



# **Programme of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

**January 1 – June 30, 2026**



# An Autóνομος Union. Open to the World.

## The European Union must be autonomous.

**Cyprus assumes the Presidency of the Council of the EU** against the backdrop of acute geopolitical upheaval and unpredictability. But this moment is not without precedent. Europe has faced complex, even existential, crises before and managed to respond to the demands of the times, by evolving and stepping up.

What is new, is the intensity, plurality and complexity of the challenges, as well as what this moment asks of our Union. Autonomy is the necessary next step of our evolving European integration project. A Europe without divisions.

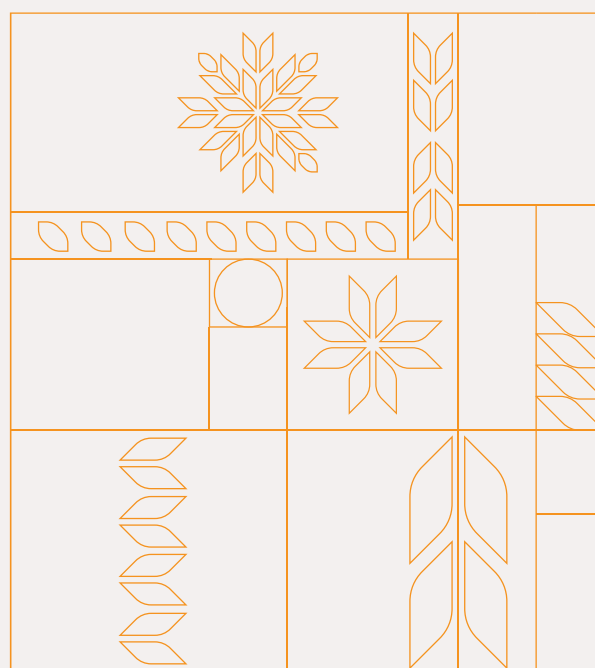
A more autonomous Union will demonstrate the necessary internal strength to cooperate with external partners whenever possible, while also acting independently when necessary. Autonomy yields strength, and from that strength will spring greater autonomy.

European autonomy is layered and multifaceted: from security and defence, to energy and trade, to competitiveness alongside the green transition, to digital innovation with social cohesion. This is Europe's moment to define and reshape its future through an assertive autonomy trajectory.

This is what is expected from a global leader and a stable, predictable partner that is firmly anchored to multilateralism and fully committed to the UN Charter, international law, including the international law of the sea. These are the guiding principles for building strength through robust partnerships from a rules-based starting point.

The Cyprus Presidency will act as a responsible, honest broker, in full respect of institutional propriety, and in close cooperation with the European Parliament and the European Commission, to ensure that we transform challenges into opportunities and that our ambition is matched with action and tangible results, based on the following priorities:

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#CY2026EU

## AUTONOMY THROUGH SECURITY, DEFENCE READINESS AND PREPAREDNESS

***A more autonomous Europe is a more secure Europe.*** To protect our citizens and defend our interests, we must strengthen our capacity to act independently when necessary—without fear of reducing dependencies and with the confidence and capability to ensure that Europe can safeguard itself.

Security is no longer a monodimensional or conventional concept. The interdependence of the myriad facets of security, exposes at the same time inherent vulnerabilities. It is thus imperative to hedge our risks, expand our security bandwidth and build up our pre-emptive capacities. With our eyes on the future and our vision in a 360-degree scope.

The ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, marked by an illegal invasion and continued occupation, dictates an unequivocal commitment to international law. Its founding principles cannot be violated—neither in this case nor in any other, in Europe or beyond. Double standards are not the EU's compass.

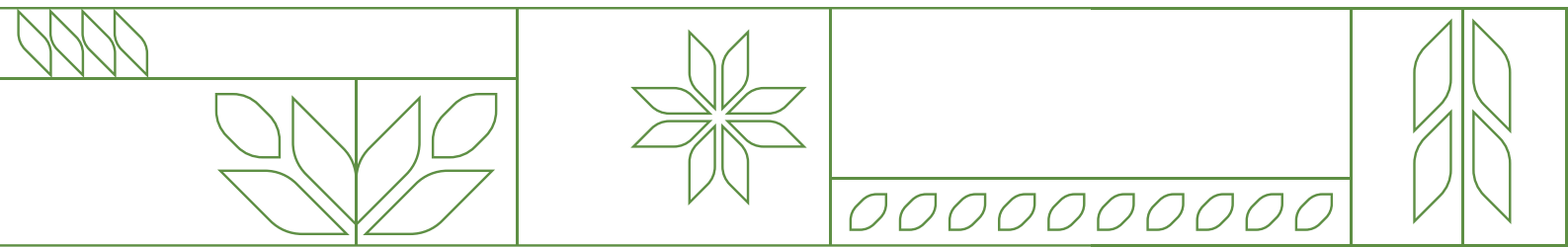
The intensified multidirectional hybrid attacks, the recent violations of EU airspace, coupled with the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine, are manifestations of the challenges to Europe's security architecture. These threats underscore the urgency of strengthening the Union's **defence readiness and strategic autonomy**, reducing dependencies and enhancing the EU's capacity to respond effectively and proactively. The Cyprus Presidency will support key defence initiatives and flagship projects of common interest and will prioritise the swift implementation of the **White Paper on the Future of European Defence and the accompanying Readiness Roadmap 2030**.

Strengthening transatlantic relations, as the cornerstone of European security, and advancing further EU-NATO cooperation, will also remain a key priority. We must ensure that the transatlantic relationship evolves, adjusts and is morphed in an inclusive, reciprocal, transparent and mutually beneficial manner.

The Cyprus Presidency will promote greater coherence and transparency in engagement with like-minded global partners, thus expanding our strategic outlook. Greater Union autonomy creates more value for our partners.

Ensuring freedom of navigation and security across all maritime routes are essential elements. The EU should be able to effectively protect its maritime borders and vital maritime routes, safeguard critical infrastructure, and work for more resilient energy and trade interconnections. Fully committed to the rules-based order at sea and grounded in UNCLOS, the Presidency will advance the implementation of the **EU Maritime Security Strategy**, including through enhanced cooperation with EU bodies and partners in regions such as the Red Sea, the Horn of Africa, the Gulf, and the Indo-Pacific.

Economic security is another key dimension of European autonomy. It requires protection against supply-chain vulnerabilities, critical-infrastructure threats, technology leakage and weaponised dependencies. The Cyprus Presidency will steer implementation of the 2023 Economic Security Strategy, advancing the new Joint Communication to promote more coordinated and strategic use of existing tools and the development of new ones.



**Water resilience** has emerged as another critical dimension of security. It is a strategic priority central to climate adaptation, economic competitiveness, and crisis preparedness. The Presidency will support the implementation of the **European Water Resilience Strategy**, ensuring access to clean and affordable water for all.

Effective **migration management** - of both its internal and external dimensions, and addressing the root causes of migration - is yet another central facet of security. The Cyprus Presidency will prioritise the full implementation of the **Pact on Migration and Asylum** and will promote a strengthened return system and deeper and more meaningful cooperation with key third countries, thus ensuring a balanced and comprehensive approach.

Attacks on **democracy** - including disinformation, foreign interference, pressures on media freedom, hate speech and electoral manipulation - pose a serious threat to the EU foundations and core values, with particularly acute risks for children exposed to harmful online content. In this context, the Cyprus Presidency will work closely with the Commission and Member States to strengthen democratic resilience through initiatives such as the **EU Democracy Package**.

At the same time, the Cyprus Presidency will pay special attention to initiatives that combat **all forms of discrimination** - including antisemitism and hate, intolerance, racism, xenophobia and anti-Muslim hatred - by strengthening follow-up efforts related to the **Council's declaration of 15 October 2024 on fostering Jewish life and combating antisemitism**, as well as the forthcoming Commission **Strategy on anti-racism**.

**Internal threats** - from organised and transnational crime, to terrorism and violent extremism, including in the digital sphere - demand swift and urgent action in line with the **ProtectEU Strategy**. This is integral to strengthened law-enforcement capabilities, enhanced transnational cooperation and improved regulatory framework.

The **EU Preparedness Union Strategy** complements the broader security framework by addressing threats ranging from geopolitical tensions to climate-driven natural disasters. The Presidency will prioritise its implementation to ensure that the Union is prepared to protect its citizens.

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## AUTONOMY THROUGH COMPETITIVENESS

*Only a more competitive Union can yield a more autonomous Union.*

Europe's competitiveness is the basis for resilience and autonomous action. A more competitive Europe will be better placed to secure sustainable growth and deliver on its strategic objectives. We must seize this generational opportunity, acting decisively and with urgency to boost our competitiveness in the world.

A **clear and predictable regulatory framework is a practical enabler of Europe's competitiveness.** This empowers businesses - particularly SMEs and start-ups - to focus on what really matters: investment, innovation and global competition. Supporting the growth of smaller enterprises helps build a more agile and self-reliant European industrial ecosystem. The Cyprus Presidency will prioritise regulatory **simplification**, by advancing the omnibus proposals to streamline EU rules and reduce red tape.

5 Completing the **Single Market** is crucial to further European integration. It demands dismantling unjustified barriers, safeguarding consumers, fostering inclusive growth and strengthening the conditions for innovation. **A stronger Single Market** is vital for Europe's strategic autonomy, economic prosperity and clean energy transition. This means **modernising our industry**, driving the green and digital shifts, and revitalising our industrial base by securing critical raw materials, reinforcing clean-tech supply chains, and reducing energy vulnerabilities.

**Boosting Europe's financial autonomy is pivotal for a dynamic economy.** The Cyprus Presidency will work to deepen **capital markets** and advance the **Savings and Investment Union**, ensuring that private savings are channelled more effectively into productive investment across the Union. Open and efficient capital markets are fundamental to financing Europe's future, underpinning the Union's long-term strategic objectives.

Energy volatility and high energy costs continue to hinder Europe's competitiveness. **Strengthening energy security**, diversifying supplier networks and routes, and **ensuring affordable and predictable prices** are essential for industry, for growth, and for the prosperity of our citizens. The Cyprus Presidency will focus on enhancing **energy grid infrastructure** and **interconnections**, promoting citizen engagement, and investing in clean and breakthrough technologies.

The Presidency will advance cross-regional **connectivity, especially for islands and peripheral regions**, through resilient digital networks, modern transport links, and key energy corridors. The forthcoming **Ports and Industrial Maritime Strategies** will be prioritised to empower Europe's ports and waterborne industries to lead the clean and digital transition, to safeguard shipping and to ultimately reinforce Europe's maritime leadership.

Strengthening Europe's **digital sovereignty** and reducing external dependencies are necessary for securing the **Union's digital leadership**. The Presidency will therefore focus on key technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), cloud infrastructure and cybersecurity, all essential to ensure that Europe can shape its own digital future.

Europe's shift toward **sustainable, low-carbon and resource-efficient production** must preserve ambition while supporting competitiveness. The Presidency will promote this balanced approach to strengthen agricultural and food systems and ensure fair conditions and stable supply.



## OPEN TO THE WORLD, AUTONOMOUS

***Autonomy does not mean turning inward – it means engaging the world from a clear position of unified strength and strategy.***

By reinforcing our strategic capabilities, Europe enhances its ability to shape international developments while remaining firmly committed to cooperation. Autonomy entails power through partnership, and at the same time provides the foundation for promoting core interests worldwide.

The Cyprus Presidency stands ready to increase the EU's visibility, and act as enabler to reinforce the Union's role as a strategic global actor by making better use of its toolbox, and building on strong partnerships across all regions of the world.

This effort begins with the Union itself. From Ukraine and Moldova to our Western Balkan partners, and Türkiye, in line with established strict and fair conditionality. **Enlargement** is about completing a vision-one that unifies Europe and expands the space of peace, democracy, security and stability. Enlargement has proven to be one of the EU's most transformative tools, including within candidate countries, reflecting their willingness to reform and solve long-standing problems with their neighbours based on European law, values and principles. Enlargement in essence represents a strategic investment in Europe's future. The Cyprus Presidency is firmly committed to advancing the enlargement agenda in a credible manner, by delivering tangible results on a merit-based process.

Ukraine will be a central priority. The Presidency will continue to advance the Union's diplomatic, political, economic, military, energy, and humanitarian support to Ukraine. The EU's support for Ukraine's efforts for a just and lasting peace, with full respect of the country's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders remains unwavering.

An open Union is open to all its neighbours, East and South. The Cyprus Presidency will work to revitalise the Union's engagement with its Southern partners and the Gulf. A stronger and more strategic partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood is a long-term investment in regional peace, stability, prosperity and security. The **New Pact for the Mediterranean** provides a renewed framework for tangible, results-oriented cooperation.

The Presidency will promote its objectives and implementation, including complementarity with India-Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). It will further promote an ambitious EU agenda with our Middle East and Gulf partners, advocating deeper strategic cooperation and a reinforced EU presence in the region. The Presidency will support deepening relations with regional organisations such as the Gulf Cooperation Council and the League of Arab States, providing a bridge to partners in Asia and Africa. The Cyprus Presidency will also work on fostering intercultural and interfaith dialogue as a vital element of mutual understanding, social cohesion and regional stability.

The Presidency will support efforts to deepen cooperation with the US on all critical files, as well as with the UK and other like-minded partners, including in tackling together challenges for peace and stability around the globe.

Recent strains in international trade highlight the need to reinforce the Union's internal market and diversify external partnerships to reduce strategic dependencies. The Cyprus Presidency will support ongoing efforts to promote an open, robust and sustainable EU trade policy by expanding the network of trade agreements, strengthening the rules-based multilateral system — including the WTO — and ensuring effective implementation and enforcement of existing accords.

As the world's largest provider of development and humanitarian assistance, the EU plays a pivotal role in global crisis response. The Cyprus Presidency will seek to elevate this role further, and promote efforts to enhance the EU's capacity for rapid and effective crisis response, ensuring that no crisis is forgotten or neglected. It will foster stronger synergies between emergency relief and long-term development - particularly through initiatives such as Global Gateway.

## AN AUTONOMOUS UNION OF VALUES THAT LEAVES NO ONE BEHIND

*The strength of our autonomous Union lies in its people and in the active involvement of every European.*

An autonomous Union leaves no citizen behind: it exists to protect our shared values, empower participation, and create an enabling environment in which all can thrive.

7 What binds us together are the core values embedded in the **Rule of Law**, fundamental rights, and democracy - prerequisites for the flourishing and the full participation of all Europeans in our shared society. The Cyprus Presidency will work to strengthen the Rule of Law across the Union, building on existing tools and mechanisms whilst advancing a spirit of trust and cooperation among all Member States.

