



Brussels, 9 February 2026
(OR. en, bg, fr)

5787/26
PV CONS 3
AG 14
PARLNAT

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

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Council adopted the agenda set out in document 5529/26.

2. Approval of 'A' items

(a) Non-legislative list

5531/26

The Council adopted all "A" items listed in the document above, including all linguistic COR and REV documents presented for adoption.

(b) Legislative list (public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)

5532/26

1. Regulation on phasing out Russian natural gas imports, improving monitoring of potential energy dependencies and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1938



5289/26 + ADD 1
+ ADD 2 REV 1
PE-CONS 63/25
ENER

Adoption of the legislative act

approved by Coreper, Part 1, on 23.01.2026

The Council approved the European Parliament's position at first reading and the proposed act has been adopted pursuant to Article 294(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, with Hungary and Slovakia voting against and Bulgaria abstaining (legal basis: Articles 194(2) and 207 TFEU).

Statements by Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Commission to this item are set out in the Annex.

Non-legislative activities

3. Priorities of the Cyprus Presidency



Presentation by the Presidency

Exchange of views

The Council took note of the presentation by the Presidency of its priorities and held an exchange of views.

4. European Democracy Shield: empowering strong and resilient democracies



5143/26

Exchange of views

5. Annual rule-of-law dialogue: country-specific discussion 5019/26
Exchange of views
6. Any other business
- a) EU macro-regional strategy for the Atlantic 5673/26
Information from Spain
- b) EU's outermost regions 5685/26
Information from France and Portugal

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-  First reading
-  Public debate (Article 8(3) of the Council's Rules of Procedure)
-  Restricted item
-  Item based on a Commission proposal
-

Statements to the legislative "A" items set out in doc. 5532/26

Ad "A" item 1:

Regulation on phasing out Russian natural gas imports, improving monitoring of potential energy dependencies and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1938
Adoption of the legislative act

STATEMENT BY THE COMMISSION

“In order to avoid essential security risks and energy dependencies resulting from continued energy trade with the Russian Federation, the European Commission remains committed to ensuring the phase out of all remaining oil imports from the Russian Federation by end of 2027, in line with the Versailles Declaration.

The Commission intends to table a legislative proposal at the beginning of 2026 to ban oil imports from the Russian Federation as soon as possible, but not later than by end 2027.

The Commission will carefully assess the potential impact of an accelerated termination of oil imports on the security of supply, economy and competitiveness of the most affected Member States.

The Commission will work actively, in a spirit of solidarity, with the directly affected and other relevant Member States, in order to identify appropriate measures to minimise possible risks identified in the assessment, facilitating access to alternative supplies.”

STATEMENT BY BULGARIA

“България изразява подкрепа за стратегическата цел на предложението за Регламент за постепенно прекратяване на вноса на руски природен газ, подобряване на мониторинга на потенциалните енергийни зависимости и за изменение на Регламент (ЕС) 2017/1938 (Регламент REPowerEU).

Вземаме под внимание окончателния компромисен текст на Регламента REPowerEU и по-специално отчитаме елементите на компромиса, свързани с:

- отчитането на спецификите на региона на CESEC и целта за осигуряване на алтернативни доставки на природен газ;
- препратките към целите за запълване на газовите хранилища и
- запазването на клаузата за суспендиране в случаите на риск за сигурността на енергийните доставки.

В същото време поддържахме следните съображения:

- Член 5(8), приложим към „Странджа 1“, не е обоснован, тъй като през тази точка за междусистемно свързване се транзитира единствено природен газ с неруски произход, и води до непропорционална административна тежест за вносителите на газ с неруски произход.
- Окончателният компромисен текст не предвижда достатъчни гаранции срещу потенциални арбитражни производства и финансови санкции за дружества с дългосрочни договори за транзит на природен газ по газопроводи и резервиран капацитет. България настоява за пълна реципрочност, включително за адекватни финансови гаранции за държавата членка, прилагаща регламента на външна граница на ЕС, включително в случаите, в които актът впоследствие бъде отменен или обявен за незаконосъобразен.
- Предложената правна основа за приемането на регламента не е достатъчна.

Предвид гореизложените притеснения и като се отчита, че българските съображения, изложени в писмената декларация за заседанието на Съвет „Енергетика“ на 20 октомври 2025 г., не са отразени в пълна степен, **България гласува „въздържал се“ по окончателния текст на Регламента REPowerEU.**”

STATEMENT BY FRANCE

“En ligne avec la déclaration de Versailles, la France a toujours apporté son soutien plein et entier à la sortie de la dépendance de l’Union européenne aux combustibles fossiles russes.

Lors des négociations sur ce projet de règlement, la France s’est attachée à assurer la solidité juridique du texte et des modalités de mise en œuvre qui permettent de minimiser le risque de contournement des interdictions. À cet égard, la France souligne que **le recours exclusif aux sanctions européennes doit rester la norme pour les mesures restrictives que l’Union européenne décide d’imposer à des pays tiers. L’adoption du règlement REPowerEU sur le gaz a constitué une exception à cette règle qui ne saurait être qu’exceptionnelle, et qui s’est justifiée par des circonstances très particulières.** La France sera donc particulièrement vigilante à toute future mesure d’interdiction qui s’apparenterait à des sanctions, en particulier dans le secteur énergétique.”

