



PROGRAMME

Spanish presidency of the Council
of the European Union

Second half of 2023

Europe, closer



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Europe, closer

The European Union is a welfare project for all Europeans, close to its citizens and committed to providing European solutions to their shared problems.

In a context in which Russia's unacceptable aggression against Ukraine compels us to act in unison, this will require working for a global, autonomous, digital, green Europe, a Europe that combines innovation and social justice. An agile and resilient Europe, a Europe capable of making crucial decisions and rising to the major challenges of our time.

This is the Europe in which Spain believes, and for which the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union will work, on the basis of four priorities.



1 Reindustrialize the European Union and guarantee its open strategic autonomy

- Consolidate the conditions for EU reindustrialization as a prerequisite for citizens' prosperity.
- Place the European Union at the forefront of the technological revolution, fostering a regulatory framework that combines incentives for technological development and innovation and the defence of the EU users rights protection model.
- Strengthen open strategic autonomy, reducing vulnerabilities in essential supplies such as food, energy and health, while consolidating alliances with our reliable partners.
- Advance in partnership agreements with priority regions, in particular with Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Promote competitiveness and sustainable and inclusive economic growth, strengthening and deepening the single market on the 30th anniversary of its creation.
- Advance towards responsible digitalization, bridging the digital divide and guaranteeing digital privacy for all Europeans.



2 Make progress in the green transition and in environmental adaptation

- Complete a socially just green transition, promoting the mitigation of the effects of climate change and taking into account social exclusion and energy poverty.
- Combat the effects of climate change at the global and European levels.
- Conclude an electricity market reform that guarantees affordable prices for our citizens.
- Boost the decarbonization of the EU's economy, completing the adoption of Fit for 55 package.
- Foster a green economy, one which ensures quality jobs and the competitiveness of European companies.



3 Promote greater social and economic justice

- Promote a social economy in which wealth creation reaches all Europeans.
- Guarantee the rights of workers in the new economic sectors, ensuring the right to decent work.
- Strengthen the European welfare state.
- Guarantee European tax justice, preventing tax avoidance and promoting minimum EU-wide taxation standards.
- Reform economic governance, with more just, realistic and predictable fiscal rules, which allow Member States to finance public policies and services while preserving fiscal stability.
- Progress in the initiatives and goals set forth in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.
- Promote equal treatment and inclusivity, paying particular attention to gender equality and to children and persons with disabilities.
- Advocate the preservation and extension of rights linked to European citizenship.
- Advance towards the economic, social and territorial cohesion of regions with natural and geographical imbalances, guaranteeing quality of life and the rural lifestyle.
- Enhance methods for EU citizen participation.
- Address the demographic challenge and the fight against depopulation.
- Complete the European Health Union, creating a European Health Data Space and strengthening EU action on caregiving and mental health.

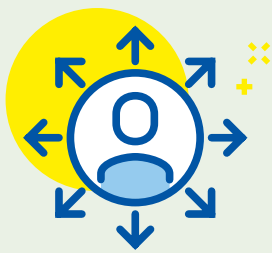


4 Strengthen European unity

- Maintain the unity of the Member States and international partners in support for Ukraine. Defend a just peace under the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- Consolidate a European strategic space on the basis of the development of common interests between the EU and its partners.
- Advance in the accession process of candidate countries.
- Support the revision of decision-making procedures in the European Union, especially by expanding the use of qualified majority voting, to make them more efficient.
- Promote a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the development of security in strategic European spaces, in complementarity and collaboration with NATO.
- Strengthen relations with the EU's strategic partners, paying particular attention to Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States, the Southern Neighbourhood, Africa (especially the Sahel), the Western Balkans and other countries within the European neighbourhood.
- Complete the Pact on Migration and Asylum, achieving humane, orderly, compassionate, responsible and effective management of migration flows, collaborating with our partners by developing an external dimension of migration equipped with sufficient resources and protecting the EU's borders and those who seek a better future in the EU.
- Improve the EU's resilience and its crisis management capacity.
- Strengthen the area of freedom, security and justice (AFSJ) and the defence of democratic values and of the rule of law.

Main lines of action by Council configuration

General Affairs Council configuration



The European Union, today more than ever, must represent a values-based model. Democracy, the rule of law, pluralism, tolerance, non-discrimination and equality between men and women constitute the foundation of the integration project, and are what unites us as Europeans.

The EU must adapt to the new challenges and in particular to that of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, promoting institutional strengthening and the improvement of decision-making processes, boosting the enlargement of the European Union, and strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Citizenship

Coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty and the creation of EU citizenship, the Spanish Presidency will strengthen channels for citizen participation, paying particular attention to creating mechanisms to assess the impact of EU policies on citizens.

The Spanish Presidency will bring Europe closer to its citizens, developing channels for participation in public policies, strengthening local autonomy, and increasing the visibility of the cohesion policy and Next Generation EU funds.

Enlargement

The Spanish Presidency will work to boost the accession process of candidate countries, continuing the political dialogue to favour convergence, in accordance with the Copenhagen criteria.

The inclusion, for the first time, of Ukraine and Moldova in the Annual Report on progress towards accession by the candidate countries, drafted by the European Commission, will be an important milestone of the Spanish Presidency. On the basis of this report, the Spanish Presidency will promote Council Conclusions on Enlargement that offer realistic, credible timelines to candidate countries.

The Spanish Presidency will seek to advance in convening Intergovernmental Conferences with the candidate countries, as well as in opening accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova.

We will address these and other institutional matters at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on General Affairs to be held in Murcia on 27-29 September.

Follow-up of the Conference on the Future of Europe

The Spanish Presidency will advance the debate on the passerelle clauses to extend the use of qualified majority voting, both on Common Foreign and Security Policy and on other essential EU policies, such as tax policy.

This will be done within the framework of a broader discussion regarding how to streamline EU decision-making processes and strengthen the EU's capacity to act in the face of a crisis. In this context, the Spanish Presidency will be responsible for holding the annual follow-up event of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

The Spanish Presidency will also monitor, together with the President of the European Council, the different actions and initiatives that may be promoted by the European Parliament with regard to the reform of the Treaties.

Economic, social and territorial cohesion

The Spanish Presidency will foster actions aimed at EU-wide territorial convergence, strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The Spanish Presidency will adopt a 2.0 cohesion approach, identifying essential elements such as shared management, the regional approach, pre-financing, and co-financing rates. We will promote analyses beyond the income criterion, modifying the calculation of co-financing rates and the thematic concentration criteria. We will propose the inclusion of criteria relating to exposure to climate change, unemployment and youth unemployment rates, social exclusion, school drop-out rates, on migratory pressure. Incentives for digital transformation and the full use of the green

transition to generate opportunities in every territory will also be taken into account.