A truly autonomous Europe depends on strong social cohesion, where no person or region is left behind. This means tackling poverty and ensuring access to affordable housing and energy.

In this regard, the Cyprus Presidency will focus on affordable housing, promoting the implementation of the **European Affordable Housing Plan** with full respect for the principle of subsidiarity and national competences, contributing to efforts to meet the fundamental need for a safe and stable home.

It will also support the implementation of the forthcoming **Anti-Poverty Strategy**, advancing also initia-

tives that secure an unobstructed supply of safe, high-quality food for all.

Children are the present and future of Europe. We must protect and prepare them for the challenges of a rapidly changing world. The Cyprus Presidency will advance the implementation of the **European Child Guarantee**, tackling child poverty and ensuring access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education, so that every child can thrive and contribute to Europe's long-term prosperity. Within this context, the Presidency will also seek to promote digital well-being by fostering **a safer online environment for minors, including through the Commission's anticipated Action Plan against cyberbullying.**

Europe must ensure an inclusive society with equal opportunities for everyone. The Presidency will support the full implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights**, promoting **gender equality**, removing barriers for people with **disabilities**, and supporting **active ageing** with dignity, solidarity, and intergenerational balance.

The EU's autonomy also depends on ensuring that its people have the skills and conditions to adapt to the new realities. As digital and green shifts reshape our economies, investing in high-quality education, training, and lifelong learning is essential for competitiveness and shared prosperity. The Cyprus Presidency will advance initiatives in line with the Union of Skills, promoting fair and inclusive employment, with adequate working conditions. Particular attention will be given to farmers and fishers, ensuring a resilient working environment that supports generational renewal.

In this context, recognising the central role of young people in shaping Europe's future, the Cyprus Presidency will promote youth-friendly policies that strengthen trust, participation and dialogue, embedding youth perspectives across skills and broader policy frameworks.

People's trust in our health systems depends on the availability of adequate expertise, resources, and tools to ensure a coordinated response to future health crises. The Cyprus Presidency will promote actions that improve the daily lives of European citizens by strengthening access to and availability of medical products, fostering innovation, and enhancing the resilience and integration of health systems across the EU, in line with the vision of a truly autonomous **European Health Union**.

Particular attention will be devoted to **mental health**, highlighting the importance of active engagement of all stakeholders in the development of relevant policies, with a special focus on youth.



## A LONG-TERM BUDGET FOR AN AUTONOMOUS UNION

***Strategic autonomy requires sufficient financing for our common goals.***

The Multiannual Financial Framework for 2028-2034 (MFF) is the Union's strategic roadmap for the decade ahead - the **key instrument** that converts our **long-term goals into concrete action**.

The EU's ability to safeguard its interests, reduce critical dependencies, compete and respond swiftly and independently to crises and security risks while also accommodating future enlargements must stand at the heart of the new long-term budget.

The Cyprus Presidency, building on the progress achieved, will significantly advance negotiations on all sectoral legislative files of the proposed MFF. In this respect, we will work constructively and in a transparent manner with all relevant actors to shape a balanced framework.

The Presidency aims to deliver a well-developed, mature negotiating box with indicative figures to pave the way for the timely conclusion of negotiations at the European Council.

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# General Affairs Council (GAC)

***The Cyprus Presidency begins at a critical moment, against the backdrop of a shifting geopolitical landscape which is calling on Europe to act decisively, with unity and resilience, for greater European autonomy. In this context and informed by the Commission's 2026 Work Programme, the Presidency will fully uphold the GAC's central role in ensuring coherence across all Council configurations and in steering the Union's horizontal agenda.***

Ensuring a balanced and forward-looking EU budget will be a top priority. Building on the progress achieved, the Presidency will significantly advance negotiations on all sectoral legislative files of the new MFF 2028-2034, as part of the ambition to reach an agreement by the end of 2026.

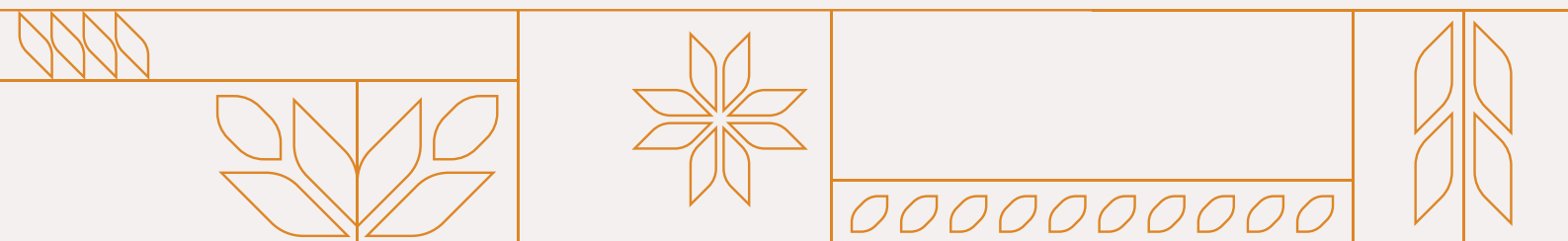
Driving the EU's simplification agenda forward will also be a central priority with the aim of reducing regulatory and administrative burdens and boosting competitiveness, especially for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

The Cyprus Presidency will place strong emphasis on defending and promoting the Union's fundamental values, democracy and the rule of law, reinforcing citizens' trust in the European project and strengthening democratic resilience.

Recognising that enlargement remains one of the Union's most transformative and geostrategic instruments for the security and prosperity of the European space, the Presidency is committed to delivering concrete progress while upholding the credibility of the established methodology and its merit-based character.

The Cyprus Presidency will also work to further enhance EU-UK relations, building on the positive momentum of the London Summit of May 2025, while ensuring the full implementation of existing agreements.

The Presidency will endeavour to strengthen cooperation with EFTA countries and other non-EU Western European partners, thereby reinforcing the Union's wider network.



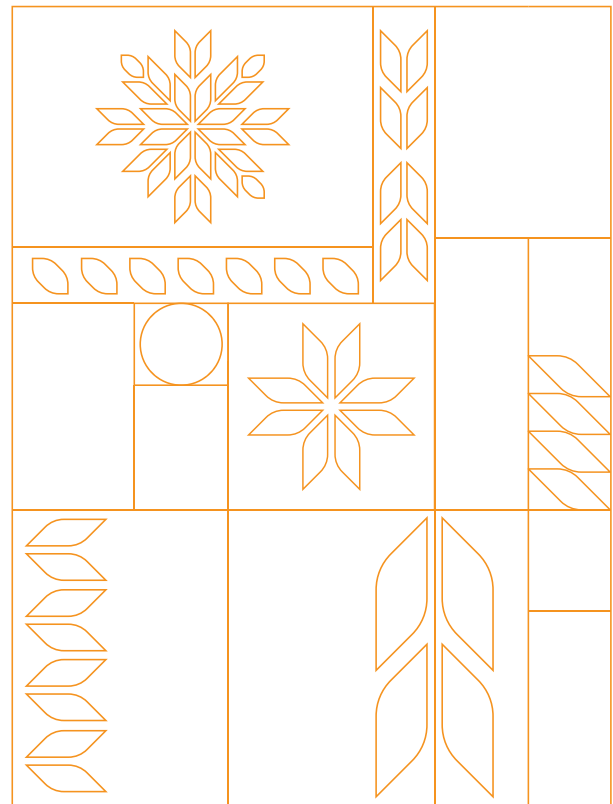
## PROMOTING AND SAFEGUARDING THE EU'S FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

The EU's fundamental values - respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, equality, and human rights - are the cornerstone of the Union's functioning and essential to the well-being of its citizens. The Cyprus Presidency is committed to promoting and protecting these values.

Emphasis will be placed on further strengthening the rule of law across the EU, building on existing tools and mechanisms such as the **Annual Rule of Law cycle and the ongoing Article 7 procedure**. The Presidency will hold two country-specific rule of law dialogues based on the Commission's annual Rule of Law Report.

Through constructive dialogue, targeted and results-oriented discussions, and the exchange of best practices, the Cyprus Presidency aims to contribute to effectively addressing shortcomings and preventing democratic backsliding. Engaging like-minded partners with a European perspective in discussions on promoting and safeguarding the rule of law will further enhance these efforts and maximise their impact.

Fully committed to strengthening democracy across the EU, the Presidency will drive forward the **Democracy Package**, which includes the **European Democracy Shield** and the **EU Strategy for Civil Society**. Together, these initiatives aim to bolster democratic resilience against threats such as foreign interference and disinformation, safeguard free media and expression, free and fair elections, deepen cooperation with civil society organisations to empower citizens, and reinforce societal resilience.



## EU ENLARGEMENT

Enlargement is a geopolitical necessity and a strategic investment in the EU's autonomy. It serves as a key engine for safeguarding peace, security and stability across our continent and beyond. It is also a driver for improving the economic and social conditions of our Union and its citizens, through the expansion and strengthening of the internal market. Driven by geopolitical imperatives, the enlargement process has gained significant political momentum, and over the next two years the Council will be called to take decisive action for its enlargement. An enlarged Union will be stronger and more resilient, enhancing prosperity, while upholding its core values.

In this framework, the Cyprus Presidency will take forward the enlargement agenda responsibly, in line with the established methodology, fair and rigorous conditionality, as well as the principle of own merits and reversibility. It remains essential for all enlargement partners to fully respect and uphold the values and principles on which the EU is founded, and to meet the obligations required for EU membership. A strong emphasis on the fundamentals will underpin this process.



The Presidency will aim to make further solid progress in the enlargement process for the Western Balkan partners, as well as for Ukraine and Moldova. Türkiye remains a candidate country and its relations with the EU will continue within the framework set in April 2024 by the European Council, previous Conclusions and established conditionalities.

## AN EU FIT FOR THE FUTURE

In line with the European Council Conclusions of June 2024, progress on internal reforms must advance in parallel with the enlargement process. The aim is for both the Union and future Member States to be fully prepared for accession and equipped to contribute to a resilient, effective, and forward-looking EU.

The Cyprus Presidency stands ready to steer work on the Union's internal reform agenda once the Commission presents its in-depth policy reviews.

## MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The Presidency is committed to ensuring that the new MFF reflects the Union's strategic priorities, addressing longstanding investment needs, as well as new and emerging challenges across the EU.

A balanced agreement for the new MFF must reconcile the financing of economic challenges with the imperative, to promote sustainable growth, resilience, defence and security, competitiveness, and social cohesion within Member States' fiscal constraints.

The Presidency will work in close cooperation with all the Member States, the European Commission and the President of the European Council, and with the active engagement of the European Parliament, to pave the way for a timely completion of the negotiations at the European Council.

The Presidency will advance negotiations, building on the work done, with a sense of urgency and a view to political agreement, aiming to submit a mature negotiating framework with indicative figures by June 2026.

With the ambition of achieving a Partial General Approach, the Presidency also intends to significantly

advance the negotiations on key elements of the MFF package, including the Regulation establishing the European Fund for economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and rural development, fisheries and maritime policy, prosperity and security (National and Regional Partnership Plans and Interreg Plan), the European Competitiveness Fund and the Global Europe Instrument, as well as the sectoral regulations of the new MFF.

## ENHANCING ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

Cohesion Policy remains a core EU policy and a key driver of European growth, competitiveness and solidarity. By reducing regional disparities, addressing structural challenges and supporting convergence, Cohesion Policy strengthens the Single Market and helps overcome its long-standing obstacles – including fragmentation, unequal access to opportunities and asymmetric adjustment capacities across regions.

In line with the Treaty Objectives, Cohesion Policy should continue to build on its strengths: its place-based approach, multi-level government, shared management model and long-term strategic investment character. Recognising the diverse challenges faced by EU regions and Member States, is essential to securing a strong Single Market. In this context, the specific needs of cities, island regions as well as the "right to stay" concept – will be highlighted. Furthermore, the Cyprus Presidency in line with the recent Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 mid-term review, and how the policy is evolving in the context of new and emerging challenges, will aim to provide guidance on discussions for the National Regional Partnership Plans considering the new MFF.

In addition, the Cyprus Presidency will further support work on the Urban Agenda and the territorial aspects of Cohesion Policy in preparation of a revision of the Territorial Agenda 2030.

The Presidency will work intensively to advance the negotiations on the ERDF/CF-including Interreg, and ESF+ Regulations, with the ambition of achieving a Partial General Approach.

## SIMPLIFICATION AND BURDEN REDUCTION

The regulatory and administrative burdens across the different EU sectors have hindered competitiveness, innovation, and investment. In line with the October 2025 European Council Conclusions, the Cyprus Presidency will advance the simplification agenda by building on the significant work of the two preceding Presidencies of our Trio. It will advance work on omnibus packages and upcoming simplification initiatives ensuring that these efforts do not lead to de-regulation, but rather to rules and procedures which are more efficient, proportionate, and easier to apply, especially for SMEs.

It will aim to initiate and conclude trilogues on Omnibus IV, V and VI and initiate and advance negotiations on the new packages, including Digital, Environmental, Food and Feed Safety, and Automotive.

## EU RELATIONS WITH THE UK

The UK remains a key trading and a like-minded partner for the EU in addressing a wide range of pressing security and geopolitical challenges. The Presidency will work towards further strengthening EU–UK relations through the effective implementation of the agreed framework governing our partnership. This includes the full, timely and faithful implementation of the **Withdrawal Agreement** in all its parts, as well as the proper and consistent enforcement of the **Trade and Cooperation Agreement**.

At the same time, the Presidency will seek to build on the positive momentum generated by the EU–UK Summit of 19 May 2025 and will promote the follow-up and implementation of the **Summit's outcomes**. Reinforcing mutual trust and delivering tangible benefits for citizens on both sides, while safeguarding the Union's interests and preserving unity among the Member States in line with the European Council guidelines will be at the core of the Presidency's work.

## EU RELATIONS WITH EFTA COUNTRIES, ANDORRA, MONACO AND SAN MARINO

The non-EU European Western countries are the EU's closest partners based on shared values and cooperation.

The Presidency will closely collaborate with Member States in order to present Council Conclusions on a homogenous and extended internal market, aiming to assess the overall state of EU relations with the EFTA countries, as well as Andorra, San Marino, Monaco and the Faroe Islands.

The Presidency will work towards achieving the adoption of the decision on the signing of the broad package of Agreements with Switzerland.

## INTEGRATED MARITIME POLICY

The Cyprus Presidency will work with a coherent approach and increased coordination on maritime issues between different policy areas, aiming, inter alia, to reach an agreement on the **List of EU Voluntary Commitments** to be presented at the 11th Our Ocean Conference 2026 to be held in Kenya.

