

OUTLINE: STRATEGIC AGENDA 2024-2029

The June European Council is expected to adopt the Strategic Agenda 2024-2029, which will define EU priorities for the next five years, steering its work and providing guidance for EU institutions.

The European Council spearheaded preparations, which began in June last year and were further developed at the informal meeting of Heads of State or Government in Granada in October. These were followed by informal consultations of leaders in small groups.

On the basis of these consultations, a number of priority areas for action were identified, which underpin the attached outline. These converge towards delivering a powerful common goal – a strong, prosperous and democratic Union. The next MFF should take these priorities into account.

I. A STRONG AND SECURE EUROPE

Coherent and influential external action

- Assert Europe's sovereignty and place as a global player in the new strategic/geopolitical/multipolar context
- Engage with international partners to uphold an inclusive and fair rules-based multilateral order
- Leverage EU policies (internal and external) to defend our interests and values where needed
- Promote peace, stability and prosperity in our neighbourhoods
- Pursue a balanced trade policy while reducing our external dependencies

A comprehensive approach to migration

- Protect effectively our external borders and fight irregular migration and its instrumentalisation
- Cooperate with countries of origin and transit on migration, including on returns and on legal pathways
- Fight smuggler networks and organised crime
- Ensure the smooth functioning of the Schengen area

Strategic action on security and defence

- Mobilise all necessary instruments to ensure our defence readiness, our capacity to act and our security
- Increase substantially European defence spending, investment and cooperation, including with NATO
- Improve conditions for the scaling up of the European defence industry and improve access to public and private finance, including through the EIB
- Strengthen our preparedness and crisis response capacities
- Tackle cyber and hybrid threats and address foreign manipulation and interference
- Fight against radicalisation, terrorism and violent extremism to ensure our internal security

Well prepared enlargement

- Incentivise the enlargement process
- Undertake the necessary internal reforms of EU policies, financing and capacity to act
- Support candidate countries in meeting the accession criteria through established and new instruments
- Encourage regional integration and resolution of historical tensions
- Use possibilities for the gradual integration of candidate countries by building on existing legal instruments and exploring new ones

II. A PROSPEROUS AND COMPETITIVE EUROPE

An integrated approach to competitiveness

- Complete our Single Market in all its dimensions, by removing barriers, including on services
- Gear up financial integration in all its dimensions, notably the Capital Markets Union and the Banking Union, in order to increase access to finance for industry and businesses
- Support public and private investment in infrastructure, including connectivity
- Diversify and secure our strategic supply chains
- Promote innovation and research, including in the field of defence and to accompany Europe towards climate neutrality
- Increase economic and social cohesion through upward convergence

Succeeding in the twin transition

- Increase energy independence by accelerating the energy transition and building an energy union
- Decrease strategic dependencies and increase resilience by developing a more circular and resource-efficient economy
- Support the industrial development of digital and clean technologies
- Encourage investments in and application of game-changing digital technologies such as AI, exploiting the untapped potential of data
- Ensure our food security through a vibrant agriculture sector
- Prepare for the new realities stemming from climate change

Promoting an innovation- and business-friendly environment

- Safeguard fair competition and fight unfair practices
- Ensure a level playing field both internally and globally
- Reduce administrative burden at all levels, making the best use of digital government possibilities
- Create the conditions to attract talents as well as public and private investments in Europe

Leaving no one behind

- Increase participation in the labour market
- Invest in people's skills and education throughout life to provide opportunities for all
- Ensure all citizens and businesses can seize the opportunities offered by the twin transition
- Reduce disparities at all levels through adequate social protection

III. A FREE AND DEMOCRATIC EUROPE

Upholding the Rule of Law

- Promote and safeguard the Rule of Law as a cornerstone of EU integration
- Respect the balance of powers between the institutions
- Protect individual freedoms and fundamental rights offline and online
- Fight against attempts at destabilisation including through disinformation

Living up to our values

- Demonstrate leadership in addressing global challenges, including governance
- Support efforts towards global peace and stability
- Promote democracy and universal human rights in all fora, including the UN framework