The Spanish Presidency will promote the negotiation of the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP). We will study the funding of assistance for large companies through the European Regional Development Fund, the Just Transition Fund, the European Social Fund + and the Cohesion Fund, depending on each region's level of development. We will propose delaying the closure of the 2014-2020 period by 12 additional months, so as to maximize the absorption rates of the funds.

We will address the structural difficulties of island territories, cross-border regions, and maritime and sparsely populated areas.

We will provide support for the European Union to identify and respond to the challenges certain European territories face due to their insularity. In turn, we will foster discussion on the development of strategies for maritime regions with common geographical specificities, such as the Atlantic macro-region.

In coordination with the Conference of Presidents of the Outermost Regions (OR), the Spanish Presidency will foster cross-cutting action favouring ORs, responding to the structural deficit recognized in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). We will support the creation of a European Tourism Agency with branch offices in each of the OR's geographical areas.

The Spanish Presidency will emphasize the participation and visibility of sub-State entities, and will intensify cooperation with bodies such as the Committee of the Regions.

Demographics

The demographic challenge and the fight against depopulation will be a cross-cutting priority of the Spanish Presidency. We will foster ecological and digital transitions that generate opportunities in rural areas and in areas with declining populations, guaranteeing their socio-economic inclusion.

The Spanish Presidency will promote an informal working mechanism that contributes to guiding initiatives in this field. We will address convergence between rural and/or less populated municipalities and urban areas. We will foster an analysis of EU funds of a structural nature so as to address their impact on combating depopulation. We will progressively incorporate urban-proofing with an evaluation of EU public policies on territorial planning and convergence, at the regional, local and cross-border levels.

We will raise awareness in the European institutions of the need for specific funding instruments to combat depopulation, which will make it possible to advance new approaches and intervention frameworks for territories with greater socio-demographic vulnerability.

We will address the Commission's proposals on demographics and ageing as a key dimension of the EU demographic challenge. In this regard, we will advance towards a European strategy that contributes to adapting national social protection systems to the new reality of an ageing population, and we will support an Old Age Guarantee.

Relations with the United Kingdom, the European Free Trade Association, and Andorra, Monaco and San Marino

The Spanish Presidency will pay close attention to the development of the relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom, defending the unity of Member States and compliance with Agreements with the EU. The relationship between the United Kingdom and the EU will be marked by the approval and implementation of the Windsor Framework Agreement for resolving difficulties in implementing the Protocol on Northern Ireland. During our Presidency, we will verify compliance with the agreement and especially with the safeguards established by the Commission. The full development of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) will be ensured.

During the Spanish Presidency, negotiations for the Association Agreements with Andorra, Monaco and San Marino will be fostered, and progress will be made on negotiations for a possible new agreement between the European Union and Switzerland.

Protection of European values: rule of law and democracy

The Spanish Presidency will decisively contribute to strengthening the EU's rule of law as an essential pillar of the European project, especially in the context of Russia's illegal aggression against Ukraine. During the second half of 2023, priority will be given to evaluating the rule of law Mechanism and reaching a consensus on Conclusions. Likewise, the Spanish Presidency will support the Commission's role as guardian of the Treaties, including through the mechanisms set forth in Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU).

The resilience of European democracies has become crucial in the context of the war in Ukraine. Therefore, strengthening European democracy will also be a priority for the Spanish Presidency.

In the framework of the European Action Plan for Democracy, the Spanish Presidency will strive to adopt legislation regarding the transparency and targeting of political advertising, the arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament and in municipal elections, and the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations.

The Presidency will also work to adopt legislation regarding the reform of the EU Election Law and will continue to support European initiatives aimed at increasing the EU's resilience in the face of hybrid and cyber threats.

Foreign Affairs Council configuration



The Spanish Presidency will undertake the defence of a rules-based international order in which peace, stability and development prevail, placing citizens at the heart of our external action. To this end, a fundamental priority will be to continue providing steadfast support for Ukraine against the Russian aggression.

In an increasingly interconnected and unstable world, the well-being of Europeans requires that Europe not only be strategically secure, but that it also be open to its partners and allies, with the institutional strength and resilience necessary to face the geopolitical, social and economic challenges of our times.

Russian aggression against Ukraine

The Spanish Presidency will contribute to the EU’s common action to counteract Russia’s illegal aggression against Ukraine. We will preserve the unity of the Member States in continuing to provide assistance of all kinds to Ukraine while isolating Russia. We will redouble our efforts with third States to achieve the necessary international support for the peace formula presented by Ukraine and monitor the global consequences of the aggression, such as the food and energy crises.

We will advance in accountability and in combating impunity. We will discuss the prosecution of the crime of aggression and explore the possibility of using proceeds from frozen and immobilized Russian funds to finance the reconstruction of Ukraine.

During our Presidency, we will strengthen the application of the restrictive measures already adopted, and we will promote dialogue with third States to ensure the global effectiveness of sanctions.

The Spanish Presidency will work to prevent possible repercussions of the sanctions on spheres such as food security and humanitarian assistance, maintaining the EU’s role as a humanitarian actor.

The need for European unity in the face of the principal geopolitical challenges will inspire the discussions of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Foreign Affairs to be held on 30-31 August.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The third EU-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Summit of Heads of State and Government, to be held on 17-18 July in Brussels, will mark one of

the Spanish Presidency’s principal foreign policy lines of action.

The European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean share a deep-rooted compatibility in the defence of democratic values, in addition to major economic, social and cultural ties. Our alliance with the region has strategic importance for addressing the major geopolitical challenges, including the sustainable and inclusive economic recovery of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The EU-CELAC Summit will mark a turning point in the bi-regional relationship, through renewed political commitment at all levels, strengthening its architecture and the frequency of interactions. This will be coordinated through regular Summits and by launching a permanent EU-CELAC coordination mechanism. The aim is for Conclusions to be adopted on the European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean bi-regional strategic partnership.

In line with the Bi-Regional Roadmap 2023-2025 and with the Joint Communication for a New Agenda for relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean, we will advance a positive, ambitious and forward-looking agenda for a new era of cooperation in areas of shared interest.

Our Presidency will make use of instruments such as the Global Gateway initiative to increase the EU’s presence in Latin America and the Caribbean, fostering the participation of the private sector and supporting the just, green and digital transitions in the region. We will pay particular attention to the Investment Agenda with the region, and continue the EU-LAC Digital Alliance.

