



# Oireachtas Digest on Europe

Week : 29 July to 4 August 2024 | Ref: 29-24



Seirbhís Thithe  
an Oireachtais  
Houses of the  
Oireachtas Service

## European Parliament

**The European Parliament is in recess over the summer from 29 July to 1 September 2024. Parliamentary business resumes on Monday 2 September.**

## European Commission

**During summer recess, read the latest news on the Commission's political priorities and press releases [here](#)**

## Council of the European Union

**Informal meetings recommence 28th August**

**Link to Council Meeting Calendar [here](#)**

**Link to CORPER Meeting Calendar [here](#)**



## Highlights Week 22 to 28 July 2024

### European Parliament.

#### Highlights Week 22 to 28 July

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##### **Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs elected**

All of Parliament's 20 standing committees and four subcommittees held their constitutive meetings on Tuesday to elect their Chair and Vice-Chairs.

A committee bureau (Chair and up to four Vice-chairs) is elected for a two-and-a-half-year mandate. Committees deal with legislative proposals, appoint negotiating teams to conduct talks with EU ministers, adopt reports, organise hearings and scrutinise other EU bodies and institutions.

Link to EP report [here](#)

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### European Commission.

#### Highlights Week 22 to 28 July

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##### **Commission coordinates action by national consumer protection authorities against Meta on 'pay or consent' model**

On Monday, the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network sent a letter following concerns that Meta's 'pay or consent' model might breach EU consumer law. The Commission coordinated this action which is led by the French Directorate General for Competition, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Prevention. The action started in 2023, immediately after Meta had requested consumers overnight to either subscribe to use Facebook and Instagram against a fee or to consent to Meta's use of their personal data to be shown personalised ads, allowing Meta to make revenue out of it ('pay or consent').

Consumer protection authorities assessed several elements that could constitute misleading or aggressive practices, in particular whether Meta provided consumers upfront with true, clear and sufficient information. They analysed whether this information allowed consumers to understand the implications of their decision to pay or to accept the processing of their personal data for commercial purposes on their rights as consumers. In addition, CPC authorities are concerned that many consumers might have been exposed to undue pressure to choose rapidly between the two models, fearing that they would instantly lose access to their accounts and their network of contacts.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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##### **Commission publishes new guidelines for more clarity on air passenger rights**

On Monday, the Commission published revised interpretative guidelines on air passenger rights that will facilitate compliance with regulations and harmonise enforcement by national bodies. Since 2016, the Commission has been providing guidelines to address common concerns raised by national enforcement bodies, passengers and their associations, and industry representatives. Today's revision notably takes into

account rulings by the Court of Justice since 2016 that clarify certain provisions, allowing for more effective and consistent enforcement of the rules. A new section on massive travel disruptions has also been added.

[Revised interpretative guidelines](#) guidelines on the rights of persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air have also been published.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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## State Aid

**Germany:** The Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, amendments to a State aid scheme to support the deployment of very [high capacity broadband networks](#) offering Gigabit speeds in Germany.

**France:** The Commission has approved a €1.5 billion [French scheme](#) to support the production of sustainable biomethane to foster the transition towards a net-zero economy. The scheme was approved under the State aid Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework ('TCTF') adopted by the Commission on 9 March 2023 and amended on 20 November 2023 and on 2 May 2024.

**Netherlands:** The European Commission has approved a €750 million [Dutch scheme](#) to support investments in the decarbonisation of industrial production processes to foster the transition towards a net-zero economy. The scheme was approved under the State aid Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework ('TCTF') adopted by the Commission on 9 March 2023 and amended on 20 November 2023 and on 2 May 2024.

**Spain:** The European Commission has approved a €1.2 billion [Spanish scheme](#) to support investments in the production of renewable hydrogen to foster the transition to a net-zero economy. The scheme was approved under the State aid Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework ('TCTF'), adopted by the Commission on 9 March 2023 and amended on 20 November 2023 and on 2 May 2024.