## REVISION OF THE EUROPEAN ELECTORAL ACT (PROXY VOTING)

The Cyprus Presidency aims to conclude the file on the amendment of the EU Electoral Act, which seeks to strengthen maternity provisions by introducing proxy voting for Members of the European Parliament.

## STRENGTHENING EUROPE'S FUTURE OUTLOOK

In line with the more horizontal role of the GAC, the Presidency stands ready to facilitate discussions on cross-cutting challenges — including demographic — and on the forthcoming **EU Intergenerational Fairness Strategy**, which could shape the future of the European project and the lives of generations to come, while fully respecting Member State competences.

# Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)



***In an increasingly complex geopolitical environment, the EU must strengthen its ability for effective and autonomous external action, while remaining outward-looking and closely engaged with international partners.***

Strengthening the Union's capabilities is essential to protect citizens' security and prosperity, and to enhance the competitiveness of the Union. This is most evident in security and defence, where the EU must assume a greater responsibility by ensuring defence readiness by 2030, investing across all security tools, applying a comprehensive 360-degree approach to address the entire range of threats.

The EU's unwavering support to Ukraine -through diplomatic, political, economic, humanitarian, military, and energy channels - remains crucial as Russia's war of aggression continues to violate the international legal order and undermine European security. The Union will continue to stand firmly by Ukraine, committed to a just and lasting peace that respects its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

In the Southern Neighbourhood, a region of strategic importance, it is essential to promote the EU's goals of stability, security, and prosperity through implementation of the new Pact for the Mediterranean. Developing a structured partnership with Gulf countries and pursuing mutually advantageous trade agreements are key. The EU should also remain committed to supporting the implementation of the comprehensive peace plan in Gaza and facilitating the distribution of humanitarian aid.

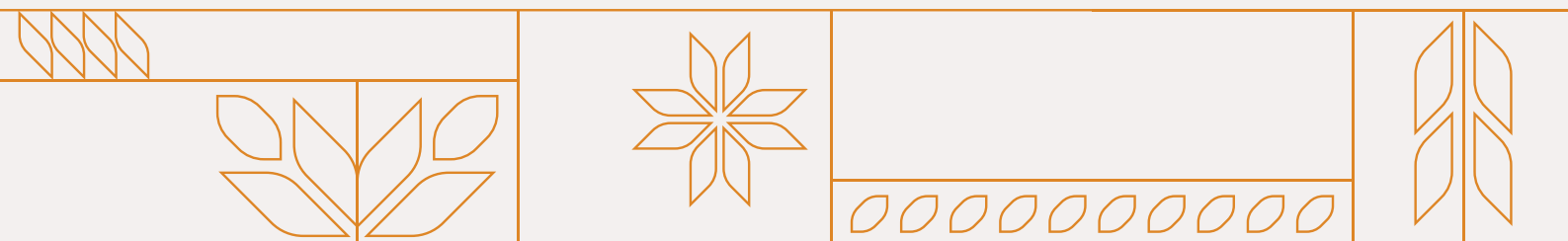
The EU must broaden its diplomatic reach with like-minded partners. Strong and mutually beneficial transatlantic relations, with both the US and Canada, remain vital in maintaining the rules-based order. Continuous constructive dialogue with the US is essential across all key areas.

Deepening and diversifying trade relationships with partners in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, is vital to maintaining the EU's economic strength, reinforcing critical supply-chain resilience, and advancing broader geopolitical objectives.

The EU must remain committed to a strong multilateral system grounded on the UN Charter, international law including the law of the sea, and promoting human rights worldwide. The EU has also a responsibility to sustain its leadership in protecting the most vulnerable, especially in conflict-affected regions.

The Cyprus Presidency will work closely with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to advance these priorities and to contribute to a more capable, present, engaging, confident, and influential EU on the global stage.

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## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

### UKRAINE

The Cyprus Presidency is committed to ensuring the EU's sustained support for Ukraine in the face of the ongoing Russian aggression, and to advancing the pursuit of a just and lasting peace through negotiations with Ukraine's full participation. The Presidency stands ready to promote, for as long as necessary, additional political, diplomatic, economic, military, and humanitarian support, making full use of all available EU instruments, including CSDP missions in Ukraine.

In line with the EU's "peace through strength" approach, it will advance efforts to provide comprehensive support to Ukraine and its people as they exercise their inherent right to self-defence, in close coordination with like-minded partners and in support of the High Representative.

Recognising that a strong, capable and resilient Ukrainian Armed Forces constitutes the most effective security guarantee for Kyiv, together with its EU accession process, the Presidency will support the implementation of existing EU instruments, including the European Peace Facility and assistance to Ukraine's defence industry. It will also promote long-term strategic planning to ensure sustained EU engagement with Ukraine's security, reconstruction and recovery needs.

The EU's support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, including the inviolability of its borders, remains steadfast and unwavering. The Presidency will work to support efforts in increasing pressure on Russia to cease its war of aggression and to engage meaningfully in peace negotiations. In this context, the Presidency's approach to sanctions will focus on advancing work regarding new measures, as well as ensuring the effective implementation and enforcement of existing ones. Continued alignment with like-minded partners and outreach to third countries remain key to maximising impact, and tackling circumvention.

The Cyprus Presidency will also seek a closer EU-US dialogue and coordination on Ukraine, including in diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a peace agreement.

Upholding international law is essential. The Presidency will prioritise addressing the abduction of Ukrainian children, advancing accountability efforts, and supporting legal instruments such as the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine.

## SOUTHERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

The EU and its Southern Neighbourhood are linked by geography, history and shared challenges. The Cyprus Presidency will support efforts to deepen engagement with Middle East and Gulf partners. In this context, it will also promote the swift implementation of the New Pact for the Mediterranean, which will serve as a key instrument for advancing EU's strategic cooperation in the region.

On the Middle East, an integral part of the Southern Neighbourhood, the Presidency remains committed to supporting peace efforts as well as ongoing efforts for the implementation of the comprehensive peace plan in Gaza, and facilitating the distribution of humanitarian aid at scale into Gaza, including via the Cyprus Maritime Corridor.

The first EU-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit in 2024, was a linchpin in our shared vision for peace, security and stability in the EU and the Middle East. Work will proceed on stocktaking and deliverables ahead of the 2026 second EU-GCC Summit, aiming to deepen the mutually beneficial partnership.

The Cyprus Presidency remains dedicated to fostering intercultural and interfaith dialogue as a key instrument to foster mutual understanding, social cohesion, and regional stability in the EU's Southern Neighbourhood.

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## WESTERN BALKANS

The Western Balkans remain strategically important and integral to Europe's security and stability, particularly given the evolving geopolitical landscape. The Presidency will seek to reinforce the EU's role and visibility in the region, bolster its resilience, and actively support Western Balkan partners on their path toward EU membership.

## TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

Strong and mutually beneficial transatlantic relations remain essential for our prosperity, security, and the maintenance of a rules-based international order. The Cyprus Presidency is committed to reinforcing the transatlantic relationship through forward-looking engagement, ensuring that the partnership continues to serve as a pillar of stability and progress on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond.

Enhancing EU-US ties is of great importance. The Presidency will actively promote a constructive, inclusive and mutually beneficial EU-US dialogue across all major areas of cooperation. This will include economic relations and the implementation of the EU-US Joint Statement of 21 August 2025, technology and innovation, security and defence, coordination on Ukraine and the Middle East, energy and connectivity, counter-narcotics and law enforcement cooperation, and achieving full EU-US visa reciprocity.

Emphasis will also be placed on further strengthening the EU-Canada Strategic Partnership, grounded in shared values and common interests.

## AFRICA

Acknowledging the intrinsic links between Europe's and Africa's security and prosperity, the Presidency will support efforts for close cooperation with African partners to address common challenges and harness joint opportunities.

It will promote work towards implementing the Joint Vision 2030 agreed at the 6<sup>th</sup> EU-AU Summit in February 2023, building on the outcomes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> EU-AU

Ministerial Meeting in May 2025 and the Joint Declaration of the 7<sup>th</sup> AU-EU Summit in November 2025.

## ASIA AND INDO-PACIFIC

The Cyprus Presidency will work to further strengthen the EU's engagement with the countries in the Asia and the Indo-Pacific region.

On China, the Presidency will support constructive dialogue to address issues of concern, and cooperation on areas of shared interest based on the EU's threefold approach.

The Presidency will support promoting the EU-India relations, including by advancing our strategic partnership.

At the same time, the Cyprus Presidency will actively support the advancement of our partnerships with Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines, as well as the enhancement of EU-ASEAN relations, working towards a more structured partnership.

## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Presidency will work to further promote the EU's engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean, building on high level EU engagements, including the 4<sup>th</sup> EU-CELAC Summit, and emphasising a robust trade relationship with the region.

## CENTRAL ASIA

The EU-Central Asia relations have gained significant momentum underpinned by a shared commitment to peace, stability, and sustainable economic cooperation, including efforts to prevent the circumvention of sanctions. The Cyprus Presidency will seek to sustain this momentum by promoting high-level political dialogue, trade, investment, and digital connectivity as key drivers of a stronger and more interconnected partnership. It will also work for promoting the further engagement in the context of the Global Gateway, as well as enhancing EU's visibility in the region.





## MULTILATERALISM – INTERNATIONAL LAW – HUMAN RIGHTS

In the current geopolitical context, multilateralism is more important than ever. Cyprus' geopolitical position makes us acutely aware of the importance of collective approaches to shared challenges. In line with the rules-based international order, grounded in the UN Charter and International Law, the Presidency, together with the EU High Representative, will support and promote close EU-UN cooperation. This will be on the basis of International Law, including International Humanitarian Law, protecting and promoting human rights, advancing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and all relevant processes (Agenda 2030, Pact for the Future).

## DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND HUMANITARIAN AID

The Cyprus Presidency will promote the Team Europe Approach, to advance the leading role of the EU and its Member States as the global leader in the provision of Official Development Assistance (ODA). Particular attention will be placed on foundational development to secure the enabling environment for resilience, stability and security in our partners, while addressing fragility through a holistic humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach. The effective usage and implementation of EU Global Gateway projects, with the participation of more SMEs from all Member States would be a valuable tool in this direction.

Special attention will be given to Ukraine, the Middle East, the Southern Neighbourhood and Africa, encompassing actions under the Pact for the Mediterranean, in order to tackle current and ongoing development and humanitarian challenges, including food security, nutrition, issues related to climate change, water, oceans, health, women's empowerment, youth engagement, as well as security and migration. The Presidency will also promote the relations of the EU with Small Island Developing States, especially in relation to their development and humanitarian needs.

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

The Cyprus Presidency also intends to significantly advance the discussions on 'Global Europe Instrument' of the new MFF.

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## DEFENCE AND SECURITY

### DEFENCE

In the face of rising threats and security challenges in Europe's neighbourhood and beyond, the Cyprus Presidency will prioritise strengthening the EU's ability to respond. The Presidency will advance the implementation of the **EU Defence Industry Strategy (EDIS)**, taking into account the **EU Defence Readiness 2030**, the forthcoming steps under the **EU Defence Transformation Roadmap**, the **Security Action for Europe (SAFE)** initiative and the implementation of the **European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) Regulation**.

The Presidency will underline the importance of advancing digitalisation and dual-use technologies as key enablers for European defence sustainability and resilience. It will support the rapid deployment of required defence capabilities through joint programmes and agile defence procurements. This is fully aligned with the EU's efforts to reduce dependencies on third countries and enhance European strategic autonomy and technological sovereignty, while reinforcing synergies with like-minded strategic partners.

The Presidency will also ensure coherence with ongoing EU initiatives, including the **Defence Readiness Omnibus**, to streamline support and maximise industrial impact. Particular focus will be placed on supporting defence industries, especially SMEs engaged in research and innovation and specialised in state-of-the-art niche technologies, as well as collaboration with larger European companies through targeted incentives.

The Cyprus Presidency will work closely with the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS), and the European Defence Agency (EDA) to advance Europe's security and defence transformation. It will also support the European Investment Bank (EIB) Group in implementing dedicated actions that reinforce Europe's strategic autonomy and industrial capacity. These include investments in military mobility corridors, the strengthening of critical infrastructure resilience, and cross-border initiatives to enhance protection against drone and hybrid threats.

Building on these efforts, the Presidency will further promote initiatives to increase EU investment in defence-related innovation and infrastructure, with an emphasis on securing the necessary technology and know-how. It will also foster synergies between civil and defence research programmes to strengthen industrial resilience and digital preparedness.

The Cyprus Presidency will support the EEAS' efforts to strengthen cooperation between the EU and NATO in line with the three Joint Declarations and the agreed practical actions. This cooperation will be carried out in an inclusive, reciprocal, transparent and mutually beneficial manner while fully respecting the agreed principles and parameters, and decision-making autonomy of both organisations.

Relations with partners across the Atlantic remain a cornerstone of European security. In this context, the Presidency will underscore the importance of continued close collaboration to address foreign policy priorities, crises and conflicts in line with the European values stipulated in the Treaties.

### MILITARY MOBILITY

External threats have underlined the importance of achieving the expeditious, organised and secure movement of military forces and equipment across the EU. Investments in strategic ports, airbases and logistic hubs will be encouraged to better integrate Member States into the broader military mobility network.

The **Military Mobility Package** is a flagship initiative in this direction, and the Cyprus Presidency will seek to advance this proposal, bringing the EU closer towards "military Schengen" in line with the **European Defence Readiness 2030**.

## NON - MILITARY SECURITY AND RESILIENCE - PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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

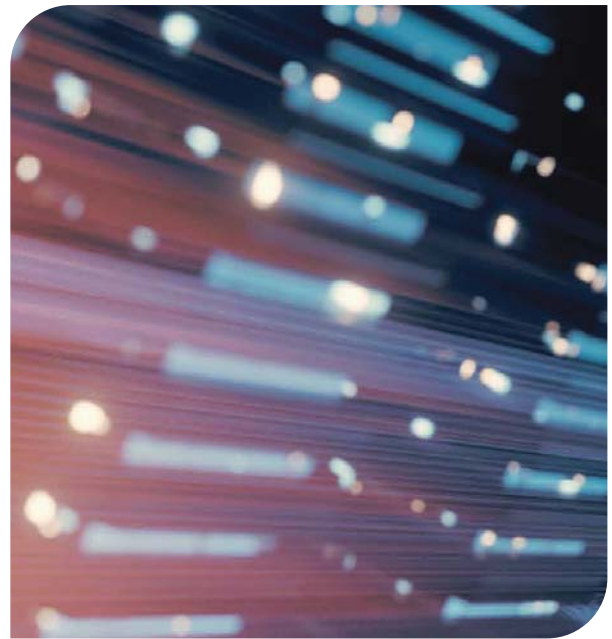
As hybrid and cyber threats are increasing in numbers and sophistication, the Presidency will focus on reinforcing, enhancing, and streamlining our collective EU response mechanisms. Threats against one EU Member State should be considered as a threat against the entire EU and all its Member States.