Transatlantic relations

The importance of the transatlantic link has been made clear in the efforts of the European Union and its allies to respond to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. We will continue to strengthen ties between the European Union and the United States — a natural ally and privileged partner of the EU — to support Ukraine and respond to major international challenges.

The Spanish Presidency will continue to intensify and consolidate the different cooperation mechanisms established, making maximum use of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council. The Spanish Presidency will maximize this historic moment in our relations to advance in issues of the utmost interest to both parties, such as the critical minerals agreement and the global arrangement on sustainable steel and aluminium

Southern Neighbourhood

Prosperity, stability and environmental sustainability are closely interconnected on the Euro-Mediterranean agenda.

The Spanish Presidency will seek to strengthen the southern dimension of the Neighbourhood and create a truly bi-regional dynamics, to complement the bilateral relationship between the EU and each country, and continue to foster an area of shared prosperity on both shores of the Mediterranean.

To this end, we will promote the revision of the New Agenda for the Mediterranean, strengthening of the institutional architecture of the Southern Neighbourhood.

In the multilateral sphere, we will champion the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) as a focal point for supporting initiatives in the region.

Gulf Countries

The Spanish Presidency will promote the implementation of the strategic partnership with the Gulf and the development of broader cooperation between the EU and its partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council, focusing on the green transition and energy security, and on a greater contribution by the EU to regional peace and security.

European Political Community

The Spanish Presidency will organize the 3rd Summit of the European Political Community (EPC), to be held on 5 October in Granada. We will strive to make the EPC a success as a high-level forum of the Member States and their closest neighbours, a symbol of our unity and determination against the war of aggression in Ukraine.

Eastern Partnership

The Spanish Presidency will also pay special attention to the Eastern Partnership, with particular emphasis on the common threats and opportunities in spheres such as food security, energy, cybersecurity and connectivity, which are key for our mutual resilience.

Moreover, the Spanish Presidency will work to consolidate the EU's role in stabilizing the Caucasus region.

Western Balkans

In the Western Balkans, we will strengthen our political commitment to resilience, stability and security in the region, as well as to the project for their gradual integration into the EU.

We will foster the accession processes of the Western Balkan countries and will work to achieve alignment and cooperation with regard to the CFSP, underlining the importance of unity and a shared purpose in times of geopolitical rivalry.

We will support stabilization, normalization and the development of EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

Milestones in the EU's relationship with the region include the convening of a Forum of the region's Civil Society, and the holding of an EU-Western Balkans ministerial meeting.

Eastern Mediterranean and Türkiye

The Presidency will seek to achieve a stable and safe environment in the Eastern Mediterranean, and will promote the development of a positive agenda with Türkiye to improve cooperation in spheres of common interest, such as the resumption of the EU-Türkiye High-Level Dialogues.

Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel

The Spanish Presidency will strengthen relations between the European Union and Africa, guaranteeing the follow-up of the EU-African Union Summit of February 2022.

Under the principles of leadership and ownership, we will work with our African partners on joint initiatives of shared interest, such as food security, climate

change, migration, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

The Spanish Presidency will renew its commitment to the development and stability of West Africa and the Sahel. Seeking a comprehensive approach that addresses cooperation on security, good governance, development and humanitarian assistance will be a priority in this regard.

We will also strengthen security collaboration with the countries of the Gulf of Guinea, supporting their integration and intra-regional solidarity.

The stability of the Horn of Africa is a priority for the European Union. We will intensify our commitment, both at the regional level and with each of the countries in the region.

Asia

The Spanish Presidency will continue to support efforts to increase the presence of the European Union in Asia, seeking to maintain equitable trade and investment relations, boosting cooperation to address major global challenges, and promoting the preservation of a rules-based international order that respects the fundamental principles of international law.

We will also intensify the EU's presence and involvement in Central Asia, promoting connectivity and taking into account the importance of these countries in the context of the Russian aggression.

The Spanish Presidency will contribute to the full roll-out of the European Union Strategy for the Indo-Pacific, in close collaboration with our partners, to advance towards sustainable and inclusive prosperity, the green transition, connectivity and security.

African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States

The Spanish Presidency will redouble efforts to achieve the signature and implementation of the post-Cotonou Agreement, intensifying the relationship with the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS).

Development

In a world that is facing new economic, social, environmental and geopolitical challenges, the Spanish Presidency will seek to promote an international cooperation programme for sustainable development that consolidates the EU as a leading actor in this regard.

The Team Europe approach will be promoted, to achieve a transformative impact, maintain the EU's relevance as an international cooperation actor, and achieve a sustainable recovery at the global level, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Work will be done to pool the Member States' efforts in terms of funding, planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting on cooperation. Political guidance will be sought to strengthen their success, contributing to the mid-term review of foreign policy instruments.

Moreover, the EU must support, at the international level, the social, digital and green transitions. Even during phases of growth, developing countries face interconnected structural obstacles that limit their development capacity. The European Union should support them in a comprehensive manner, preventing the widening of gaps caused by inequalities and vulnerabilities.

Cooperation efforts must pay particular attention to gender equality. During the

Spanish Presidency, particular attention will be paid to women's economic justice, especially through the care economy.

Other milestones regarding the SDGs will take place during the Spanish Presidency, such as the EU's first Voluntary Review of the SDGs, which will be presented in New York during the United Nations High-Level Political Forum of July, and the SDG Summit of September. During the Spanish Presidency, the crucial role of local and regional authorities in the achievement of the SDGs will be highlighted.

Furthermore, the Presidency will also advance in the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy and will promote the European model with the aim of setting high international standards and developing socially, environmentally and financially sustainable infrastructure to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We will continue the process initiated by the Commission to identify and select the priority flagship initiatives for 2024, with a view to a debate during our Presidency. We will also address the questions of how to strike a balance between the different sectors of the strategy and how to involve civil society in this initiative.

In the humanitarian sphere, synergies will be sought between development and humanitarian priorities, in line with the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach. The gender perspective will be promoted using a two-fold approach focused, on the one hand, on combating gender violence and providing access to reproductive health rights, and, on the other, on empowering women and women's organizations so that they can participate in the humanitarian architecture. Efforts will also be made to guarantee the protection of civilians, especially children, humanitarian workers, refugees and displaced persons.

We will promote early action and disaster preparedness, as well as the narrowing of the humanitarian financing gap by increasing the donor base and their contributions and aid effectiveness.

The Informal Ministerial Meeting on Development Cooperation will be held in Cádiz on 4-5 September.

