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'I' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)
Subject:	DEBATES taken by the Presidency on behalf of the Council at the European Parliament plenary part-session in Strasbourg from 14 to 17 September 2026

The Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to take note of the following debates taken by the Presidency (Irish Minister of State for European Affairs, Thomas Byrne, and Irish Minister for Finance Simon Harris) on behalf of the Council:

Tuesday 15 September 2026

1. Council and Commission statements - *Devastating heatwaves, wildfires and droughts in Europe: lessons from summer 2026*

After expressing its sympathies to those affected by the destructive events of this summer, the Presidency underlined the need to reinforce the EU's determination to mitigate climate change, while at the same time stepping up adaptation and preparedness measures. The Council looks forward to the upcoming EU Framework for Climate Resilience to this end. The Presidency also praised the use of the Civil Protection Mechanism this summer and highlighted it is working to achieve a Council mandate for the related Regulation.

2. *Findings and recommendations of the Special Committee on the European Democracy Shield*

The Presidency commended the comprehensive findings and recommendations by the Special Committee on the European Democracy Shield, highlighting the overall finding that democracies are under threat from outside and inside, notably hybrid threats by Russia and disinformation campaigns extending beyond individual Member States. For protecting democracy, the Presidency referred to protecting free and fair elections, freedom of speech, and free and independent media, also adding the need to protect citizens online.

3. Council and Commission statements - *The recent hybrid attacks and instrumentalisation of migrants in Ceuta and the need for a coordinated response to protect EU's external borders*

The Presidency expressed condolences with the families of the victims and reaffirmed solidarity with Ceuta. Following the incident on 30-31 July, the Presidency informed that Council took immediate steps and reiterated that at the informal meeting of Home Affairs Ministers, Ministers expressed a unified message of solidarity and identified a number of priorities for Council to work on. The Presidency added that the next JHA Council meeting on 1 October will discuss Ceuta and the broader EU migration trends which, have significantly decreased over the past three years.

Wednesday 16 September 2026

1. Statement by the President of the Commission - *State of the Union*

The Presidency welcomed the strong convergence of views between the Commission and the Council, noting that many of the issues mentioned by the Commission's President overlapped with the priorities of the Presidency (Ukraine, security and defence, competitiveness, enlargement, relations with global partners, online safety for children and young people, respect for rule of law and democracy, peace in the Middle East). The Presidency also recalled the ongoing work on the MFF as the basis to support the EU's priorities.

Finally, the Presidency noted the readiness to work on the Joint Declaration on the legislative priorities for 2027, as well as on the implementation of the "One Europe, One Market" Roadmap.

2. Topical debate requested by a political group (EPP) (Rule 169) - *Stop gold-plating, relieve SMEs: Member States must implement EU legislation without adding extra bureaucracy*

The Presidency emphasized that gold-plating creates disproportionate barriers for SMEs by introducing national rules, reporting requirements, and procedures beyond EU legal requirements, thereby fragmenting the Single Market. To prevent gold-plating during national transposition, the Council called for using regulations over directives where possible, creating legislation that is simple by design, and utilizing the Commission's forthcoming toolkit of best practices.

3. Presentation by the Council of its position on the draft general budget - 2027 financial year

The Presidency presented the Council's position and the adjustments proposed to the Commission's proposal, calling for a prudent, responsible and realistic management of the budget, with a clear focus on achieving tangible results and delivering value for taxpayers' money. It was noted in particular that the budget should stand at an appropriate level for the implementation of policies and programmes, that it should safeguard the ability to cope with ongoing crises and challenges, and that it should leave room for flexibility to deal with unforeseen circumstances.

4. Council and Commission statements - *The impact of the implementation of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) on SMEs, its administrative burden and challenges for the European Single Market*

The Presidency underlined that the objectives of the PPWR are still crucial and that the Council remains committed to building a circular economy. The Presidency also indicated the upcoming proposal on the Circular Economy Act as the right platform to define a well calibrated solution for the different waste streams.

5. Council and Commission statements – *Devastating floods in Nepal*

The Presidency expressed deepest condolences and full solidarity with the people of Nepal affected by the flood disaster on 26 August, highlighting the humanitarian aid provided by the Member States and the European Union and affirming sustained support and cooperation.