In this regard, the Cyprus Presidency will contribute to further secure the well-functioning and continuous implementation of the frameworks adopted through the Strategic Compass, such as the EU Hybrid Toolbox, the Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) toolbox, actor-specific frameworks, the Hybrid Rapid Response Teams and the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox.

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

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

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



## MARITIME SECURITY

The Cyprus Presidency will prioritise the security of critical maritime routes as a key element of EU resilience and supply chain protection. Efforts will focus on enhancing situational awareness in vulnerable maritime regions, protecting sea lines of communication, and supporting the effective implementation of the EU Maritime Security Strategy. The Presidency will promote a comprehensive EU Maritime Readiness and Resilience approach in security and defence matters, linking maritime security with digital, energy, and critical maritime infrastructure protection, including subsea cables and pipelines. This will also include promoting enhanced seabed-to-space situational awareness and the use of emerging digital tools to anticipate and mitigate hybrid risks.

The Presidency will engage in high-level discussions to reinforce the EU's maritime posture and ensure that maritime security remains integral to the Union's external action. In this context, the Presidency will underscore the pivotal role of EU naval operations in maintaining maritime stability and countering hybrid threats. It will also emphasise the importance of UNCLOS as the legal framework governing all activities at sea and as the strategic foundation for national, regional and global action and cooperation in the maritime and marine sectors.

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## CLIMATE AND SECURITY NEXUS

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

## TRADE

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The Cyprus Presidency will promote an open, ambitious, balanced, and forward-looking trade agenda, combining traditional and more flexible forms of trade and investment agreements. The aim is to deliver tangible benefits to EU citizens and businesses, especially SMEs.

In an increasingly complex geopolitical environment, trade agreements are a vital instrument for diversification and for strengthening the EU's resilience and strategic autonomy.

In this context, emphasis will be given to ongoing trade negotiations with strategic partners in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, in particular India and the United Arab Emirates. Moreover, the Presidency will prioritise the finalisation of the procedures in the Council for already concluded agreements in the Latin American and ASEAN regions.

The Cyprus Presidency will also support the Commission's efforts in monitoring the implementation of existing trade agreements, ensuring that their opportunities and benefits are effectively communicated to stakeholders and interested parties.

A key priority for the Presidency will be the timely and effective preparation and coordination of activities ahead of the 14<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) that will take place in Cameroon in March 2026. The Presidency will work closely with the Member States and the EU institutions with the aim of formulating a unified and strategic approach that reflects the Union's objectives.

In regard to the trade relations with the US, the Cyprus Presidency, guided by the Commission's approach, is committed to advancing the implementation of the EU-US Joint Statement with the objective of strengthening cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

The Presidency will work constructively towards the finalisation of the legislative file on addressing the negative trade related effects of global overcapacity on the Union steel market.

*Geopolitical tensions, rising competition, and a shifting geoeconomic landscape have highlighted the risks inherent in certain economic dependencies. The Presidency will guide ongoing discussions, in the framework of the EU's 2023 Economic Security Strategy, including on the new Joint Communication on strengthening EU economic security.*



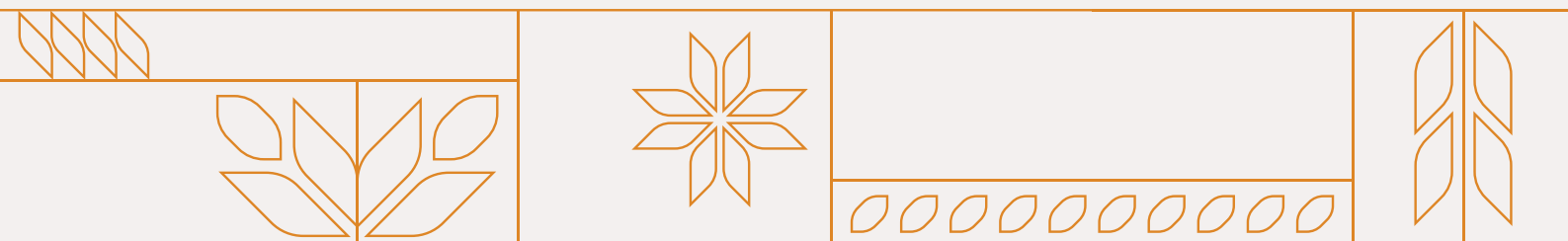
# Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN)

***Enhancing the EU's financial autonomy and reinforcing its global economic position will be the guiding principles of the Cyprus Presidency in steering ECOFIN's agenda. The Presidency will seek to effectively address the challenges posed by the EU's economic and financial landscape, by prioritising and advancing policies that strengthen the EU's long-term competitiveness and productivity, while promoting sustainable and inclusive growth.***

To this end, the Presidency will further pursue the efforts to advance the legislative work on the Savings and Investments Union (SIU), by making sufficient progress on the Capital Markets Union agenda on initiatives aimed at strengthening the competitiveness and integration of the EU banking sector.

In the area of Taxation, the Cyprus Presidency will focus on promoting the EU tax decluttering and simplification agenda, as part of the broader efforts to strengthen competitiveness. Furthermore, the Presidency aims to progress legislative work towards a modernised Customs Union.

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## ECONOMIC POLICY COORDINATION AND GOVERNANCE

The Cyprus Presidency will work actively to ensure smooth coordination of Member States' economic and fiscal policies, within the framework of the **European Semester**. At the same time, the Presidency will facilitate efforts towards the successful **completion of the Recovery and Resilience Facility**, in view of the final year of its implementation.

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

In line with its commitment to simplification, the Cyprus Presidency stands ready to **advance** work on the **Fiscal Consistency Package**, aiming for an agreement with the European Parliament. It will further advance the simplification agenda, promoting initiatives including those related to the economic consequences of EU legislation.

The Presidency will closely follow the financial aspects of the implementation of the **SAFE instrument**.

It will facilitate exchanges with the EIB to address the financing needs for security and defence projects, given its vital role in enhancing Europe's defence industry through an array of financial instruments.

The Presidency will strive to conclude work on the proposal for a **Regulation on non-financial statistics on commercial real estate**.

## ECONOMIC SUPPORT TO UKRAINE

The Cyprus Presidency will work on ensuring the ongoing support to Ukraine, as part of the implementation of the **Ukraine Facility** and the **G7-led Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration (ERA) loans**. The Presidency will ensure swift examination of the new legislative proposals regarding future Financing of Ukraine, including its reconstruction after the end of the war.

The Presidency intends to continue examining the economic and financial impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, especially if the conflict continues, including the proper implementation of EU sanctions against Russia and Belarus.

## GLOBAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

The Presidency will work towards the adoption of the **joint Terms of Reference (ToR) for the G20** meetings of Finance Ministers and Central Banks Governors, as well as the common EU Statement to the International Monetary and Financial Committee. These efforts will contribute to the work of developing and presenting a unified EU position on key areas of economic policy thereby safeguarding Union's interests and strengthening its strategic role in the context of the global economic cooperation.

## FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Cyprus Presidency will focus on legislative initiatives that will increase the efficiency of the European capital markets that are fundamental for financial stability, market integrity, growth and competitiveness of the Union, and which will optimise the Single Market. Considering the rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape, especially in the fields of security, defence and the twin digital and green transitions, mobilising both public and private funding will be crucial to advancing the goal for a more resilient EU economy.

The **SIU**, which aims, *inter alia*, to channel more savings to productive investments, will be essential for the development of EU capital markets. In this regard, the Cyprus Presidency will advance measures that will increase the efficiency of capital markets by simplifying and improving EU rules, while at the same time, ensuring a high level of investor protection.

The Presidency will also support initiatives aimed at strengthening the competitiveness and integration of the EU banking sector. Steps will be taken in reducing regulatory complexities and administrative burdens and ensuring that EU legislation is effective, providing

more funding opportunities by allowing EU entities especially SMEs and start-ups to innovate, grow and compete across borders, while at the same time meeting the objective of SIU in boosting the Union's global competitiveness.

The Cyprus Presidency will prioritise concluding the technical work on the **Retail Investment Strategy (RIS)** text, based on the political agreement reached, and in line with the principles of simplification, proportionality, and high-level investor protection.

Regarding the **Financial Data Access (FiDA) Regulation**, the Presidency aims to continue trilogue negotiations towards a balanced framework that enables data sharing and innovation, while ensuring consumer protection and data security.

On the **Single Currency Package**, the Cyprus Presidency aims to launch political trilogues once the European Parliament is ready, acknowledging that the introduction of the digital euro constitutes a major step towards the digital age that will support the provision of secure and efficient payment services, while enhancing the EU's autonomy and competitiveness in global financial markets.

The Presidency also aims to initiate trilogue negotiations on the **Securitisation package** that simplifies and aligns rules, revitalising the securitisation market, improving access to finance for SMEs and smaller jurisdictions, while maintaining transparency and financial stability.

The Cyprus Presidency will further achieve progress on the legislative proposals for the **review of the Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provision (IORP) II Directive** and the **Pan-European Personal Pension Product (PEPP) Regulation** to increase the take-up of supplementary pensions across Europe, improve the long-term performance of pension products, and enable pension funds to contribute more effectively to the real economy.

The Presidency will steer discussions on revising the **Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR)** to reduce complexity, address greenwashing, and make sustainability reporting simpler and more effective,

with the aim of reaching a negotiating mandate.

On the **Market Integration/Market infrastructure Package**, the Presidency is committed to advancing a constructive dialogue among Member States, focused on striking the right balance between various objectives, whilst recognising the differences between market players and infrastructures, and the need for an inclusive SIU.

## EU BUDGET AND OWN RESOURCES

In the area of EU Budget, the Cyprus Presidency will work on the preparation of a Council Recommendation to the Commission for the **implementation of the 2024 EU budget** and the **guidelines for the 2027 EU budget**. The Presidency will also aim to significantly progress discussions on the **Own Resources proposals** within the new MFF, and on the **Performance Framework Regulation**.

## TAXATION

Cyprus Presidency will continue efforts to combat tax evasion, aggressive tax planning and harmful tax competition.

In the area of direct taxation, it will, *inter alia*, work on updating the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions, in line with the principles of tax good governance, as reflected in the Council Conclusions of February 2025.

The Presidency will initiate work on the upcoming recast of the **Directive on administrative cooperation in the field of taxation**, in line with the Council Conclusions of March 2025.

Building on the simplification agenda, the Cyprus Presidency stands ready to open discussions on the **upcoming omnibus package to streamline direct taxation** rules and enhance the competitiveness of EU businesses.

It will also advance the discussions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on the United Nations Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, aiming to a balanced and inclusive outcome that reflects both EU values and global consensus.

Efforts will be undertaken to continue work on the revision of the **Tobacco Taxation Directive** and to conclude the technical work regarding the revision of the proposal for the **VAT rules on distance sales of imported goods and import VAT**.

The Presidency will continue to efficiently address the cross-sectoral issues relating to the **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) Regulation**, including assessing the legal, financial, economic, and political feasibility of proposed solutions as well as, examining relevant proposals and initiatives, with a view to reaching a General Approach.

It also will stand ready to begin work on upcoming proposals including the proposal on the **revision of the Regulation for administrative cooperation and combating fraud in the field of VAT**.

## CUSTOMS UNION

The reform of the EU Customs Union constitutes a priority for the Cyprus Presidency, where it will aim to conclude trilogue negotiations, reaching a political agreement, on the proposed Regulation establishing the Union Customs Code and the European Union Customs Authority (**Customs Reform Package**).





# Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA)

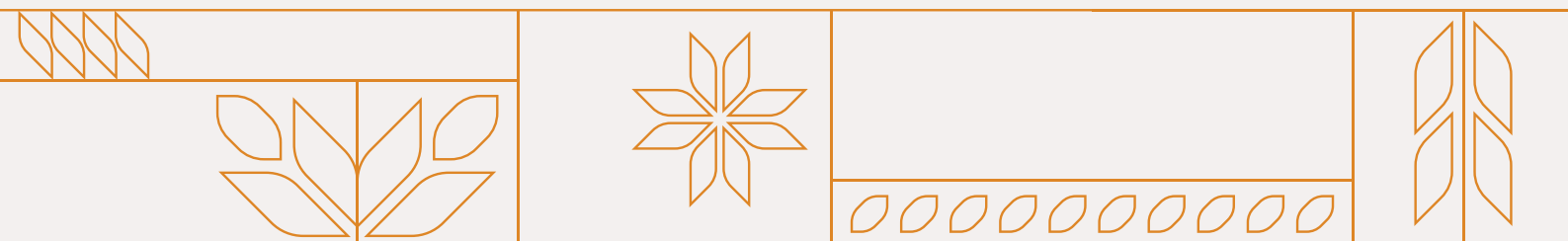
***A strong and autonomous Europe needs the tools and capacities to ensure a secure, resilient, and integrated European area - capable of managing external borders, protecting citizens from internal and external threats, and upholding fundamental values.***

The Cyprus Presidency will guide the JHA agenda on effective migration management, with a focus on the implementation of the Pact for Migration and Asylum, ahead of its full operationalisation, the efficiency of the asylum and return system, and the development of comprehensive partnerships with third countries.

It will advance a safer internal area by strengthening law enforcement capabilities and cooperation among Member States and EU Agencies, tackling transnational and organised crime, addressing new threats stemming from technological developments, and protecting minors from online and offline threats. The Presidency will also promote efforts that enhance EU's preparedness and resilience against all types of threats.

Promoting fundamental European values, including the rule of law and equal access to justice, will remain central priorities throughout these efforts.

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## ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLICY

The areas of migration, asylum, and returns will constitute a key priority for the Cyprus Presidency. Building on the EU's legislative achievements and the political direction set by the **Pact on Migration and Asylum**, the Presidency will focus on ensuring its **coherent, fair and effective implementation**.

The Presidency will promote **a more efficient, coherent and balanced European returns system**, ensuring a unified approach that combines effectiveness with full respect for fundamental rights. Equally important will be to conclude the negotiations on the **safe third country concept** and the **EU list of safe countries of origin**. Furthermore, it will be ready to advance the discussions on return-related innovative solutions.

The Cyprus Presidency will **advance the efficiency of the external dimension of migration** based on a "whole of route" approach and respecting geographical balance. This strategic imperative will promote sincere cooperation and **mutually beneficial strategic partnerships** with key international partners, on a "more for more" basis. Among the key objectives is the effective dismantling of criminal networks, the enhancement of legal migration pathways, and the improvement of the Union's return policy.

## PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE

The **implementation of the EU Preparedness Strategy** and its accompanying Action Plan will be a core priority of the Cyprus Presidency. Strengthening the EU's and Member States' preparedness and resilience to effectively address natural and human-made disasters is vital. The Presidency will build on the work of the previous Presidencies to ensure that the EU is more capable of addressing future challenges, while considering specific concerns and needs of all Member States.

Priority will be given to enhancing the EU's crisis preparedness and response capacity, with a particular **focus on civil protection and the resilience of**

**critical entities**. The Cyprus Presidency will seek to advance strategic dialogue **on enhancing Union-wide coordination mechanisms and long-term preparedness planning**. Particular attention will be given to ongoing discussions on the revision of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism legislation, the introduction of a health emergency preparedness and response pillar (UCPM-HER) and the potential reinforcement of the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) with a Crisis Communication Hub.

The Presidency will also support efforts to **improve civil-military cooperation in emergency preparedness and response**, including through the exchange of best practices on planning for large-scale evacuation operations. It will encourage structured cooperation among civil, military, and private-sector actors, contributing to enhanced resilience in an increasingly complex risk environment.

In parallel, the Presidency will promote the **implementation of the Directive on the Resilience of Critical Entities**, with a focus on protecting vital infrastructure across key sectors such as energy, food, health, transport, space and telecommunications. It will support relevant EU initiatives, including the **protection of underwater infrastructure**, as well as work to advance the **EU Critical Infrastructure Blueprint**.

## EU INTERNAL SECURITY

The Cyprus Presidency will prioritise a robust and secure EU internal space. In line with the **ProtectEU Strategy**, it will focus on advancing key actions to **strengthen EU security capabilities**, and to **combat organised crime**, migrant smuggling, drug trafficking, terrorism and violent extremism.

The exploitation of new technologies by criminal networks in committing crimes both online and offline requires prompt action by the EU, with the development and the use of the appropriate investigative tools as specified in the **Roadmap on lawful and effective access to data**.

In this regard, the Presidency will monitor and promote common efforts at EU level for the implementation of technological solutions that would enable law enforcement authorities to access and analyse readable data, while safeguarding fundamental rights.

It will also lead strategic discussions on the forthcoming proposal to **transform Europol** into a truly operational law enforcement agency.

Additionally, the Cyprus Presidency will continue the dialogue on the **impact of the current geopolitical environment** in Ukraine and the Middle East on the EU's internal security. It will also explore how to increase political engagement with Southern Mediterranean partners in preventing organised crime.

In promoting actions that tackle organised crime and its root causes, the Cyprus Presidency will emphasise **combatting migrant smuggling** by preparing Council Recommendations.

Drugs policy will also be a key priority for the Presidency, which will facilitate discussions on the new **EU Drugs Strategy** and the new **EU Action Plan against drug trafficking**.

In this context, the Presidency will **promote a balanced, evidence-based approach to EU drugs policy**, giving equal emphasis to demand and supply reduction. It will facilitate thematic discussions on drugs in prisons, opioid overdose prevention,

minimum quality standards in demand reduction, and emerging drug threats, while strengthening cooperation with key international partners.

Terrorism and violent extremism, including radicalisation remain significant threats, exacerbated by instability in neighbouring regions and by social polarisation linked to external interferences and FIMI. The Cyprus Presidency will facilitate discussions on the new **EU Agenda on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism** and promote additional measures as needed.

It will also place particular emphasis on addressing the infiltration of potential terrorist elements, preventing violent extremism and radicalisation facilitated by modern technologies, tackling the terrorism–criminality nexus, and examining new trends and challenges in terrorist financing.

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



## SCHENGEN MATTERS

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

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

The Cyprus Presidency will continue trilogues on the **Regulation establishing the Digital Travel Credentials Application**.

## COOPERATION IN JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS WITH EU'S PARTNERS

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

The Presidency will hold the regular meetings with the US, both at Ministerial and Senior Officials level, and will organise a preparatory Senior Officials' meeting with the Western Balkans ahead of the autumn Ministerial Meeting. In addition, under the newly established eighteen-month collaboration cycle with Latin America through the EU – CLASI multidisciplinary approach, it will plan the next interinstitutional meeting to review progress achieved and prepare the program for the next Ministerial Meeting.

## PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Ensuring a high standard of protection for children against sexual abuse and exploitation, online and offline, is of paramount importance. The Presidency will advance negotiations with the European Parliament on the **Directive to combat child sexual abuse**, as well as strive for the adoption of a durable and effective agreement on the **Regulation preventing and combating child sexual abuse**, ahead of the Interim Regulation's expiration in April 2026.

Building on the work of previous Presidencies, the Cyprus Presidency will also continue discussions on strengthening the protection of children, through child-friendly, multidisciplinary models, including online safety measures. In this context, it will facilitate the **exchange of best practices among Member States**, as well as the development of procedures or guidelines for effective evaluation of cases of violence against children.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE COOPERATION

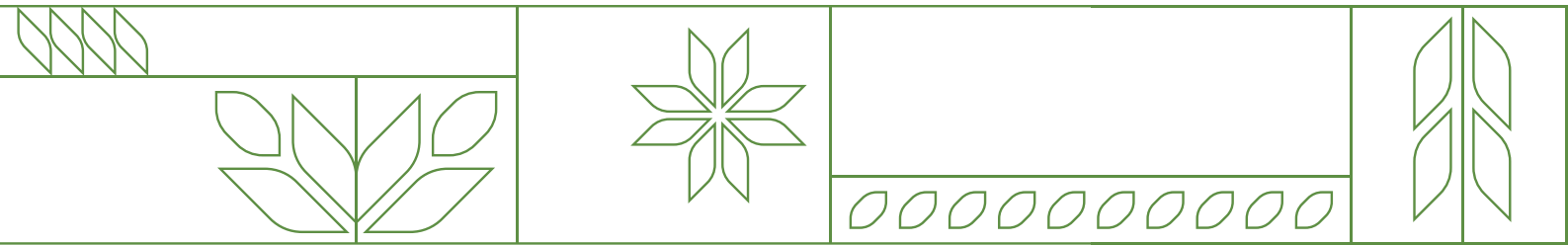
The Presidency will seek to initiate and conclude the negotiations on the **Directive on smuggling of migrants**.

Further, the Cyprus Presidency will initiate and **advance the new legislative proposal to combat illicit firearms**, with the aim of achieving a General Approach.

The dire consequences of **Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine** and its people will be a prominent point of focus in the work of the Council. The Cyprus Presidency will support efforts to advance the fight against impunity.

Recognising the growing involvement of minors in serious crimes, the Presidency will **explore alternative approaches for young people in conflict with the law**, seeking to balance justice, rehabilitation and fairness, while ensuring that the justice system remains consistent with the rule of law principles.

The illegal proceeds generated from organised crime continue to escalate at an unprecedented rate. The



Presidency will facilitate discussions in exploring ways to overcome the challenges that exist in **depriving criminals and criminal groups of ill-gotten gains**.

The Cyprus Presidency will be ready to launch negotiations on the forthcoming **Eurojust and European Investigation Order proposals**, to strengthen coordination to effectively respond to cross-border crime.

## CIVIL JUSTICE COOPERATION

The Cyprus Presidency will conclude negotiations on the **Regulation on Parenthood**. Furthermore, it will also aim to reach a General Approach and start negotiations with the European Parliament on the **Regulation on the Protection of Adults**.

## FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

The protection of fundamental rights and freedoms is a priority objective of the Cyprus Presidency. As regards the **accession of the EU to the ECHR** and given that the Commission has submitted a request for an Opinion to the CJEU, focus will be shifted to the internal rules. The Presidency will initiate and advance discussions on the proposal for the adoption of internal rules that will allow the EU to function as a party to the ECHR.

The Presidency will discuss the results of the **mid-term review** of the Strategy to strengthen the application of the **Charter of Fundamental Rights** and will aim to adopt Council Conclusions.

Recognising the importance of inclusion, and of fighting all forms of discrimination, including antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred, intolerance, racism and xenophobia, the Cyprus Presidency will **support the forthcoming EU Anti-Racism Strategy**.

## MFF RESOURCES FOR JHA

The Cyprus Presidency will contribute to the Council's work on JHA-related aspects of the new MFF, ensuring that the relevant funding instruments support the Union's priorities in internal security, home affairs, border and migration management, and justice.



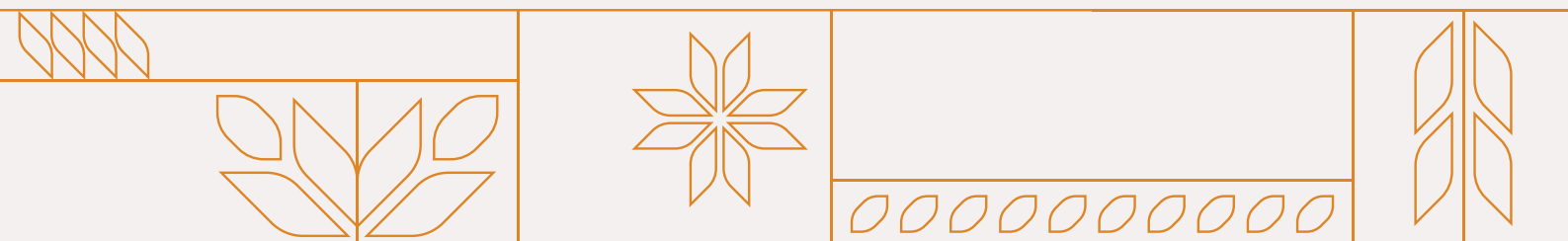
# Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)

***An autonomous Europe begins and centres around its people. EU citizens must be supported to be able to adapt to the current challenges and opportunities arising from the digital and environmental developments, and the demographic realities.***

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At the same time, everyone - with no exclusions - should live in an environment of social justice and equal opportunities - an environment of dignity where people can access essential goods, affordable housing, quality healthcare, and quality jobs with decent work conditions.

The Cyprus Presidency will lead the work of EPSCO with this vision: strengthening Europe's social model through the European Pillar of Social Rights, advancing the Union of Skills, and reinforcing a more resilient and integrated European Health Union.



## EMPLOYMENT

### FAIR AND SAFE EMPLOYMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Cyprus Presidency will emphasise fair and inclusive employment as a key principle of social justice across the EU. In a labour market reshaped by digitalisation and the rise of AI, the Presidency will promote policies that harness technological progress to improve job quality, reduce inequalities and ensure just transition. **Fair wages, safe working conditions, and equal opportunities** must remain central to ensure benefits for all workers.

The Cyprus Presidency will foster the dialogue for fair, inclusive, and quality labour market policies in a rapidly changing work landscape guided by the recent **Quality Jobs Roadmap**, the principles of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** and aligned with the International Labour Organisation's longstanding commitment to social justice as a foundation for peace and prosperity.

It will also aim to safeguard the important role of the EPSCO Council within the framework of the **European Semester**.

The Presidency will continue the work on the revision of the **Regulation on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers** aiming to further secure vulnerable jobs and employees. It will also advance negotiations with the European Parliament on the **Traineeships Directive** aiming to improve the working conditions of trainees.

Health and Safety at work is a priority for the Cyprus Presidency, which will continue the work on the **6<sup>th</sup> revision of the Directive on carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxic substances** for the prevention of negative effects on human health.

Fair employment for social justice will feature as a key discussion topic during the Informal EPSCO Council in February 2026.

### COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Recognising the crucial role of social partners and stakeholders the Cyprus Presidency will emphasise collective responsibility in achieving the objectives of the Union of Skills. This priority will be central to discussions at the 25th Board Meeting of the European Network of Public Employment Services in June 2026, contributing to the broader aim of enhancing European workforce skills, ensuring competitiveness and social cohesion across the EU.

### LABOUR MOBILITY FOR COMPETITIVENESS AND PRODUCTIVITY

The Presidency will highlight fair labour mobility as a vital element of a resilient and cohesive European labour market. In an era marked by demographic changes, skills shortages, and the transition to the green and digital age, promoting equitable mobility among Member States, while safeguarding workers' rights, is essential for the Union's competitiveness.

With reference to the upcoming **Fair Labour Mobility Package**, the Presidency will promote discussions that contribute to a coordinated European approach that protects workers' rights, enhance the coordination of social security systems and social cohesion, and ensure a modern and fair framework for labour mobility across the Union. The Cyprus Presidency will strive to finalise the negotiations on the **Regulation on social security coordination** that aims to revise the rules and modernise EU social security coordination law.

## SOCIAL POLICY

Leaving no one behind and ensuring a better future for all, relies on strengthening the EU's Social Model and Agenda. This is achieved by enhancing social inclusion and targeting poverty by concurrently addressing the challenges of a just, green and digital shift.

The implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** is essential in ensuring a strong social Europe. The Cyprus Presidency will thus support the upcoming **New Action Plan**, aimed at reinforcing the Pillar's implementation. In parallel, the forthcoming first-ever **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy** will be a key priority, reaffirming the commitment to providing protection, ensuring access to essential services, and advancing the fight against poverty across the Union.

## WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN

Safeguarding the wellbeing of our children will constitute a priority. The Cyprus Presidency will support the **European Child Guarantee** initiative enabling every child to thrive and reach its full potential. Efforts will focus on enhancing visibility and advancing initiatives aimed at tackling child poverty, promoting participation in accessible, affordable and high-quality early childhood education and care in line with the Barcelona targets. Key initiatives will include the adoption of relevant Council Conclusions and a High-Level Conference dedicated to children's wellbeing, in May 2026.



## EMPOWERMENT AND SUPPORT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In line with the 2nd phase of the **European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030)** and the principles and values embedded in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities the Presidency will focus on advancing disability rights, promoting active participation and full inclusion and supporting high-quality, community-based and person-centred services.

Flagship initiatives will include a High-Level Conference on the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities and a Disability Platform meeting to be held in May 2026.

## STRENGTHENING LONG-TERM CARE AND ACTIVE AGEING

Europe's ageing population is one of the most significant demographic and social challenges within the EU with far-reaching implications for health systems, labour markets, social services and care systems. Promoting a shared vision on ageing and high-quality care that upholds dignity, solidarity and intergenerational balance, in line with the **European Care Strategy** and the principles enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights will be a priority for the Cyprus Presidency. Strengthening Long-Term Care and Active Ageing, will be central to the discussions during the informal EPSCO Council in February 2026.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Against the backdrop of intensifying housing challenges across Europe and growing political momentum at EU level, housing constitutes a key priority for the Cyprus Presidency. Access to affordable, adequate and sustainable housing is recognised as a fundamental social right and a cornerstone for social cohesion, economic stability and territorial balance, particularly in rural, remote and vulnerable areas.