Trade

In the current context, the Spanish Presidency will foster greater diversification of EU supply chains and export markets, as a way to ensure growth, prosperity and economic resilience, as well as the green and digital transitions, promoting open, predictable and transparent trade relations.

This will be done by expanding and diversifying bilateral trade relations and maintaining an open trade policy.

To this end, we will maximize the full potential of the EU's bilateral trade agreements agenda, to forge strategic partnerships with like-minded partners that contribute to greater supply for production chains and generate new business and investment opportunities for our companies.

We will prioritize advancing decisively and definitively in agreements with Latin America and the Caribbean, such as the agreements with Chile, Mexico and Mercosur, and the EU-Central America Association Agreement. We will also work to conclude negotiations on the EU-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

We will seek to consolidate EU trade relations with the United States to promote agreements of mutual interest.

As for the EU's trade relations with China, the aim will be to keep communication

channels open and supply chains functioning, ensuring equal access to the respective markets.

Moreover, efforts will be made to reform the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to preserve its role as the cornerstone of the international rules-based trade system.

In particular, we will promote the preparatory negotiations for the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference, to be held in February 2024 under the Belgian Presidency. This will be a crucial moment to invigorate and channel the necessary reform of the WTO and address the modernization of multilateral trade rules in the current geopolitical context.

The Informal Ministerial Meeting on Trade will be held in Valencia on 19-20 October.

Defence

Russia's illegal and unjustified aggression against Ukraine has affected Europe's capacity to protect our own citizens and to project security in our geographic vicinity.

The Spanish Presidency will foster unity between Member States, especially by strengthening the areas that are most vulnerable to today's challenges.

We will guarantee access to global commons, such as outer space, cyberspace and the maritime environment. In particular, we will foster the continuity of efforts aimed at implementing the EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence and the EU Maritime Security Strategy and its Action Plan. We will boost coordinated action in cyberspace and the fight against disinformation. We will strengthen the role of the EU as a global actor in the sphere of maritime security, especially in the Indo-Pacific and in the Gulf of Guinea.

The Presidency will seek to develop defence capabilities, so as to guarantee freedom of action with European forces and capabilities. We will contribute to the development of the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity, organizing the first real exercise with the participation of Member States. Furthermore, we will promote the development of our own capacity and that of the European industrial and technological base. Likewise, we will foster financial solidarity through the European Peace Facility, which plays an essential role in supporting Ukraine and Africa.

The Spanish Presidency will strengthen the EU's global influence, consolidating its agenda for the future with climate change mitigation and adaptation measures; the Women, Peace and Security agenda; the Safe Schools initiative; and military support for the security of the World Food Programme.

We will guide the transmission of European values outside our borders, strengthening ties with our partners for a more just and safer world. In particular, we will intensify our relations with Latin America, Africa and the Indo-Pacific, fostering the participation of our partners in the European culture of defence, the sphere of cybersecurity, and the operations of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

We will also work to achieve the goals included in the Strategic Compass.

We will support the efforts aimed at approving the concept of EU Air Security Operations, and we will approve the Capability Development Plan (CDP) drafted by the European Defence Agency (EDA). In addition, we will start to prepare for the next cycle of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), beginning in 2025, placing particular emphasis on operational commitments.

The Spanish Presidency will be responsible for the strategic review of EUTM Mozambique, the renewal of the mandate of EUTM Central African Republic, and the corresponding renewal of the EUFOR ALTHEA mandate.

The Presidency will promote complementarity and close collaboration with NATO, in line with the Madrid Strategic Concept and the Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation of January 2023.

The Spanish Presidency will also organize a joint event with the European Defence Agency on the future of PESCO, as well as the second Board Meeting at Ministerial Level of the European Union Satellite Centre (SatCen).

The Informal Ministerial Meeting on Defence will be held in Toledo on 29-30 August.

Economic and Financial Affairs Council configuration



The Spanish Presidency will be determined by international economic instability. The growth prospects for the European economy are more positive than in recent months, but with uncertainties deriving from the invasion of Ukraine, trade tensions, the impact of interest rates, financial volatility, and possible surges in the prices of raw materials.

The European Union will have to respond to the uncertainties in the international economy. In this context, important dossiers will come to maturity, such as strengthening the Economic and Monetary Union, public and private investments for the green and digital transitions, protecting the welfare State, and strengthening the competitiveness and energy and digital autonomy of EU industry.

A new European framework of economic and financial governance to boost strategic autonomy and the green and digital transitions

The Spanish Presidency will promote the revision of the Stability and Growth Pact to adapt the fiscal rules applicable to national budgets.

Our Presidency will also promote the mid-term review of the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2021-2027, a debate that is very closely linked to sustaining financial aid for Ukraine and other key initiatives for the economic future of the EU. We will also prioritize the approval of the EU Budget for 2024, and the consolidation and amendment of the Financial Regulation.

We will work towards the approval of new own resources for the EU, aimed at repaying the loans that financed the Next Generation EU investment programme, thus contributing to equip the EU with greater financial capacity.

Moreover, to continue deepening the Economic and Monetary Union, the Spanish Presidency will seek to reinforce the bank crisis management framework so as to strengthen mechanisms for liquidity, bank resolution and deposit guarantee schemes, and to boost the Capital Markets Union, the sustainable financing agenda, the digital

euro, and the regulatory package on the prevention of money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

Lastly, as part of this line of action we will expedite files regarding corporate, indirect and customs taxation with the aim of streamlining the burden for individuals and companies, and to combat tax evasion and avoidance.

Competitiveness and cohesion

The Spanish Presidency will strive to design an ambitious European strategy to strengthen the EU's competitiveness and strategic autonomy. To this end, we will launch regulatory reforms to guarantee the integrity of the internal market and to preserve effective competitiveness within it, while at the same time encouraging the implementation of strategic projects and territorial development.

In this regard, it will be very important to revise the competitiveness and State aid control policies, as well as the cohesion regulations.

The informal ECOFIN Council meeting, to be held in Santiago de Compostela on 15-16 September 2023, will be a key opportunity to advance in these priorities.

Strengthening the multilateral financial framework and financial collaboration with Latin America and the Caribbean

We will seek to strengthen multilateral financial collaboration, including transatlantic collaboration, within the framework of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC).

