



Brussels, 30 March 2026
(OR. en)

7436/26
PV CONS 17
AG 49

DRAFT MINUTES
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
(General Affairs)
17 March 2026

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Council adopted the agenda set out in document 6543/26.

2. Approval of "A" items

a) Non-legislative list

6793/26

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

Statements to this item are set out in the Addendum.

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

6794/26

General Affairs

1. Amendment of the European Electoral Act

Agreement in principle

Request for the consent of the European Parliament approved by Coreper, Part 2, on 13.3.2026

S 6821/26 + COR 1
+ ADD 1-3
6708/26
AG

The Council reached an agreement in principle on the Decision and decided to request the consent of the European Parliament in accordance with article 223(1) subparagraph 2 TFEU.

Statements by Hungary and Sweden and a joint statement by the Netherlands and Denmark are set out in the Annex.

Legislative deliberations

(Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)

3. Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034: governance aspects

Policy debate

SC 6911/26

The Council held a policy debate on governance aspects of the proposal for the multiannual financial framework 2028-2034.

4. Any other business

a) New own resources

Information from France

SC 7352/26

The Council took note of the information provided by France.

Non-legislative activities

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|----|---|----------------------------|
| 5. | Preparation of the European Council on 19-20 March 2026:
conclusions
<i>Exchange of views</i> | 5155/26 |
| 6. | European Semester 2026 | |
| a) | Synthesis report
<i>Exchange of views</i> | 6939/26 |
| b) | Updated roadmap
<i>Presentation by the Presidency</i> | 13566/2/25 REV 2 |
| c) | Council Recommendation on the economic policy of the
euro area
<i>Transmission to the European Council</i> | 5991/1/26 REV 1
5732/26 |
| 7. | Any other business | |
| a) | The pilot project on the digital age verification system: a
call for next steps
<i>Information from Spain</i> | 7347/26 + ADD 1
REV 1 |

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- S** Special legislative procedure
- C** Item based on a Commission proposal
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Statements to the legislative “A” items set out in doc 6794/26

Ad "A" item 1: Amendment of the European Electoral Act
Agreement in principle
Request for the consent of the European Parliament

STATEMENT BY HUNGARY

“Hungary recognizes and promotes equality between women and men in accordance with the Fundamental Law of Hungary, and the primary law, principles and values of the European Union, as well as commitments and principles stemming from international law.

Furthermore, equality between women and men is enshrined as a fundamental value in the Treaties of the European Union, in particular in Article 2 of the TEU and Article 8 of the TFEU.

In line with these and its national legislation, Hungary interprets the concept of “gender” as reference to “sex” and the concept of “gender equality” as reference to the “equality between women and men”.

Regarding the equality of opportunity and social inclusion, Hungary supports the bottom-up approach in empowering under-represented groups instead of the top-down quota-based access.”

STATEMENT BY SWEDEN

“Depending on how childcare responsibilities for newborn children are shared within a family, both male and female Members of the European Parliament may find their ability to participate in parliamentary work impeded. Sweden would therefore have preferred a broader amendment that, in addition to mothers who have recently given birth, also covers the other parent of a newborn child. Nonetheless, Sweden welcomes today's decision as a positive step towards promoting gender equality and family-friendly working conditions for Members of the European Parliament.“

STATEMENT BY THE NETHERLANDS AND DENMARK

“The Netherlands and Denmark underline the importance of establishing an arrangement that enables Members of the European Parliament to participate in plenary voting during pregnancy and in the months following childbirth. In this context, the Netherlands and Denmark welcome today’s adoption of the Council decision amending the Electoral act, which will allow Members to temporarily delegate their vote so that they may focus on their private and family life.

At the same time, the Netherlands and Denmark would have preferred a broader scope for the proposal, notably covering situations such as paternity leave and long-term illness. In addition, the Netherlands and Denmark note that a temporary replacement scheme would have the potential to capture the full scope of the duties of a Member of the European Parliament.

The Netherlands and Denmark therefore regard today’s proposal as a positive first step and stand ready to continue working with the European Parliament, Council and Commission on further steps related to parental leave arrangements for members of the European Parliament.

The Netherlands and Denmark also note that the principle of a free mandate and voting without binding instructions is firmly embedded across the European Union and in the EU Electoral Act. It is essential that elected representatives are not bound by voting instructions and are able to vote freely. The Netherlands and Denmark wish to emphasise that the proposal on the transfer of voting rights does not entail any derogation from the principle of the free mandate, as laid down in the second sentence of Article 6(1) of the EU Electoral Act.”