The Presidency will aim to strengthen the European dimension of housing policy, building on the **European Affordable Housing Plan**, and any subsequent Commission initiatives and legislative proposals stemming from it with due regard for the principle of subsidiarity and national competences. Housing will be addressed as a cross-cutting issue, linked to demography, energy efficiency and the fight against energy poverty.

The Informal Ministerial Conference on Housing, to be held in May 2026, will provide a high-level platform for strategic dialogue, experience-sharing, and consensus-building among Member States with a view to advancing discussions on the European housing agenda.

## GENDER EQUALITY

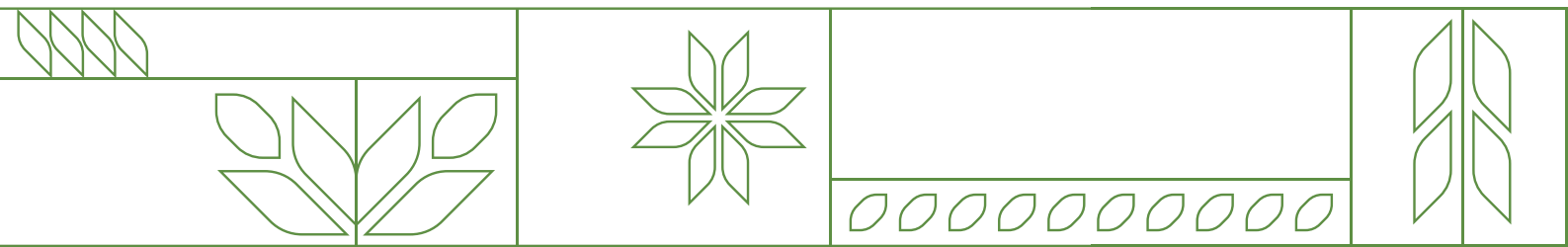
The Cyprus Presidency will keep gender equality high on the EU's agenda, with a strategic focus on combating cyber violence against girls aged 13 to 18. In line with the Beijing Platform for Action, particularly the priority areas of "The Girl-Child" and "Violence Against Women", the Presidency will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

The Cyprus Presidency will also foster intergovernmental collaboration through key events bringing together policymakers, civil society, youth representatives, and the private sector, and will represent EU at the 70th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in March 2026.

The Presidency will actively support and contribute to the implementation of key European initiatives promoting gender equality, including the **EU Roadmap for Women's Rights**. The Presidency will also host a High-Level event in Brussels in March 2026 on the forthcoming **European Strategy for Gender Equality 2026-30**.

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## HEALTH

The Cyprus Presidency will promote mental health, ensuring the active engagement of all stakeholders in the development of relevant policies, with a special focus on youth and inclusiveness, holding discussions at the High-Level Conference in Cyprus in January and the Informal EPSCO Health Council meeting in February 2026.

35 In the field of pharmaceuticals, the Presidency will further advance the legislative work, aimed at improving access to, availability and supply of medicinal products in all Member States. It will seek to finalise negotiations with the European Parliament on the Critical Medicines Act, which complements the set of regulatory measures within the revision of the EU Pharmaceutical legislation.

Safeguarding sufficient funding for health actions, programs and initiatives within the new MFF, will be another important priority.

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

The targeted revision of the EU **Regulation on Medical Devices and in vitro Diagnostic Medical Devices** will be advanced during the Cyprus Presidency, with a focus on simplification and innovation within the EU market while ensuring the affordability, accessibility, safety and effectiveness of medical devices.

The Presidency will also initiate discussions on the **Biotech Act**, focusing on health-related biotechnology to retain Europe's global leadership, competitiveness and attractiveness in this sector.

The upcoming **EU Cardiovascular Action Plan** will constitute another important priority. Building on the work of previous Presidencies, the Cyprus Presidency intends to organise a dedicated policy event.

Cooperation with third countries, as well as regional and international organisations-especially the World Health Organisation (WHO)-is essential to address new and emerging health threats. To this end, the Cyprus Presidency will coordinate the ongoing preparations for the **agreement with EEA countries on medical countermeasures** and the way forward for the **Annex on Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing to the Pandemic Convention**, ensuring that Europe's partnerships and preparedness architecture remain robust, inclusive, and future proof.

The Presidency will promote the effective implementation of the **European Health Data Space** as a means of integrating health systems and completing the **European Health Union**. It will support the creation of a unified, robust, and secure health data ecosystem within the EU, aimed at improving the delivery of health services through broader data exchange and fostering innovation in the health sector, including AI solutions.



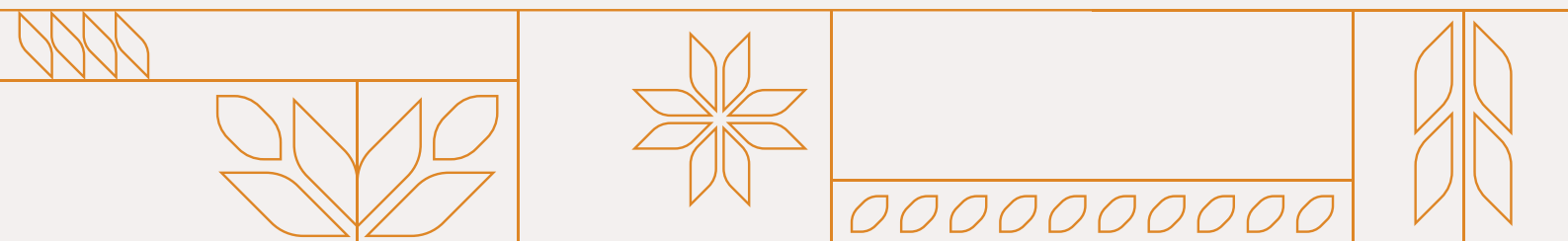
# Competitiveness Council (COMPET)

*In an increasingly complex global environment that is reshaping global trade, energy security, and economic policies, Europe must strengthen its economic resilience, secure critical raw materials, and advance long-term growth, while fostering a robust European research and innovation landscape. A strong and competitive Union is essential to sustaining Europe's open strategic autonomy and its capacity to define and pursue its own strategic choices in a rapidly changing global environment. Competitiveness is the foundation of that strength and will be a central driver of Europe's future.*

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In close cooperation with Member States, the European Commission and key stakeholders, the Cyprus Presidency will translate its vision into action in the COMPET Council by advancing industrial modernisation, reinforcing strategic value chains and improving the business environment. This includes creating a predictable and simplified regulatory framework to boost productive investment, and strengthen the Single Market, enhancing the EU's economic sovereignty and global competitiveness.

Building on these priorities, the Cyprus Presidency will advance a balanced and competitive European research and innovation framework that advances excellence and closes innovation gaps. As space technologies emerge as the next technology frontier, the Presidency will also prioritise efforts to enhance EU's role in this domain.





## INTERNAL MARKET AND INDUSTRY

The Cyprus Presidency will prioritise reinforcing the coherence, resilience, and depth of the Single Market, in line with the Union's shared objective of fostering a more competitive, innovative, and integrated European economy.

Efforts will focus on ensuring the effective and timely **implementation** of the **Single Market Strategy**, with particular attention to removing unjustified barriers and easing administrative complexity that constrain investment, innovation, and the full expression of Europe's entrepreneurial capacity. In this context, the Cyprus Presidency will aim to advance the **Single Market and Customs Programme (SMCP)** for the period 2028-2034, enhancing the efficiency and modernisation of the EU's Single Market, customs, and related governance systems.

The Presidency attaches high importance to SMEs, recognising their pivotal role in Europe's economic development, employment, and social cohesion, as well as their contribution to the Union's overall competitiveness. It will support actions to facilitate cross-border operations, enhance access to finance, accelerate digital transformation, and foster sustainable business growth and scale-up.

These initiatives will be closely aligned with broader measures to enhance Europe's industrial competitiveness, essential for the Union's long-term resilience, strategic autonomy, and global leadership, while advancing the green and digital transitions.

Within this framework, the Presidency will work to initiate and advance negotiations on the upcoming **Industrial Accelerator Act** and to ensure that the Union's climate ambition is underpinned by concrete and enabling measures. Building on the **Clean Industrial Deal**, the Presidency will seek to reinforce strategic value chains, promote industrial modernisation, and ensure a regulatory framework that encourages sustainable investment, technological advancement, and the development of skilled and innovative industrial ecosystems, including the planned **revision of the Chips Act**.

The Presidency will contribute to advancing discussions on the **European Competitiveness Fund** within the new MFF, a key instrument to strengthen Europe's industrial base, drive innovation and skills, support the Union's decarbonisation efforts, reinforce technological leadership and long-term competitiveness.

The Presidency will also support the **structured implementation of the Competitiveness Compass** to ensure that industrial, climate and social objectives are pursued in a balanced and coherent manner across EU policies. Particular attention will be devoted to the needs of energy-intensive industries and SMEs, to ensure that the clean and resilient transition remains fair, inclusive and economically sustainable.

In the area of **Company Law**, the Presidency will initiate work on the **28<sup>th</sup> Regime** and support efforts to streamline procedures and reduce the administrative burden for European companies.

As part of the **Intellectual Property** agenda, the Presidency will seek to advance discussions on the **Patent package** and coordinate the EU's positions at the meetings of the World Intellectual Property Organisation. It will also support efforts for a **robust copyright framework** and monitor the developments related to emerging technologies and their impact on intellectual property rights.

In the field of **Consumer Protection**, the Cyprus Presidency will actively promote the **New Consumer Agenda 2025–2030**. It will work towards the adoption of relevant Council Conclusions. Safeguarding vulnerable consumers and upholding high standards of protection and information will remain key priorities.

The Cyprus Presidency will also **promote consistent and effective enforcement of EU Competition rules** to ensure a level playing field and foster innovation. It will support the modernisation of the antitrust and state aid legislative framework to reflect market developments and current EU strategic priorities.

The Presidency is committed to advance a collaborative dialogue on the **Public Procurement Directives**,

facilitating a balanced and effective revision that enhances resilience, transparency and sustainability. It will also address the need to streamline sectoral legislation containing public procurement provisions to ensure simplification, legal certainty, and reduced administrative burden.

The Cyprus Presidency will seek to **improve the EU regulatory framework** to boost competitiveness, entrepreneurship and investment. Building on the **Trio Presidency non-paper on Better Regulation**, the Presidency will promote the systematic use of competitiveness checks, SMEs' tests and impact assessments in new EU legislation, while pursuing simplification and burden reduction.

## TOURISM

The Cyprus Presidency will work on a forward-looking agenda to enhance the competitiveness, resilience and sustainability of the EU tourism ecosystem. Building on the **EU Transition Pathway for Tourism**, the **report on the Tourism Agenda 2030** and the upcoming **Sustainable Tourism Strategy**, the Presidency aims to highlight policies fostering balanced, inclusive and sustainable tourism models that benefit both communities and the environment, while meeting travellers' ever-evolving needs and expectations.

The Informal Meeting of EU Tourism Ministers will be a key opportunity to discuss the new Sustainable Tourism Strategy, as well as to keep tourism a priority in the EU agenda.

The Cyprus Presidency aims at the adoption of Council Conclusions on tourism in May 2026, addressing the key areas of concern for the future of EU tourism.

## RESEARCH

Research and innovation are vital for boosting the EU's global competitiveness, resilience and strategic autonomy. The Cyprus Presidency will strive to **promote a balanced EU R&I landscape** that fosters excellence, reduces innovation gaps across Member States, and supports deeper integration of the single market.

The Presidency will also aim to achieve significant progress on the negotiations of the **Horizon Europe 2028-2034**. Efforts will also focus on promoting sufficient support for cutting-edge research, simplifying EU funding instruments to maximise impact and close the gap from research to market-ready innovation.

The Presidency will advance initiatives that facilitate the scaling of innovative enterprises, enhance access to funding, and promote more favourable conditions for startups and SMEs. In this context, it will be ready to advance discussions on key proposals, such as the **European Innovation Act**.

The Presidency will also refine instruments supporting traditional sectors of the European economy, such as coal and steel, to facilitate the green transition and strengthen the EU's resilience and security, by negotiating a revision of the **Fund for Coal and Steel**.

Emphasis will also be placed on the importance of international R&I partnerships, promoting science diplomacy in alignment with the **EU Global Gateway** and the **Strategic Agenda 2024–2029**.

The Cyprus Presidency will promote innovation ecosystems, underpinned by digital technologies including AI, high-performance computing, and data infrastructures. It will work to bolster Europe's capabilities in these areas, following the newly announced **Startup and Scaleup Strategy** as well as the **AI Continent Action Plan**.



## SPACE

The space sector is a strategic asset for the EU. It enables critical services that underpin numerous EU policies — from climate action and environmental protection to security and defence, connectivity, and crisis management — while also driving economic growth, creating high-skilled jobs, and supporting industrial development.

The Cyprus Presidency will steer discussions on the **EU Space Act**, which aims to establish a harmonised legislative framework for space activities across the EU to ensure safety, resilience, and environmental sustainability.

The Presidency will also prioritise advancing negotiations for the **Space component of European Competitiveness Fund**, as part of the new MFF. The Presidency will work to secure continued investment in the Union's core space capacities and assets, including

Copernicus, Galileo, EGNOS, and GOVSATCOM, as well as in strategic initiatives such as the European Quantum Communication Infrastructure (EuroQCI) and the IRIS<sup>2</sup> satellite constellation.

Efforts will also focus on the forthcoming **EUSPA Regulation proposal** to strengthen the Agency's role in fostering innovation, ensuring secure and resilient space services, and promoting the uptake of EU space assets. These efforts will be instrumental in maintaining Europe's leadership in secure, resilient, and cutting-edge space infrastructure and services.

The Cyprus Presidency will highlight the inclusion of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and start-ups into the space sector by addressing market obstacles, enhancing access to financing and procurement opportunities, and supporting a diversified and resilient industrial base.