**Netherlands:** The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, [a €2 billion Dutch measure](#) to support the **PALLAS project** aimed at producing medical radioisotopes for cancer diagnosis and treatment. The measure contributes to ensuring security of supply of essential and life-saving medicines in line with the [Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe](#).

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## Commission decides to register two new European Citizens' Initiatives on closing animal farms and labelling of food

The Commission has decided to register two European Citizens' Initiatives, entitled 'Stop Cruelty Stop Slaughter' and 'Stop Fake Food: Origin on Label'.

### Next Steps

Following registration, the organisers have six months to open the signature collection. If a European Citizens' Initiative receives at least one million statements of support within one year with minimum numbers reached in at least seven different Member States, the Commission will have to react. The Commission will have to decide whether or not it will take action in response to the request, and will be required to explain its reasoning.


Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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## EU's first medical evacuation operation of Palestinians transfers children from Egypt to Spain

On 24 July, the first EU-coordinated medical evacuation operation of 16 Palestinian children and their family members took place from Egypt to Spain. The operation was financially and operationally supported by the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), in close coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Palestine Childrens Relief Fund (PCRF) and authorities of all countries involved.

In response to the activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism by the WHO, the EU has been fully supporting the coordination of the activities to medically evacuate Palestinian patients to Europe. The request concerns targeted medical evacuations for a number of children in urgent need of medical care.



So far, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Slovakia and Spain offered assistance for medical evacuations, including treatment for patients as well as transportation.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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## **Rule of Law Report 2024: with the 5th edition, the EU is better equipped to face rule of law challenges**

The Commission published its fifth annual Rule of Law Report, examining systematically and objectively rule of law developments in all Member States on an equal basis. In comparison to the first issue of the Rule of Law Report adopted in 2020, Member States and the EU as a whole are much better prepared to detect, prevent and address emerging challenges. This contributes to the resilience of our European democracies and to mutual trust in the EU. It also contributes to a good functioning of the single market and benefits a business environment that fosters competitiveness and sustainable growth.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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## **July infringement package: key decisions**

In its regular package of infringement decisions, the European Commission pursues legal action against Member States for failing to comply with their obligations under EU law. These decisions, covering various sectors and EU policy areas, aim to ensure the proper application of EU law for the benefit of citizens and businesses.

The key decisions taken by the Commission are presented and grouped by policy area. The Commission is also closing 72 cases in which the issues with the Member States concerned have been solved without the Commission needing to pursue the procedure further.

For more information on the EU infringement procedure, see the full [Q&A](#). For more detail on the history of a case, you can consult the [infringement decisions' register](#).

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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## **Commission takes action to ensure complete and timely transposition of EU directives**

The Commission is adopting a package of infringement decisions due to the absence of communication by Member States of measures taken to transpose EU directives into national law. The Commission is sending a letter of formal notice to those Member States who have failed to notify national measures transposing directives, whose transposition deadline expired recently. In this case, there are 26 Member States who have not yet notified full transposition measures for two EU directives in the field of climate and defence. Member States concerned now have two months to reply to the letters of formal notice and complete their transposition, or the Commission may decide to issue a reasoned opinion.


Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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## **First transfer of €1.5 billion of proceeds from immobilised Russian assets made available in support of Ukraine**

On Friday, the EU made available, in support of Ukraine, the first payment of €1.5 billion generated from immobilised Russian assets. These extraordinary revenues generated by EU operators and held by central securities depositories (CSDs) from immobilised Russian sovereign assets were made available by Euroclear to the Commission as a first instalment on 23 July. The money will now be channelled through the European Peace Facility and to the Ukraine Facility to support Ukraine's military capabilities as well as to support the country's reconstruction.

