Urbanelebens Qualitat GMBH (Austria), Asociatia Pentru Tranzitia Urbana (Romania) and finally E35 Fondazione per la Progettazione Internazionale (Italy).



16. Multiplier event of the “IntCult AE” project in Potenza

On June 19th took place in Potenza, at the offices of Exeo Lab, the Italian multiplier event envisaged in the project “Intercultural Competence Development for Adult Education” (acronym “IntCult AE”), an initiative approved as ref. no. 2022-1-PL01-KA220-ADU-000087417by the Polish National Agency within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme KA220-ADU - Cooperation partnerships in adult education. The event was participated by many representatives of organisations operating in the city and working with migrants and in the cultural sector. During the event, the EURO-NET staff (in particular Luigi Vitelli and Giuseppe Sabia) presented the results obtained in the project and had the various intellectual products realised in the EU initiative analysed and used, which has involved since November 2022 a partnership composed of Uniwersytet Lodzki (Poland - project coordinator), Aidlearn, Consultoria em Recursos Humanos Lda (Portugal), Ekpaideftiria Kaloskami S. A. (Greece), Erasmus ME Academy gGmbH (Germany) and EURO-NET (taly). The project will end with excellent results at the end of June 2025 and, starting in July, for a couple of months, the partners will be busy with the drafting of the final report, then they will be able to obtain the final balance from the Polish National Agency and perhaps compete for some good practice awards under the Erasmus+ programme.



17. Final meeting of the “ECOBRUB” Project, in Spain

On the 22th of July, it took place the last transnational meeting of the project “Entrepreneurial Countryside to Boost Rural Businesses” (acronym: ECOBRUB), in Oiartzun, near Bilbao. The initiative was approved by Erasmus+programme-KA210-YOU-Small-scale partnerships in youth by the competent National Agency (ref. no. 2023-1-ES02-KA210-YOU-000153263)-. At the meeting, there were at least one delegate from each of the partner organizations of the European consortium, such as the Association DE Cooperation AL Desarollo Abarka (Spain- the project coordinator), the S.C. Predict CSD Consulting S.R.L. (Romania), the Association Deportiva Y Cultural Entrejuegos (Spain) and EURO-NET (Italy). The meeting aimed at summarizing and presenting the overall results achieved throughout the project activities, which officially started on September 01, 2023. The project successfully met all its pre-set targets.

18. Workshop in Potenza for the "Register BSS Sector" Project

From July 14th to 25th, the EURO-NET association organized a workproject focused on the use of

VR tools in the training process at GODESK innovation hub, located at Via della Tecnica 18, Potenza. This training was developed as part of the project "training registry of the Modern Business Services sector" (acronym: "register BSS Sector"), a European initiative approved by EACEA under ref. no.101132877 within Erasmus+ call EDU-2023-PI-FORWARD-LOT3. This workshop aimed to train 10 participants in the effective use of VR tools in learning processes and to implement soft skills training in immersive VR environments. The training followed the "learning by doing approach" and it has provided exercises and interactive forms of works involving multiple participants together. The course had a duration of 8 days, for a total of 50 hours, in which the participants have been introduced to: the fundamentals of communication, attentive and active listening, building positive interpersonal relationships, verbal and non-verbal communication, communication style and their impact on relationships,

communication barriers and how to overcome them, principles of effective communication, introduction to Virtual Reality, theory and methodology of immersive learning using VR headsets, practical sessions with VR headsets and evaluation of course activities. At the end of the VR course, participants were awarded badges, which conferred credits for completed activities. More information is available on the project’s the website: https://mbssregister.eu/en/, Facebook https://www.facebook.com/MBSS.FB and Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/mbss_trainingregistry/. In conclusion, this project has been “funded by the European Union”. The views and opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the EACEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

19. The second pilot activity of the WARRIOR project held in Potenza

On July 18th, the association EURO-NET carried out the second pilot activity of the project “Warrior Values: Effective Defence against Fakes and Frauds” (acronym WARRIOR). The initiative is co-

founded by the European Union and approved by the National Agency for Youth under the Erasmus Plus KA220-YOU program-Cooperation partnership for young people (ref. n. 2023-1-IT03-KA220-YOU-000153640). The event, titled “Digital Safeguarding” was led by Antonino Imbesi, Director of the Europe Direct Basilicata center. The activity involved the participation of 14 youth workers, educators and trainers, who actively and enthusiastically engaged in the proposed workshops. During the activity, participants were informed and trained on how to enhance their ability to: recognize the fake and manipulative behaviors; understand the connection between values, personal needs and manipulation; develop tools and skills to support young people in using digital environments avoiding manipulative contents and falsification phenomena on socials. More information about the project can be found in the official website: https://warriorproject.eu/it/home-it/. Or on the Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61554717032106.