Coinciding with the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) and the informal ECOFIN Council meeting, an EU-Latin America and the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting will be held in Santiago de Compostela on 15 September. This Ministerial Meeting will serve to promote, together with multilateral banks, the EU-LAC Global Gateway Investment Package, as well as the development of bilateral investment packages between the EU and Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Justice and Home Affairs Council configuration



One of the greatest achievements of the European Union is the consolidation of the area of freedom, security and justice, in which the citizens of Europe can feel they belong to the same community of rules and laws. Achieving a more cohesive Europe also involves completing the AFSJ, paying particular attention to the progressive convergence of national legislations, the digitalization of a justice system that is at the service of its citizens, and the protection of victims of criminal offences and of especially vulnerable groups.

Likewise, we must protect the Schengen Area because it is one of the greatest successes of European integration, enlarging it to Romania and Bulgaria. This should go hand in hand with guaranteeing an area that is free of internal borders, working with a humane, responsible, compassionate and effective management of flows of migrants and asylum-seekers.

Justice

The area of freedom, security and justice must guarantee respect for the democratic values on which the European Union is based, in accordance with Article 2 of the TEU.

The public justice service of the 21st century must be accessible, efficient, sustainable and committed to democratic values and the rule of law. The Spanish Presidency aims to consolidate a modern justice system at the service of the EU's citizens, in which equality is a guiding principle and social and territorial cohesion is achieved through the digital transformation.

The digitalization of the justice system will be a significant line of action, especially in the area of cross-border judicial cooperation. The Spanish Presidency will work on the new instruments to replace the current European e-Justice Strategy and Action Plan. We will also propose Council Conclusions on digital capacity-building for the protection of fundamental rights.

In criminal law matters, the Presidency will focus on concluding the negotiations with the European Parliament on the proposals for environmental protection, confiscation and asset recovery, combating violence against women and domestic violence, and the prevention of and fight against trafficking of human beings. We will also facilitate the negotiations on the proposal for a Directive on the transfer of criminal proceedings. The role of Eurojust will be crucial in the fight against cross-border organized crime.

In civil law matters, priority will be given to the dossier on abusive lawsuits against journalists and human rights defenders. The Presidency will continue negotiations on the proposals on parent-child relationships, liability for the harm caused by defective

products, adapting non-contractual civil liability rules to artificial intelligence, insolvency, and the protection of adults in cross-border situations.

The Spanish Presidency will promote the practical effectiveness of judicial cooperation instruments beyond the regulatory framework by training the justice professionals who will implement them and supporting the work of cooperation networks.

We will also continue the support for the consolidation of the rule of law and its review cycle in the European Union and the role of the European Public Prosecutor's Office in the fight against fraud to the European Union's financial interests. In addition, the Spanish Presidency will advance negotiations on the proposal for a Directive on combating corruption.

The Presidency will promote the European Union's accession process to the European Convention on Human Rights.

The consolidation of the area of freedom, security and justice is not devoid of challenges, such as those arising from Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In this regard, the Spanish Presidency will foster the adoption of the proposal for a Directive on the definition of criminal offences and penalties for the violation of Union restrictive measures. Moreover, we will promote international judicial cooperation.

The Presidency will organize an Informal Ministerial Meeting on Justice and Home Affairs in Logroño on 20 July (Home Affairs) and 21 July (Justice).

Home Affairs

In the area of Home Affairs, the Spanish Presidency will focus its efforts on making Europe safer, stronger and more united in order to address its current challenges.

One of its main priorities will be to conclude the negotiations on the dossiers that make up the Pact on Migration and Asylum before the end of the European Parliament's term, guaranteeing a fair distribution between solidarity and responsibility.

The external dimension of migration will be a fundamental priority for the Spanish Presidency, with the fostering of preventive collaboration with the countries of origin and transit by means of tangible political, operational and economic cooperation. In addition, we will seek to maximize the potential of voluntary returns and reintegration, exploring formulas for financial assistance, including Latin America and the Caribbean in the geographical scope of action.

The Presidency will work towards according safe, orderly and regular migration greater space in EU debate and on the EU agenda, championing a comprehensive approach to migration that goes beyond combating irregular migration. The European Union must be capable of designing a migration policy that can address medium- and long-term economic and demographic challenges. In this framework, the Spanish Presidency aims to achieve results through the two proposals for Directives on legal migration currently being negotiated, which seek to streamline procedures, protect migrant workers, strengthen their migratory status, and facilitate intra-EU mobility for long-term residents. This will contribute to attracting and retaining talent, to meeting national labour needs, and to improving labour market effectiveness across the European Union.

The Presidency will continue to defend giving support and protection to the persons displaced by Russia's aggression against Ukraine for as long as they wish to remain abroad and until it is safe for them to return. We will also promote a debate on challenges such as assisting the persons already admitted, including the extension of their Temporary Protection and the future legal framework for such persons after their Temporary Protection expires.

Likewise, the Spanish Presidency will make progress on the legislative dossiers that are currently under way, such as the proposals for Regulations to establish new rules to strengthen the use of Advance Passenger Information (API) data, the proposed "Prüm II" Regulation, and the proposal for a Regulation against child sexual abuse online.

We will also work to continue improving the functioning of the Schengen area as an area of free movement without internal border controls, and to promote intelligent and secure mobility management across external borders. We will seek to conclude the negotiations with a view to allowing Romania and Bulgaria to participate fully in the Schengen area.

The Spanish Presidency will further work on preventing and combating terrorism and violent radicalization, including the protection of the victims of terrorism and their role in raising social awareness about violence, the fight against terrorist financing, the use of new technologies and the threat posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters, with priority attention to be paid to the Sahel and North Africa.

The fight against organized and serious crime will be another priority, in particular the fight against drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings, promoting cooperation with third countries, in

particular with Latin America and the Caribbean. In view of the rise in cybercrime, police forces must have access to available data, while respecting the right to privacy. We will continue to monitor the impact that the conflict in Ukraine is having on illegal trafficking in weapons in Europe and possible threats from criminal organizations.

The Spanish Presidency will prioritize reinforcing governance in disaster risk management. Special attention will be paid to prevention and planning activities to achieve a European society that is much more resilient to natural and man-made disasters. Our goal will be to deepen cooperation in the European Civil Protection Mechanism by adopting a multi-risk approach, in particular with regard to climate change.

We will also continue to strengthen collaboration with third countries on matters concerning information, good practices and police training. In this field, relations with Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa will be kept in the forefront, attaching special significance to the relationship between the European Union and Latin America with the holding of a ministerial meeting with the recently created Latin American Committee on Internal Security (CLASI).

Competitiveness Council configuration



In order to make it possible for the European Union to continue to be a source of economic and social prosperity for its citizens, it is imperative to boost its reindustrialization and to improve the competitiveness of European businesses, safeguarding and reinforcing the internal market. With this objective in mind, strategic security is crucial to reduce vulnerabilities, stimulate European technology and capacities and fight unfair competition, in close coordination with our partners and allies.