STATEMENT BY HUNGARY

“Hungary believes that the composition of the energy mix, as well as decisions regarding supply sources and transport routes and their diversification, must remain in the hands of each Member State. Hungary expresses its utmost concerns that the REPowerEU Regulation fundamentally and negatively affects the energy security, energy prices, the sovereign choice of energy mix. Therefore, we believe that the RepowerEU Regulation interferes with the sovereignty of Member States and does not respect the principle of subsidiarity.

The Hungarian National Assembly issued a reasoned opinion about the significant concerns on subsidiarity.

Hungary has serious doubts concerning the chosen legal basis for the Regulation. In the REPowerEU Regulation there is no common commercial policy objective, while it even goes against the objectives indicated in Article 194(1) TFEU. Hence, we consider it as a ‘de facto sanction’ measure, which could have been adopted solely on the basis of Article 215 TFEU and Article 29 TEU.

Furthermore, Hungary believes that the RepowerEU Regulation violates the principle of solidarity under the Article 194(1) TFEU. The principle of solidarity implies a general obligation on the part of the Union and the Member States to take into account the interests of other actors when exercising their powers. They should avoid taking measures which, in terms of security of supply, economic and political viability, and diversification of supply sources and supply, negatively affect the interests of the Union or the Member States, while, in the event of a conflict, they are required to balance those interests. Having regard to the foreseeable negative economic, social and price consequences of the REPowerEU Regulation on Hungary, such balance has not been found.

In Hungary's opinion the provisions concerning a full import ban do not comply with the principles of necessity and proportionality, as well as the principle of legal certainty including whether they provide sufficient preparation time for those affected by it.

Hungary regrets the fact that no comprehensive, country specific impact assessment has been made, including a competitiveness check on resulting price pressures and volatility, as well as regional security of supply issues. Landlocked Member States, like Hungary are in a specific position that should have been taken into consideration. Moreover, the final phase out date for pipeline gas supply was set regardless to the result of the Commission's regional impact assessment prepared during the trilogues.

Hungary is convinced that the measures outlined in the REPowerEU Regulation will not only lead to higher and more volatile energy prices, - which have already become the biggest impediment to European competitiveness - but also threaten the security of supply, especially in the case of landlocked Member States. While the RepowerEU Regulation includes a suspension clause as a safeguard in case of a sudden and severe supply crisis, it is unlikely to be applicable in practice given the strict circumstances and requirements necessary to trigger it.

Moreover, we also have serious legal reservations, since the RepowerEU Regulation interferes with existing long-term contracts and entails liability on behalf of economic entities and/or Member States. It lacks any financial compensation mechanism to alleviate these liabilities.

The risk of retroactive application of certain provisions remained a potential area of legal challenge in the text such as the date of 17 June 2025 from which date any new Russian gas supply contract is considered under the immediate phase out effect of the REPowerEU Regulation.

Removing infrastructural bottlenecks to establish supply routes for non-Russian energy imports in sufficient quantity would be a prerequisite to address the consequences of the application of the REPowerEU Regulation. Despite this fact, the European Commission still refuses to support the development of fossil fuel infrastructure with EU funds.

Finally, the establishment of more partner country categories together with differentiated authorisation procedures leads to potential discrimination among external gas suppliers, causing commercial and legal challenges.

As a result, Hungary votes against the REPowerEU Regulation and reserves its right to seek its annulment before the Court of Justice of the EU.

At the same time Hungary acknowledges that certain provisions are mirroring the text of the 19th sanction package against the Russian Federation. Hungary states that such legislative method should apply to any potential new measures covering the subject of the sanctions package against the Russian Federation.

Consequently, Hungary stresses that in order to ensure the highest possible degree of legal certainty to Union operators, also to provide clarity about the applicable legal provisions under Union law, the coherence and consistency between different EU laws and policies shall be respected including the exemptions and derogations in Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 as in force at the time.”

STATEMENT BY SLOVAKIA

“The Slovak Republic supports the efforts aimed at gradually reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels. However, such efforts must duly reflect the geographical, infrastructural and economic specificities of the most affected Member States, as well as existing legal constraints.

The Slovak Republic therefore votes against the adoption of the REPowerEU Regulation due to its anticipated negative economic and financial impacts and its potential adverse effects on security of supply.

The Slovak Republic, as a landlocked country without direct access to LNG and oil terminals, has invested significantly and developed gas interconnectors with all neighbouring countries in order to strengthen energy security. However, existing infrastructure bottlenecks outside Slovak territory continue to limit the possibility to diversify gas supplies and to import sufficient volumes in an efficient and cost-effective manner within the proposed timeline. The Regulation does not adequately reflect these constraints and fails to provide the most affected Member States with appropriate instruments to address them.

Furthermore, the Slovak energy system has historically relied on imports of fossil fuels from the Russian Federation secured under long-term contracts. The premature termination of these contracts would expose the Slovak Republic and Slovak market participants to arbitration and other legal proceedings. The Regulation does not establish any safeguards or risk-mitigation framework to address these legal and financial consequences for affected Member States and importers.

Finally, the Slovak Republic reiterates its serious concerns regarding the choice of the legal basis of the Regulation, as well as its compatibility with the principles of proportionality and energy solidarity.”