20. Some budget changes to be requested in the “Digi-Youth kit”

The members of the European consortium of the “DIGI-YOUTH KIT” (acronym “DYO”) project, approved as ref. no. 2023-1-FR02-KA220-YOU-000159986 in France under the KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth initiatives, have decided to request a small budget change from the Erasmus+ National Agency. The partners in the initiative are Pole Metropolitain Pour L’entrepreneuriat, Le Carburateur (France, coordinator of the entire partnership), Cooperative D’initiative Jeunes (France), Burgaski Svoboden Universitet (Bulgaria), Regional Cluster North-East (Bulgaria), Aintek Symvouloi Epicheiriseon Efarmoges Ypsilis Technologias Ekpaidefsi Anonymi Etaireia (Greece), Eyropaiko Institoyto Topikhs Anaptykshs (Greece), Asociatia Millenium Center Arad (Romania), S.C. Predict Csd Consulting S.R.L. (Romania), Asociatia Zury (Romania), Fundacja Innowacja I Wiedza (Poland) and EURO-NET (Italy) have decided to request a small budget shift to allow the project to have an e-game (related to Work Package No. 4) translated and developed in all the languages of the partnership. It will now be the coordinator's responsibility to proceed with the application to the aforementioned National Agency. Further information on the project is available on the initiative's Facebook page at the following link: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61560874114939.

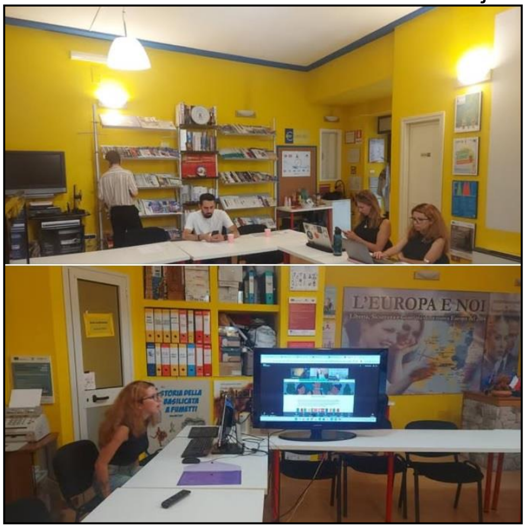
21. Templates realised for the “EcoMinds” project

The partners of the project “EcoMinds: Enhancing Climate Change Awareness and Solutions among Youth” (acronym “EcoMind”), an initiative approved by the National Agency in Turkey in the Erasmus+ programme KA210-YOU as ref. no. 2024-3-TR01-KA210-YOU-000285858, they have been working for a few days on the templates developed by the staff of the association Youth Europe Service (the only Italian partner in the project) for the development of Activity 1, which envisages desk research, a collection of good practices and a survey at the level of each nation involved in the partnership, which in addition to the aforementioned Y. E.S. also sees the involvement of

Damasistem (coordinator of the entire action - Turkey), Innovation Footprint Astiki Mi Kerdoskopiki Etairia (Greece) and Youth Policies Association (Turkey). Within 20 July, each partner took place developed the three actions set out in Activity 1 and produced a national report of the results, which were then summarised by the staff of Youth Europe Service in an international report in English and translated into each language of the European consortium members. The logo (see attached image) of the EU-funded initiative was also prepared and will be used for the duration of the project (scheduled to end on 30 April next year).

22. Final meeting for the “YEAEU” project, in Potenza

In Potenza, it took place the last meeting foreseen in “Youth Eco-Activism in the EU” Project (acronym: “YEAEU”), which was approved by Erasmus Plus National Agency (ref. n.2023-1-FR02-KA220-YOU-000159007), in France. During the event were presented and promoted- by each partner of the European consortium- all the activities and the results achieved during the project since its starts on September 2023. The meeting, hosted by Potenza-based association Youth Europe Service (the Italian partner of the EU initiative), was attended by 2 staff members from each organization participating in the European partnership. The event promoted the social platform and the guidebooks, which were developed during the activities in order to evaluate the entire project and collect important information for the final report; moreover, it was an opportunity for strengthen the partnership and open the possibility for a potential follow-up on similar topics, such as climate change and encourage the young people to climate action through direct activism. More information on the project is available on the Facebook page at: https://www.facebook.com/youthecoactivism.



23. The “EqualSciTech” project is slowly coming to a conclusion

On 30 July, the partners of the project “EQUAL SciTech: promoting gender equality in Science and Technology”, an initiative approved by the National Erasmus+ Agency in Portugal as part of actions relating to cooperative partnerships aimed at school education, met online to take stock of the situation regarding the development of the project, which will come to an end at the end of the summer: the “EQUAL SciTech” project (registered at European level under no. 2022-1-PT01-KA220-SCH-000088149) will end on 30 September. During the online meeting, the Portuguese project coordinator, Agrupamento de Escolas de àguas Santas, emphasised the need to promote and disseminate the initiative during the remaining two months and to encourage all possible stakeholders to use the tools developed during the cooperative partnership. All partners in the Geoclube project (Portugal), I.I.S. “G. Fortunato” in Rionero in Vulture (Italy), Youth Europe Service (Italy) and Sredno opstinsko uciliste Pero Nakov (North Macedonia) are committed to developing a further dissemination campaign in order to reach as many beneficiaries as possible. More information about the project, as well as all the products developed, is available on the website https://equalscitech.eu/, an image is shown below.