Open Strategic Autonomy

Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and international protectionist dynamics have highlighted the fact that the values and pillars on which the order and welfare of our societies are based are threatened by multiple factors that have an impact on our strategic security. It is essential to reinforce Europe’s industrial and energy capacities.

The Spanish Presidency will place particular emphasis on reducing risks, attaining higher resilience levels, and mitigating the dependencies of the most vulnerable sectors in which the potential for a negative impact on the well-being of our citizens is the greatest, such as industry, health, food, energy, mobility and the digital domain, by building industrial capacities and enhancing the synergies offered by cooperation with our partners and allies.

These matters will be covered at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Competitiveness, in its Industry and Internal Market configuration, to be held in Bilbao on 25 July.

The debate surrounding strategic autonomy, together with other strategic reflections currently underway in the EU, such as that regarding the enlargement process, will be included on the next EU Strategic Agenda. The first major strategic debate on this matter will take place at the Informal European Council meeting in Granada, to be held on 6 October.

Industry

In this respect, the Spanish Presidency will address the resilience, capacity-building and strengthening of the industrial sector as prerequisites for the green and digital transitions and for consolidating the European social model. To this end,

the Presidency will advance the recently launched initiatives to assign greater importance to industry and define an effective industrial policy for Europe, giving special consideration to the role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Priority will also be given to promoting fair competition at the international level, to increase the competitiveness of EU businesses, while simultaneously strengthening the internal market.

In addition, the Spanish Presidency will encourage reflection on strengthening Europe’s economic security, on the basis of the recently presented communication on a European Economic Security Strategy.

Furthermore, in view of the challenges for industry represented by digitalization and sustainability, discussions will be held on how to advance and adapt some of the industrial ecosystems identified as having the greatest impact on the European economy and society, such as the automotive, pharmaceutical, chemical, food, ceramics, aerospace and electro-intensive industries.

Among the dossiers to which special attention will be paid are the Critical Raw Materials Act, the Net Zero Industry Act and the Ecodesign Regulation.

Internal Market

The Spanish Presidency will work to deepen the internal market, paying particular attention to its impact on competitiveness, as an essential means of reinforcing European industry, of ensuring the strategic security of a European Union that is open to the world, and of underpinning Europe’s innovative future.

The Spanish Presidency will endeavour to finalize key legislative dossiers being negotiated with the European Parliament, such as the Single Market Emergency Instrument (SMEI).

The Presidency will seek to act on the European Council's Conclusions on the internal market and its impact on the long-term competitiveness and productivity of European industry, in view of the Communication issued by the Commission in this respect.

Tourism

The Presidency will pay special attention to ensuring the sustainability of tourism, especially as concerns its social dimension, which is crucial to achieving tourism that is high-quality, accessible and in line with the SDGs.

Another priority to be addressed is that of improving the digitalization of the services offered, with special attention to obtaining the necessary statistics enabling the design of policies in line with the objectives of sustainability and social impact established for the sector.

In addition, progress will be made towards regulating short-term rentals, thus assuring a balanced framework for affordable housing and sustainable tourism.

An Informal Ministerial Meeting on Tourism will take place in Palma de Mallorca on 30-31 October, to discuss issues such as digitalization, sustainability and accessibility. This Meeting will be preceded by a European Forum on Tourism, in which special emphasis will be placed on the question of social sustainability and the travel industry.

Lastly, the Tourism Intelligence and Data Forum will take place in Benidorm on 16 November. This event will focus on the digital transformation of the sector, including the generation of data spaces and their use to contribute to the development of tourist destinations, making them more competitive.

Industrial Property

The Presidency will work to develop European systems for the protection of industrial property rights. In particular, we will review the legislation on designs, in the first substantial reconsideration of dossiers in this regard in over 20 years. The Presidency will also seek definitive approval for the geographic indications of artisanal and industrial products, and will work to strengthen national patent systems and their connection with innovative sectors of the EU, as instruments reinforcing European industrial sovereignty.

The Presidency will strengthen the EU Intellectual Property Network, the enforcement of industrial property rights, the support of SMEs and the analysis of the use of artificial intelligence in the context of industrial property.

As part of this comprehensive action, the Presidency will promote further advances in dossiers on industrial property, thus contributing to the protection of technology and transparency in the market, among other measures in this respect.

Research and Innovation

Research and innovation policy is a key priority for the EU, enabling it to position itself as a leading economic and geopolitical player and respond to contemporary challenges such as the social, green and

digital transitions, open strategic autonomy and cooperation on R&I with the countries of the Mediterranean arc and those of Latin America and the Caribbean. Accordingly, the Spanish Presidency will strengthen R&I ecosystems and promote initiatives to develop them at all territorial levels.

The role of R&I in policy-making within democratic societies will be strengthened. During the Spanish Presidency, action will be taken to reach a consensus on European Council Conclusions addressing three main issues: the role of science in public policies; that of regional and local innovation-oriented ecosystems in strengthening territorial cohesion; and the impact of the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Mechanism on R&I and sectoral policies, consolidating a European Research Area.

The Presidency will advance the Commission's proposals on European missions and research projects.

The Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) will be consolidated and strengthened, as an invaluable instrument connecting the EU with the southern shores of the Mediterranean. During the Spanish Presidency, a legislative amendment will be facilitated, enabling this programme to be extended until 2027, thus facilitating its renewal within the next multiannual financial framework.

An Informal Ministerial Meeting on Research will be held in Santander on 27-28 July under the title: "Advancing together with knowledge and innovation towards a fairer and more sustainable society".

Space

The Spanish Presidency provides an opportunity to continue advancing a European policy on space, defining and reinforcing the role of the European Union as a major participant in space activities.

The Presidency will seek to adopt Council Conclusions in relation to space traffic management (STM), a key element for greater security in outer space. The Presidency will also prepare Council Conclusions on the Space Strategy for Security and Defence (SSSD).

An Informal Ministerial Meeting on Space will take place in Seville on 6-7 November. It will focus on the sustainable, green use of space, as well as on resilience and competitive and sustainable industrialization.

Environment Council configuration



To successfully address imminent global crises and contribute effectively to the fight against climate change, without compromising its prosperity, the EU must hasten the green transition. This transition, furthermore, must improve the quality of life of its citizens, generate employment opportunities and ensure that burdens are fairly shared, in a framework of social justice and solidarity, while safeguarding the interests of the most vulnerable members of society.

