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LEGISLATIVE ACTS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS

Subject: COUNCIL DECISION authorising the opening of negotiations for an agreement between the Union and the Council of Europe Development Bank on the conditions for the Union's membership

COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2026/...

of...

**authorising the opening of negotiations for an agreement
between the Union and the Council of Europe Development Bank
on the conditions for the Union's membership**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 175, third paragraph, and Article 212, in conjunction with Article 218(3) and (4), thereof,

Having regard to the recommendation from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) The conditions for membership of the Council of Europe Development Bank (the ‘CEB’) are set out in its Articles of Agreement. Pursuant to Article III.c thereof, it is possible for international institutions with a European focus to become members of the CEB upon the conditions laid down by the Governing Board of the CEB. In order for the Union to become a member, it is therefore necessary to enter into negotiations for an agreement with the CEB on those conditions.
- (2) In its conclusions of 14 June 2021 on enhancing the European financial architecture for development, the Council invited the Commission and the Member States to ensure closer coordination with and among international financial institutions in the context of the European Financial Architecture for Development. Therefore, it is appropriate for the Union to become a member of the CEB by acquiring shares in its capital in order to ensure greater consistency between the priorities of the CEB and those of the Union and to achieve the Union’s objectives in the field of social cohesion and external economic relations, by exercising the voting power conferred by ownership. In addition, becoming a member of the CEB will help deepen the relationship between the Union and other partner countries in the enlargement and neighbourhood region that are members of the CEB. Moreover, it will help bolster support for Ukraine, including with regard to its post-war reconstruction, as that country is now a member of the CEB and a core target of its policies.

- (3) The CEB's focus on social policy and infrastructure can complement and create synergies with the Union's funding programmes and policy actions aimed at addressing economic and social disparities in the Union. This concerns, in particular, areas such as affordable and social housing, healthcare, poverty reduction, education, gender equality and the social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, Roma populations and the homeless. The CEB can also play an important technical and funding role in housing policy in the Union, in light of its decades-long experience in supporting housing for vulnerable groups.
- (4) The CEB's expertise in post-conflict reconstruction and social integration aligns with the Union's goals of promoting stability and cohesion in Europe. The CEB could support the Union in preparing accession countries on their path towards Union membership and support the implementation of the Growth Plans in the Western Balkans and in the Republic of Moldova. As the geographic scope of the CEB operations has been extended to Ukraine, one of the overarching new goals of the CEB is to provide assistance to support Ukraine's reconstruction, recovery and long-term social development. The recently completed capital increase provides additional financial capacity to support Ukraine on its path towards Union membership. The CEB could support the Union in the implementation of the Ukraine Facility established by Regulation (EU) 2024/792 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹. The Union and the CEB could also further enhance their partnership with regard to social infrastructure investments in Türkiye.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2024/792 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 February 2024 establishing the Ukraine Facility (OJ L, 2024/792, 29.2.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/792/oj>).

- (5) Aid to refugees, migrants and displaced persons is one of the CEB's statutory priorities, making it Europe's specialised bank in dealing with beneficiaries of international protection and the integration of third-country nationals. That expertise can complement the Union's actions in support of beneficiaries of international protection, which will contribute to focusing the CEB's action on, inter alia, the reintegration of returning refugees, migrants or internally displaced persons and the lasting integration of third-country nationals in host countries.
- (6) In order to allow the members of the Council reasonable time to prepare adequately for the working party discussions on the forthcoming negotiations of the framework agreement, the Commission should report to the Council on the conduct, progress and outcome of the negotiations on a regular basis and whenever requested by the Council, and should forward the relevant documents to it as early as possible. The Commission should also, where appropriate, or where requested by the Council, submit a written report to the Council,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The opening of negotiations for an agreement between the Union and the Council of Europe Development Bank on the conditions for the Union's membership is hereby authorised.

Article 2

The Commission is hereby nominated as the Union negotiator.

Article 3

The negotiating directives set out in the addendum to this Decision are hereby addressed to the Commission.

Article 4

1. The negotiations shall be conducted in consultation with the Working Party of Financial Counsellors, which is hereby designated as the special committee provided for in Article 218(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, subject to any directives which the Council may subsequently issue to the Commission.

2. The Commission shall report to the Council on the conduct, progress and outcome of the negotiations on a regular basis and whenever requested by the Council, and shall forward the relevant documents to it as early as possible. Where appropriate, or where requested by the Council, the Commission shall submit a written report to the Council.

Article 5

This Decision is addressed to the Commission.

Done at ..., ...

For the Council
The President