# Transport, Telecoms and Energy Council (TTE)

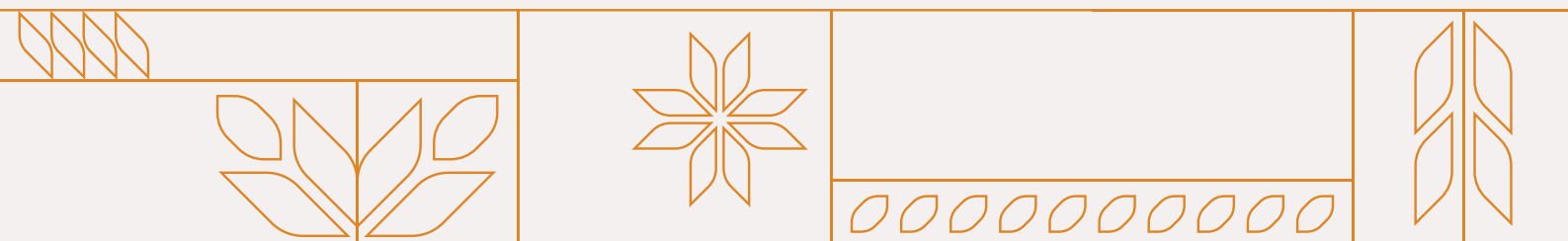
***The Cyprus Presidency will drive the TTE Council's agenda to shape a future-ready Europe by strengthening its competitiveness, resilience and strategic autonomy in transport, telecommunications and energy. Advancing negotiations that will facilitate the funding for these sectors through the relevant instruments of the new MFF will be a priority. At the same time, decarbonisation efforts in both the transport and energy sectors beyond 2030 will be an area of particular attention.***

In transport, the Presidency will accelerate efforts to forge an integrated, well-connected European transport network enabling seamless intermodal mobility.

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In telecommunications, the Cyprus Presidency will prioritise secure and resilient connectivity while advancing the EU's competitiveness and digital sovereignty in an open and inclusive manner. It will promote efforts to simplify digital and data frameworks, and drive innovation in key technologies such as AI and cloud computing. It will strengthen cooperation on cybersecurity to protect critical infrastructure and reinforce collective resilience across the Union.

In energy, the Presidency will contribute to building a resilient, self-sufficient and truly integrated Energy Union, with citizen empowerment at its core. Key priorities include enhancing grid infrastructure and interconnections, advancing towards a digitalised and cyber-resilient energy sector and fostering inclusive dialogues and coordinated actions that support energy affordably.





## TRANSPORT

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

The Presidency will prioritise **air and sea connectivity, including by advancing the legislative proposals on air passenger rights**. Affordable and reliable air links are essential for the territorial and social cohesion of the Union and serve as a fundamental key enabler for European citizens' mobility. Particular attention will be given to the specific challenges faced by island and peripheral regions. To this end, the Presidency will organise an Aviation Summit focusing on air connectivity, sustainability and competitiveness. The Presidency will also support the EU's active participation in the work of the UN International Civil Aviation Organisation.

The enforcement of passengers' rights, the implementation of fast and effective multimodal connections between ports, airports and land transport networks-serving both passengers and freight- will enhance transnational coordination and support the development of an integrated passenger transport system. This will help reduce existing disparities and create opportunities for smart transport solutions and services. In this context, the Presidency will prioritise the completion of the negotiations with the European Parliament on the Regulations ensuring **Passengers' Rights**.

Acknowledging that Europe's ports serve as critical gateways to the continent and as central nodes in our supply chains, the Cyprus Presidency will aim to ensure seamless and unrestricted access to ports, where modern supply chains can thrive under the principles of free trade. In this context, the Presidency will advance discussions on the **forthcoming EU Ports Strategy** with the aim of adopting Council Conclu-

sions. Special emphasis will be placed on strengthening connectivity, ensuring security, and developing the infrastructure necessary to meet the EU's decarbonisation objectives, while further promoting the **establishment and implementation of the European Maritime Space**. The Presidency will also focus in enhancing Europe's maritime connectivity through the **European Transport Corridors**.

The Presidency will also work on the forthcoming proposal on boosting zero-emission vehicle uptake in corporate fleets.

Transport Ministers will contribute on the Military Mobility Package negotiations, a key initiative aimed at removing regulatory barriers, establishing an emergency framework, enhancing pooling and sharing capabilities, and strengthening governance and coordination.

As part of these efforts, the Presidency will host a High-Level Meeting on the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), focusing on integration, security and investment needs. The Presidency will also pay particular attention to the transport challenges faced by peripheral countries and regions, working to ensure the timely and effective **completion of the European Transport Corridors**.

The Cyprus Presidency will aim to advance the negotiations on **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF III) 2028–2034** – a key funding instrument under the new MFF, strategically boosting transport.

## ROAD TRANSPORT

The Presidency will also place emphasis on road safety and the sustainable development of road transport. Consequently, it will advance negotiations on legislative proposals such as the **Roadworthiness Package** which aligns with broader EU Strategies like the **Road Safety Policy Framework 2021–2030**, and the **Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy**.

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

The Presidency will continue trilogues on the **Weights and Dimensions Directive**, with a view to supporting greener freight transport and contributing to the EU's decarbonisation objectives. It will also aim to achieve progress on the targeted amendment of the **Eurovignette Directive** (CO2 emissions class on heavy duty vehicles).

The Presidency will resume work on **the discontinuation of seasonal time changes**, depending on developments in this legislative process.

## MARITIME TRANSPORT

The EU maritime cluster faces significant challenges from international competition, as well as high capital costs and ageing workforce. The Presidency will work on the upcoming **EU Industrial Maritime Strategy** to strengthen the competitiveness, sustainability and resilience of the EU shipping, shipbuilding and maritime manufacturing sector, with the aim of reaching Council Conclusions. The European maritime industry is vital to the EU's strategic interests; therefore, the development of the new strategy should support the global competitiveness of the EU shipping sector. In this respect it will work towards further advancing the discussions on EU submissions and coordination at the International Maritime Organisation.

Emphasis will be placed on the reinforcement of strategic initiatives for investing in the education and training (up-skilling and re-skilling) of seafarers, to successfully adapt to the green and digital transition, as well as on measures fostering an inclusive workforce which further enhances women's participation in the maritime sector. In this context, the Presidency will support efforts towards the endorsement

of a **Lefkosia Declaration on Enhancing Seafarers' Education and Promoting Women's Inclusivity in the Shipping Industry**.

## DIGITAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The EU is well placed to drive the creation of a secure, competitive, resilient, and innovative digital ecosystem - one that empowers citizens, strengthens business, and supports an inclusive, future-ready digital society.

The Cyprus Presidency will focus on reinforcing secure connectivity frameworks, encouraging investment in next-generation infrastructure, and tackling both current and emerging digital challenges to support the evolution of a more **robust and efficient digital economy**.

The Presidency is also committed to steering discussions on the **digital component of European Competitiveness Fund** of the new MFF, recognising its strategic importance in enabling the EU to achieve its long-term digital objectives.

In supporting the launch of discussions on the forthcoming **Digital Networks Act (DNA)**, the Presidency will help advance efforts to reinforce **Europe's digital competitiveness, digital sovereignty, and resilience in the digital age**, while upholding an open and innovation-friendly approach.

The Cyprus Presidency will initiate work on the forthcoming **Cloud and AI Development Act (CAIDA)** to advance technological leadership and strategic innovation.

Simplifying administrative processes remains a key objective. The Presidency will seek to deliver tangible progress on the **European Business Wallet**, supporting Europe's wider vision to reduce administrative burdens, facilitating business operations, and fostering seamless cross-border interoperability vital to unlocking the Digital Single Market's full potential.

As regulatory efficiency becomes ever more critical the Cyprus Presidency will **drive progress on the Digital Simplification Omnibus** to streamline and modernise the EU's digital framework.

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The Presidency will support promoting a **safer digital environment for children and young people**, by reinforcing efforts to ensure their effective protection in the digital sphere.

The Cyprus Presidency will promote digital diplomacy by prioritising strengthened bilateral and multilateral digital cooperation to support the EU's long-term digital goals. Engagement with both established and emerging partners will centre on fostering inclusion, strengthening resilience, and advancing a secure, rights-based global digital environment.

## CYBER

The Cyprus Presidency will prioritise **boosting the EU's cyber resilience**, with special attention to safeguarding critical infrastructure - both essential and important entities -and ensuring the protection of key digital services.

Achieving a consistently high level of cybersecurity across all Member States is crucial for the safety of citizens, the stability of businesses, and the integrity of the internal market. The Presidency intends to **advance negotiations** on the revision of the **Cybersecurity Act**, with the objective of reinforcing the EU's cybersecurity framework and modernising ENISA's mandate.

The Presidency will work to deepen cooperation and strengthen capacities among Member States and relevant stakeholders - particularly through the CSIRTs Network and CyCLONe -by enhancing the sharing of experience and best practices. It will further promote trust and joint preparedness across the EU cybersecurity landscape to bolster Europe's collective resilience to cross-sector and cross-border cyber threats.

## ENERGY

The energy sector remains a cornerstone of EU's strategic interests, particularly in light of current geopolitical challenges. Securing a diverse and reliable energy supply is key to reinforcing the Union's resilience and strengthening its global competitiveness. Promoting consumer participation and empowering citizens to produce and manage their energy resources can foster a more inclusive and democratic energy transition.

The demands of energy transition and the need for a more efficient, cost-effective, and resilient energy infrastructure require energy grids to adapt to a more decentralised, digitalised, and flexible energy system. Digitalisation - supported by automation and AI - is essential for integrating renewable energy sources, managing the complexity of decentralised resources,

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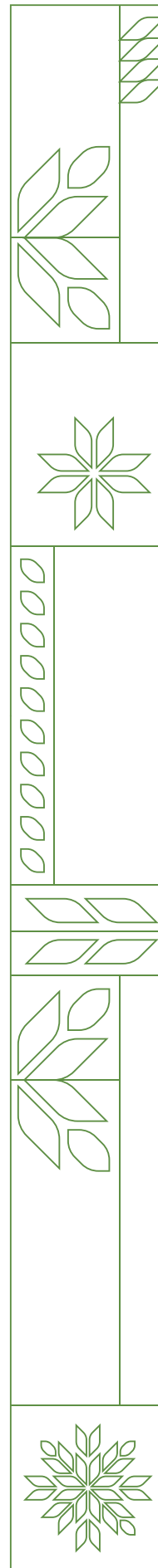


and enhancing system stability and reliability. Building on existing initiatives, the Cyprus Presidency will facilitate discussions on the **strategic roadmap for digitalisation and AI in the energy sector**.

**Strong and resilient interconnected energy systems** can reduce existing dependencies on fossil fuels, support the integration of abundant renewable resources, enhance energy security through diversified sources and supply routes, and advance EU decarbonisation.

Therefore, the Presidency will prioritise strengthening interconnections between Member States, as well as with reliable neighbours, while also advancing energy storage solutions that address renewable intermittency, increase grid flexibility, and enable greater demand-side response. Together, **enhanced interconnections and energy storage are key enablers of the clean energy transition**. The Presidency will also promote a more consumer-centric energy market by empowering citizens with information and incentives. In this context, the Cyprus Presidency will work to advance negotiations on the **European Grids Package**, as well as on the forthcoming revision of the architecture of the **Security of Supply for our Energy Union**.

While recognising that electricity prices should reflect the real cost of electricity generation, and serve as reliable market and investment signals, current conditions call for the EU to urgently focus on measures and actions to achieve affordable prices in order to improve its global competitiveness. This requires reviewing how its internal regulations on competition and state aid might affect its position in the international marketplace. To support this objective, the Cyprus Presidency will contribute to the implementation of the **Action Plan for Affordable Energy** and its follow-up strategies. It will also promote work on de-risking measures to shield EU businesses and households from the additional costs associated with the transition to clean energy, while ensuring that they are active participants and beneficiaries of the energy transition.





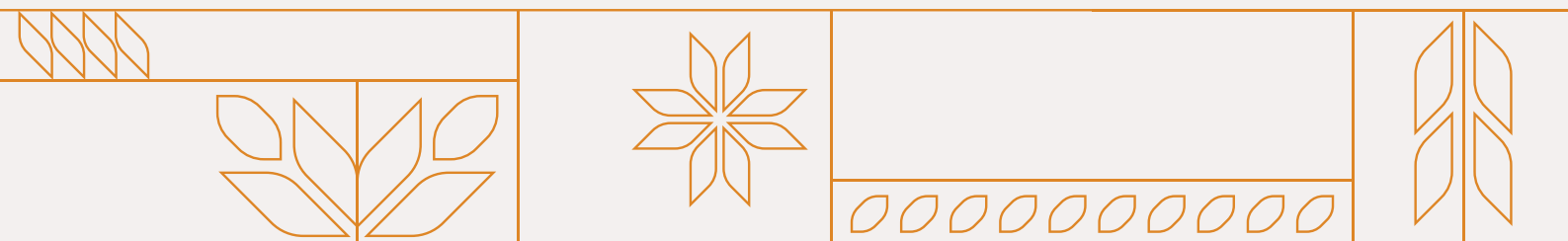
# Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH)

***Agriculture and fisheries are vital economic drivers that sustain Europe's rural and coastal communities, ensuring a stable supply of safe, high-quality food for all citizens while supporting strategic autonomy, environmental management, and the resilience of local regions.***

The Cyprus Presidency will promote a fair, competitive and sustainable primary production sector, take forward a comprehensive approach to the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and provide guidance for a reinforced Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

The Presidency will advance robust legislative frameworks that support farmers and fishers in facing climate impacts, market disruptions, animal and plant health risks and rising production costs – all of which threaten the stability and viability of these critical sectors.

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## A RESILIENT AND COMPETITIVE AGRICULTURAL POLICY

The Cyprus Presidency will work to reinforce the competitiveness, sustainability and long-term attractiveness of EU agriculture sector, addressing the serious challenges arising from climate change, biodiversity loss, forest vulnerabilities and geopolitical instability.

The Presidency will facilitate the political discussions on the proposed **CAP** package 2028-2034, including the CAP sectoral proposal. It will advance discussions on the **Common Markets Organisations (CMO)** proposals to provide a robust and adaptive legislative response ensuring food security and a fair standard of living for the agricultural community. It will also address market and self-sufficiency challenges to support the viability of farmers in a continuously changing local and international environment.

Ways for improving crisis prevention and response – including fire prevention measures and crisis management tools – will also be a priority.

Further CAP simplification will also be pursued to relieve our farmers from unnecessary administrative burden.

## AN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR THAT SECURES EU FOOD PRODUCTION

The Presidency will support the preservation of a robust and resilient internal market. It will enable regular debates on agriculture-related trade issues and agricultural markets.

On agriculture trade policy, the Presidency will seek a balance between market access and maintaining the competitiveness of European agricultural sector. Dependencies of the EU's food system on imported agricultural products and inputs should be reduced, and diversification of markets should be further promoted without compromising the supply of safe high-quality food for EU consumers.



## A SINGLE MARKET WITH SIMPLIFIED TOOLS SUPPORTING FARMERS

Our farmers should be protected from market imbalances through fit-for-purpose measures to safeguard their competitiveness. The Cyprus Presidency will advance initiatives that strengthen the position of farmers within the agri-food supply chain.