The Spanish Presidency will be an opportunity for the EU to build bridges and develop the multilateral climate agenda. COP-28, which will be held from 30 November to 12 December in Dubai, will set a milestone with the completion of the first global stocktaking, showing where we stand with respect to the goals set out in the Paris Agreement.

The European Union must adopt a more ambitious approach to climate action in order to meet the objective of restricting the global temperature increase to no more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, within a context of resilient to climate change development. The EU must also promote a further round of far-reaching national contributions, in line with scientific recommendations.

At the legislative level, significant progress is needed towards adopting regulations to restrict the emission and use of fluorinated gases and substances that deplete the ozone layer.

Another priority during the Spanish Presidency will be to implement measures aimed at achieving the Zero Pollution goal. Europe must spearhead initiatives such as improving air quality and applying an ambitious policy to control and restrict the use of hazardous chemical substances in manufacturing. Within this context of reducing the impact of human activity, the control of industrial emissions and the transition towards a circular economy model must be consolidated, with special attention to initiatives focused on waste reduction, and in particular reducing the use of plastics.

In addition to the above, the Presidency will focus on enhancing water management, in the view that water is a strategic resource in the present context of climate change. This management will involve areas such

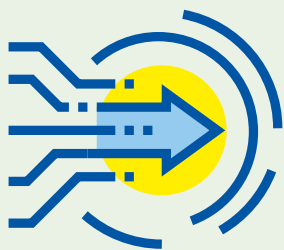
as wastewater treatment and purification, the reduction of diffuse pollution by nutrients and priority substances, and promoting water circularity. The prevention and management of droughts and other quantitative aspects of water, in times of reduced rainfall, is also of the utmost importance.

The protection and restoration of biodiversity must be accompanied by policies to combat climate change and reduce pollution. In this respect, Europe must be at the forefront of efforts to implement the results of the 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-15) and maintain the high degree of environmental protection envisaged with the creation of the Natura 2000 Network. By 2030, 30% of the land surface area in Europe is required to have legally binding environmental protection and at least 25,000 km of rivers must have recovered their natural characteristics.

At this critical moment for international decision-making on issues affecting the oceans, the Spanish Presidency will sustain the EU's international leadership in protecting the marine environment. Oceans play a vital role as regulators of the climate and reservoirs of biodiversity. Accordingly, a global consensus must be sought to design and implement appropriate policies in this field, such as on adapting coastal activities to the impact of climate change, establishing protected marine areas beyond national borders and reaching a global agreement on plastics.

The Presidency will hold an Informal Ministerial Meeting on the Environment on 10 July, to be followed by a joint session with national Energy Ministers on 11 July in Valladolid.

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council configuration



The European energy sector has changed dramatically since 2020. Events such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the energy price crisis and the increased ambition promoted by the European Union have accelerated the energy transition. The European Union must continue to act in unison to reduce its dependence on imported raw materials and key technologies, and thus achieve energy autonomy. A new, sustainable economic model cannot be built if it generates new dependencies, harms economic prosperity and industrial competitiveness and reduces the well-being of its citizens.

The European Union's transport policy contributes to the functioning of the single market, and is a vital aspect of territorial structuring and cross-border communication. In this field, important challenges that remain to be addressed include the decarbonization of the sector, the configuration of a sustainable, intelligent and resilient mobility system, and the development of the Trans-European Transport Network. The EU must also improve its cyber-resilience and develop secure telecommunications networks.

Transport

The Presidency will keep the roll-out of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, promoting resilient person-centred mobility, as an element of social and territorial cohesion.

In particular, mobility will be promoted as a universal right, one that is an essential precursor to access other rights such as those to housing, work, education and health. Special attention will be paid to supporting the role of women in the transport sector, as users and providers. These issues will be central to the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Transport to be held in Barcelona on 21-22 September.

The Presidency will work to align the policies of the main international transport organizations, such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), with those of the European Union. In this regard, the second Global Aviation Gender Summit, organized by ICAO, will be held in Madrid, and the EU-European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) Dialogues, in Valencia.

The Spanish Presidency will seek to achieve the greatest possible progress in negotiations with the European Parliament on revising the regulation of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), an essential element of social and territorial cohesion, and that of the Single European Sky (SES2+) initiative, which is crucial to competitiveness and to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by the European aviation sector.

We will step up the Council's efforts regarding the Greening Transport Package, which gives continuity to the Fit for 55 initiatives and will play a significant role in decarbonizing transport. We will also work to strengthen the Maritime Safety Package.

In the field of road safety, the Spanish Presidency will seek to strengthen cooperation and the exchange of good practices among the Member States. Furthermore, we will promote European legislation on road safety, aiming to achieve a sustained reduction in the rate of traffic accidents, and ultimately reach zero deaths by 2050.

Lastly, in this sector, the Presidency will accord architecture, housing and urban development their rightful place in EU policies. These issues will be discussed at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Urban Development, which will take place on 13-14 November in Gijón.

Telecommunications

Completing the architecture for the new digital economy model of the EU will be one of the key milestones of the Presidency, which will place particular emphasis on protecting European rights and values and, most especially, the rights to non-discrimination, privacy, and data security. On the basis of the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles, signed on 15 December 2022, the Presidency will continue to foster reflection on the importance of ethical and inclusive digitalization.

The Spanish Presidency will promote the work on the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act through a regulatory framework for artificial intelligence which, in collaboration with the European Commission, will provide legislative implementation guides for the development and roll-out of AI with an ethical approach. The advances in the field of AI will be presented at the coming European AI Alliance Assembly, to be held on 16-17 November in Madrid.

To foster economic growth, the Spanish Presidency will promote European digital entrepreneurship, in line with the standards defined by the Europe Startup Nations Alliance, ensuring that the European Union is able to meet the target of doubling the number of European unicorns by 2030.

Another of the Spanish Presidency's goals will be to hasten the digital transformation of the EU to ensure that it is equipped with the necessary skills to meet the ambitious objectives of the Digital Decade policy programme 2030. Now is the ideal time to carry out a serious reflection on a new regulatory policy for electronic communications in Europe. This policy must promote the strategic nature of this sector, maintain its dynamism, its strong competitive and innovative character, while at the same time guaranteeing its technical and financial sustainability, and the achievement of the Digital Decade objectives.

The work related to the European Digital Identity Regulation (eIDAS 2) will also be important. The aim here will be to create personal data portfolios in public administrations so that individuals can manage their personal data at EU level. Interconnectedness between digital identity systems across the EU will also be fostered.