The immobilisation of the Russian Central Bank's assets is a result of EU sanctions against Russia, adopted in



the wake of its war of aggression against Ukraine. The extraordinary revenues generated in this context by the EU operators do not belong to Russia and are held by CSDs. The EU has now started to channel these revenues to Ukraine.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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## Europeans see democracy and economic power as key strengths of the EU, Eurobarometer shows

A new Eurobarometer survey published today shows that Europeans identify respect for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law (38%) and economic, industrial, and trading power (34%) as the main strengths of the EU, followed by the good relationships and solidarity between the EU Member States (28%).

As areas the EU should address as a priority, respondents most frequently mention the environment and climate change (33%) and irregular migration (also 33%), followed by security and defence (29%) and the war in Ukraine (25%).

At the same time, the war in Ukraine ranks first in terms of challenges that the EU is facing, mentioned by 50% of the respondents. Irregular migration and environmental issues and climate change follow in second and third place, respectively, with 41% and 35%.

When asked about the values that are best embodied by the EU compared to other countries in the world, Europeans clearly indicate respect for fundamental rights and values and freedom of speech and expression (each at 53%).

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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## European Council and Council of the European Union Highlights Week 22 to 28 July

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### Foreign Affairs Council, 22 July

#### Russian war of aggression against Ukraine

The Foreign Affairs Council discussed the Russian aggression against Ukraine, after a VTC intervention by Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dmytro Kuleba, who updated his EU counterparts on the latest developments on the ground, and the most pressing Ukrainian needs, especially in terms of air defence systems and energy infrastructure.

#### European Investment Bank

Ministers welcomed the EIB's expanding role in the area of security and defence industry, expressed interest on going even further, and called for delivery of short term support to Ukraine. They also welcomed the stepped up EIB Group support for Ukrainian energy system and business.

#### Situation in the Middle East

The Foreign Affairs Council discussed the situation in the Middle East, focusing on the situation on the ground, including the **humanitarian situation in Gaza** and the situation of **hostages**.

The Council was briefed by the EU Special Representatives for Human Rights, Olof Skoog, and for the Middle East Peace Process, Sven Koopmans.

#### Current affairs

Under Current Affairs, the Council exchanged views about **digital diplomacy**, on the basis of a recent



progress report by the EEAS and the Commission.

Link to Council report [here](#)

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### **Informal meeting of justice and home affairs ministers, 22-23 July**

Link to Presidency report [here](#)

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### **Informal meeting of health ministers, 24-25**

Link to Presidency report [here](#)

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## **European Committee of the Regions (CoR)**

**Link to European Committee of the Regions Home Page [here](#)**

**Link to European Committee of the Regions News Page [here](#)**

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## **Inter-parliamentary meetings and conferences during the Parliamentary Dimension of the Hungarian Presidency 2nd Semester - 1st July - 31 December June 2024**

**Version 10 May 24**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Host</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>28-29 July</b>	COSAC Chairpersons		Budapest
<b>9-10 September</b>	Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (IPC on CFSP/CSDP)		Budapest
<b>3-4 October</b>	Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU (IPC on SECG)		Budapest

## Inter-parliamentary meetings and conferences during the Parliamentary Dimension of the Hungarian Presidency 2nd Semester - 1st July - 31 December June 2024

Version 10 May 24

<b>27-29 October</b>	LXXII. COSAC Plenary	Budapest
<b>11-12 November</b>	Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol (JPSG on Europol)	EP/Brussels
<b>4 - 5 December</b>	Conference on the topic of cultural heritage and the identity of national communities (Budapest)	Budapest
<b>9 - 10 February</b>	Meeting of the Secretaries General of the European Union Parliaments (EUSG)	Budapest
<b>11 - 13 May 2025</b>	Conference of the Speakers of European Union Parliaments (EUSC)	Budapest

European Parliament events will be added when Parliament convenes after June elections.

**Sources:** Websites of: European Parliament European Commission, European Council and Council of the European Union Council, European Court of Auditors and European Ombudsman.