In this context, the Presidency will follow-up on the **report** on the evaluation of the **Unfair Trading Practices Directive** which provides an important opportunity to assess the effectiveness of existing tools. It also offers a basis for identifying possible improvements to ensure a fairer and more resilient agri-food supply chain.

The Presidency will promote measures that ensure fairer value distribution, improve producers' resilience to market and climate-related challenges. It will also strengthen their negotiating capacity, and support innovation and generational renewal in rural areas.

Farmers need simplified legislative tools to overcome both sectoral and market challenges, and safeguard their position in the food supply chain. The Presidency will advance negotiations on the **Plant Reproductive Material Regulation** aiming to provide a simplified and coherent framework, which ensures the high quality of seeds and other plant reproductive materials placed on the EU market, supports biodiversity, fosters innovation, and promotes sustainable agricultural practices.





## ANIMAL WELFARE

The Cyprus Presidency will take forward the proposal for the **Regulation on the protection of animals during transport** to achieve the highest possible level of animal protection, taking into consideration the national and geographical specificities of the Member States and the needs of the sector's businesses. Progress on **simplification proposals on the EU animal welfare legislation** will also be pursued.

## A STRENGTHENED, SUSTAINABLE COMMON FISHERIES POLICY FOR THE PROSPERITY OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES

The Cyprus Presidency will promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture to ensure the competitiveness of the sector, a level-playing field with third countries, and the long-term health of marine resources, in line with the CFP.

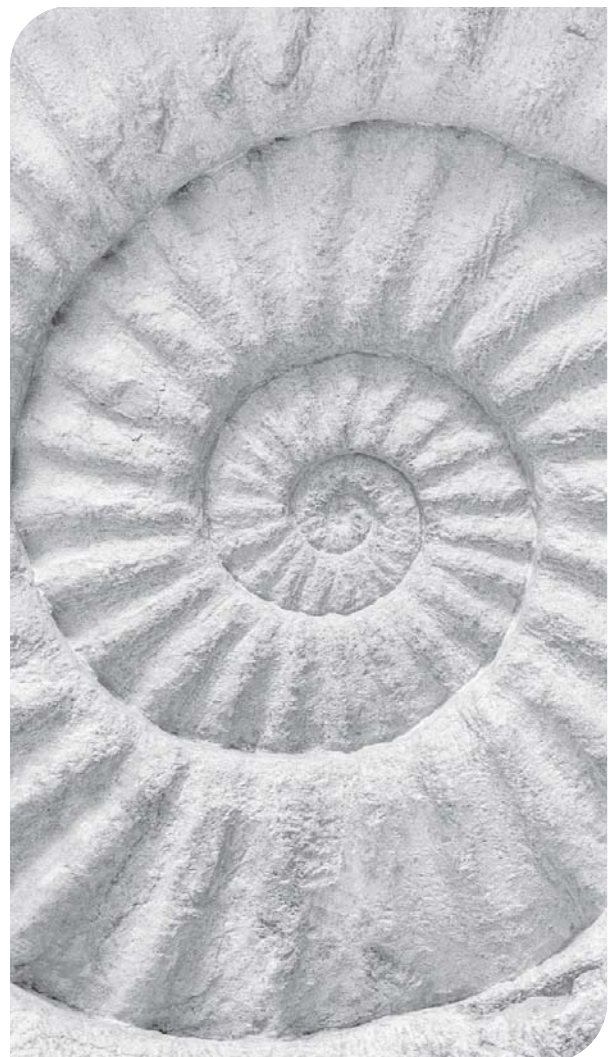
The Presidency will promote negotiations on possible proposals for amendments of regulations regarding the 2026-2027 fishing opportunities as well as facilitate the discussions on the annual consultation for the 2027-2028 fishing opportunities. The Presidency will rely on the best available scientific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

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

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

In the context of the new MFF, the Presidency will give priority to the **sectoral CFP proposal**.

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





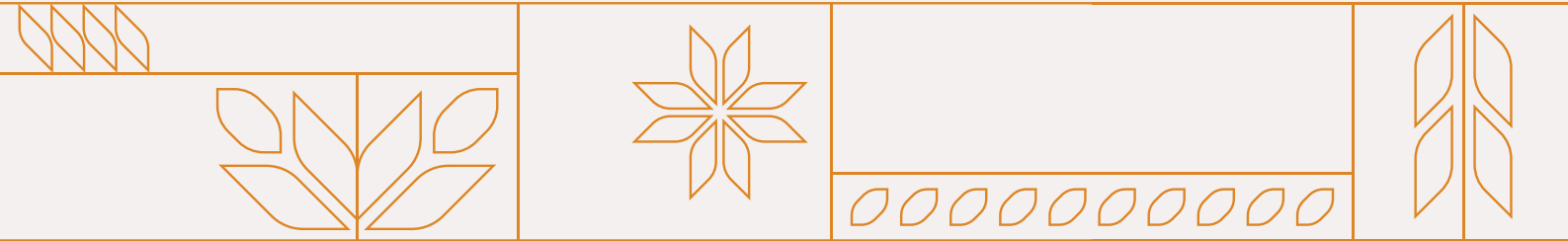
# Environment Council (ENVI)

*The EU faces growing environmental challenges that require coordinated and effective action. The Cyprus Presidency will work to strengthen the Union’s response by supporting a sustainable, resilient and competitive Europe that protects the environment and contributes to global progress.*

The Presidency will advance the green transition by promoting climate action and climate adaptation, sustainable resource management and circular economic development, while contributing to the EU’s broader strategic objectives. It will also support efforts that uphold environmental justice and reinforce the Union’s capacity to address environmental risks.

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In pursuing these goals, the Cyprus Presidency will aim to deliver meaningful progress and ensure that Europe continues to play a leading role in climate diplomacy, environmental stewardship and green innovation.





## SHAPING EUROPE'S SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

In environment protection and climate action, the Cyprus Presidency will focus its efforts on advancing the **implementation of the European Green Deal** policy initiatives. The Presidency's priorities are to support the transformation of the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy, and to tackle the urgent need to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

The Presidency will advance work on the **Environmental Omnibus Package**, aimed at simplifying and streamlining the EU environmental acquis.

### CLIMATE POLICY

**Combating climate change** will be one of the main priorities of the Cyprus Presidency. It will advance the EU's collective efforts towards achieving climate neutrality by 2050, building on the progress made.

Recognising the significant role of the transport sector in the EU's decarbonisation pathway, the Presidency will advance discussions on the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from road transport, including initiatives related to passenger cars and light commercial vehicles. In this regard, it will promote innovative, sustainable and technologically neutral solutions.

### WATER RESILIENCE AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION

As water-related crises continue to grow in what is a security issue, the Cyprus Presidency will advance discussions on the **Water Resilience Strategy**, focusing on the need for urgent action to improve water resilience across Europe by reducing water consumption, improving water efficiency, managing water stress, and protecting and restoring water bodies.

Emphasis will be placed on fostering **synergies between** the forthcoming **European Climate Adaptation Plan** and the **Water Resilience Strategy**, with a

view to strengthening Europe's resilience to climate-related risks and safeguarding the sustainable management of natural resources.

Discussions on water reuse and desalination will focus on the utilisation of natural and technological solutions on water management, the integration of conventional and non-conventional resources to meet Member States' diverse needs and the promotion of water sustainability through innovative and integrated strategies. Particular attention will be attributed to the advancement of knowledge and expertise on water technologies and the promotion of feasible innovative solutions that minimise environmental impact, while fully leveraging available EU funding mechanisms.

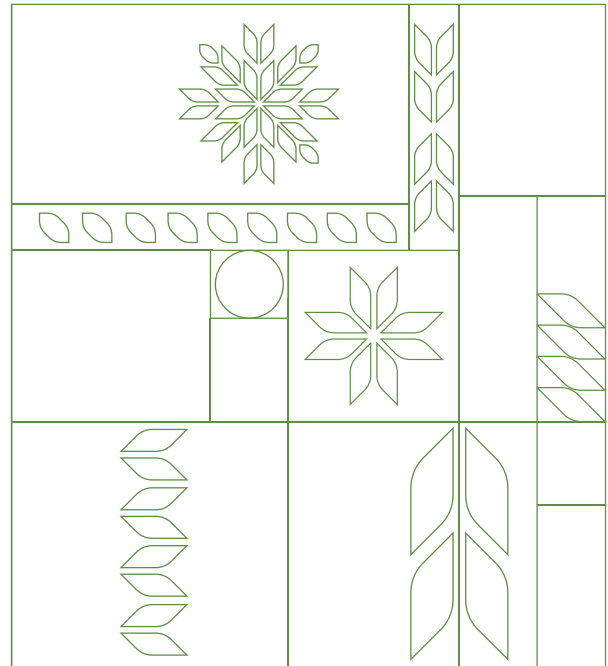


## CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND ZERO POLLUTION

A successful green transition depends on embedding the **circular economy** principle across all economic activities and throughout the life cycle stages of products. The Cyprus Presidency will lead Council discussions on the preparation of the forthcoming **EU Circular Economy Act**. The proposal will enhance resource management, reduce waste generation, promote circular practices, and create a market for circular products and services.

The Presidency will also foster discussions, with the aim of facilitating the adoption of Council Conclusions on the new **EU Bioeconomy Strategy**, focusing on bio-based innovations, green job creation, and workforce development through upskilling and reskilling. The objective is to promote circularity, sustainability and entrepreneurship while unlocking investment for sustainable bio-based solutions.

Regarding zero pollution, the Cyprus Presidency will initiate work on the forthcoming revision of the **REACH** Regulation, aiming to simplify and modernise the EU chemicals framework, ensuring a high level of protection for human health and the environment while enhancing industry competitiveness.



## EU'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

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The Cyprus Presidency will actively seek to strengthen the EU's leadership role, at the international level, in addressing global environmental challenges. The Presidency will coordinate and represent the EU and its Member States at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee during the negotiations on the international instrument on plastic pollution, at the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP15), at the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body in Bonn, and at the preparation of the United Nations Water Conference 2026.

Finally, the Presidency will work on preparing the EU's participation at other international meetings focusing on critical environmental issues such as Climate, Biodiversity, Chemicals, Desertification and Water, contributing further to the global efforts to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



## Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS)

*Europe's education systems play a decisive role in shaping the Union's future, making it essential to strengthen skills, promote learning opportunities, and enhance social development.*

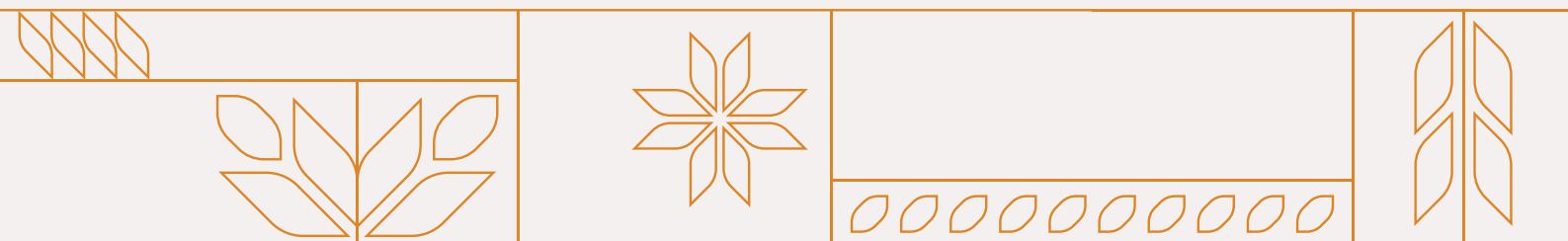
The Cyprus Presidency will advance this agenda by focusing on skills for all, empowering teachers, and reinforcing vocational and higher education in line with the European Education Area. Priority will also be given to learning mobility, citizenship education and inclusive learner-centred approaches that promote lifelong learning and social inclusion.

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The EU must continue to invest in its youth, by equipping young people with the skills and opportunities to actively shape Europe's future. The Presidency will thus promote more youth-friendly policies that strengthen trust and active participation.

In culture, the Cyprus Presidency will highlight culture's strategic role in safeguarding EU values. The Presidency will also prioritise the protection of cultural rights and cultural heritage, with a particular focus on combating the illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

In sport, the Presidency will promote sport tourism, active ageing and mental health while strengthening integrity and good governance.



## EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING

The Cyprus Presidency will promote a comprehensive learner-centred approach to skills, fully aligned with the **European Education Area**, and the Union of Skills. Emphasis will be placed on citizenship education, inclusion, lifelong learning, and strengthening competences for the digital and green transitions.

The Presidency will advance discussions on teachers, supporting professional development, career attractiveness and **empowering teachers for the future**. It will thus propose the adoption of Council Conclusions on teachers in the era of AI. The whole-institution approach for **Education for Sustainable Development** will also be advanced. **Vocational Education and Training** will focus on attractiveness and integration of new technologies, especially AI. Higher education priorities will include mobility and internationalisation, labour market-aligned upskilling and reskilling, and advancing the **Joint European Degree**.

In the context of the new MFF, the Cyprus Presidency will drive **Erasmus+** negotiations with a focus on inclusiveness and wider international outreach.

## YOUTH

The Presidency will strengthen dialogue between young people and policymakers, **promoting youth-friendly policy design and implementation**. It will also enhance the integration of youth priorities within national and European policy frameworks.

It will support the review of the **European Youth Strategy** by presenting a resolution on the 2025–2027 work plan and finalising the Trio's work through a resolution on the outcomes of the **11<sup>th</sup> EU Youth Dialogue Cycle**. In addition, the Presidency will stimulate discussions on the next phase of the Youth Strategy.

## CULTURE

The Cyprus Presidency will take forward Council work on the **Culture Compass**, the **"AgoraEU"** proposal under the new MFF and the forthcoming prolongation and revision of the **European Capitals of Culture Decision**. Priorities will include strengthening cultural governance, safeguarding cultural heritage, and addressing disinformation and ethics in the digital society. The Informal Ministerial Meeting will focus on cultural rights and on combating the illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

In Audiovisual and Media, the Presidency will address the implementation of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) and related issues under the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), including trustworthy information sources and service prominence.

## SPORT

The Presidency will propose Council Conclusions on sport tourism as a driver of economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Through this work, it will emphasise the contribution of sport to sustainable development. It will also promote active ageing through the integration of physical activity into healthcare, support mental health initiatives for athletes, and foster discussions on integrity in sport, including WADA policies. The Presidency will further advance work on the strategic framework for EU sport policy, highlighting its contribution to health, well-being and social cohesion. The Presidency will initiate discussion with the Southern Neighbourhood on a possible voluntary, Mediterranean Sport Council, aligned with the Pact for the Mediterranean's People Pillar.