Security in the digital world will be key. To this end, the Presidency will promote the Cyber Resilience Act (CRA) and will continue the work on the Cyber Solidarity Act, in addition to addressing the revision of the Cybersecurity Regulation.

Moreover, we will promote the Interoperable Europe Act to guarantee that public digital services are interoperable by design.

In addition to these initiatives, we will move forward with dossiers such as the Gigabit Infrastructure Act (GIA), as well as possible

proposals for new telecommunications regulations and new developments deriving from Gaia-X.

In the audiovisual sphere, we will prioritize the convergence of EU audiovisual legislation in spheres such as the regulation of digital sectors, the country-of-origin principle, the definition of European audiovisual work and the specific regulations and rights corresponding to bloggers and influencers.

The Spanish Presidency will seek to strengthen relations between the European Union and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, fostering regulatory and political convergence between the two regions. Specifically, bridges will be built between the two regions through the launch of the EU-LAC Digital Alliance, which will promote digital alliances with key countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and will step up support for their person-centred, rights-focused digital transformation through bilateral investment packages.

The Informal Ministerial Meeting on Telecommunications and Digitalization will be held in León, on 23-24 October.

Energy

The hastened transformation of the energy sector makes it necessary to update national planning instruments and bring them in line with the new reality. To do so, useful resources include the Next Generation EU funds, the measures set out in the REPower EU Plan, the accelerated deployment of renewable energies, the storage needed to ensure the effective integration of these technologies, the promotion of renewable hydrogen and the new definitions made of the rules for the electricity market.

Nevertheless, this impulse will be insufficient if it is not accompanied by a redesign and modernization of the electricity market. For this reason, the Spanish Presidency will work to establish common rules for the Member States, guaranteeing competitive prices for consumers, reinforcing the security of energy supply and encouraging the deployment of renewables and technologies to increase the flexibility of the electrical system for storage and demand management.

The Spanish Presidency will continue to promote the legislative proposals on energy contained in the Fit for 55 initiative, related to the promotion of energy from renewable sources, energy and building efficiency, energy taxation and sustainable mobility and transportation.

The Presidency will advance towards meeting the climate commitments made, via ambitious energy and industrial policies that contribute to achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and to reinforcing our strategic, technological and energy autonomy. This commitment must be based on opening up trade in order to maintain European leadership in technologies linked to the energy transition, while simultaneously increasing the resilience of supply chains.

Renewable hydrogen will play an essential role in achieving the full decarbonization of our economy, especially in the industrial sector and in heavy transport. The Presidency will progress towards establishing a solid basis for the development of the European hydrogen market, with the aim of providing certainty, encouraging investment and maximizing the attractiveness of the EU for project development. Due to the innovative nature of this sector, economic initiatives to

encourage investment and innovation, such as the future European Hydrogen Bank, will be essential.

The Presidency will organize an Informal Ministerial Meeting on Energy to be held on 12 July, preceded by a joint meeting with national Environment Ministers on 11 July in Valladolid.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council configuration



A cohesive Europe means an inclusive Europe. A decade of successive crises has left scars on our society that must be healed. In parallel, the appearance of new sectors of production and the development of economic activity demand ambitious social responses to reduce inequalities, increase and strengthen labour and social rights, and protect the most vulnerable groups.

Moreover, if the Covid-19 pandemic taught us anything it is that we cannot aspire to build a space of prosperity without first guaranteeing the most basic of all needs: people's health. We will seek to complete a European Health Union that enables us to respond together to the health challenges of the future.

Employment and Social Policy

With the goal of making Europe more social, more feminist, greener and more democratic, the labour policy priorities of the Spanish Presidency are aligned with the European Pillar of Social Rights and the implementation of its Action Plan adopted by the Commission in March 2021, as well as with the commitment undertaken at the extraordinary European Council meeting held at the Porto Social Summit of 2021.

The roll-out of this agenda for employment will be guided by three principal themes: social dialogue, decent work and the social economy.

The Presidency will promote social dialogue between the European social partners. We will promote information and consultation mechanisms, collective bargaining in companies, and the active participation of workers in decision-making processes. We will implement an analysis of how green collective bargaining can favour a just green transition to make companies more sustainable, resilient and productive.

Among other initiatives, the Spanish Presidency will seek to conclude an agreement with the European social partners on remote work and the right to disconnect as part of the efforts to achieve decent labour conditions in the digital age. The adoption of Council conclusions on democracy at work and green collective bargaining will also be fostered.

Efforts will also be undertaken to make decent work a pillar of inclusive and sustainable growth, with a firm commitment to equality between women and men in the world of work and to employment for young persons.

This will mean promoting safe and healthy workplaces, pursuant to the Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027.

As part of the actions to strengthen decent work, the Presidency will advance dossiers currently at the trilogue stage, such as the Directive on improving working conditions in platform work and the proposed amendments of the Directives on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work and on the limit values for lead and its inorganic compounds and diisocyanates.

The Presidency will also foster the adoption of Council Conclusions on mental health and precarious work, as well as a tripartite Declaration with the European social partners in relation to the European Year of Skills 2023.

As regards the social economy, the Spanish Presidency will work hand in hand with the Commission to include all the actions within the new Social Economy Action Plan and to achieve the adoption of the proposal for a Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions.

With the aim of promoting the social dimension of the economic governance framework of the European Semester, we will support the launch of the Social Imbalances Framework initiative, introducing indicators to detect and correct possible social imbalances, with a view to its first-time application by the Commission in the next cycle of the European Semester in autumn 2023.

In line with the aspiration to consolidate a European Union that serves all its citizens, the Spanish Presidency will place the utmost priority on the adoption of an EU Disability Card that guarantees equal access to benefits across Europe.

In addition, the Presidency will move forward with Council Conclusions regarding the Roma population that explore channels for eradicating segregated settlements and shantytowns.

Committed to improving the living conditions of all Europeans and to combating the social exclusion of the most vulnerable persons, the Spanish Presidency will work on a Council Declaration on combating homelessness at EU level and will support the European Platform on Combating Homelessness.

Similarly, efforts will be made to promote the debate on the right of persons with disabilities to vote and to stand as candidates, with the aim of delivering on Article 19 of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The European Child Guarantee is a key instrument for implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and for reducing the percentage of the EU population at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Consequently, the Spanish Presidency will work on the adoption of a Council Declaration to advance in the fight against poverty and to deinstitutionalize the child protection system.

Lastly, the Presidency will work on attaining the approval of Conclusions on person-centred and community-based care, as well as a Council Declaration on increasing care for children and adolescents.

These themes will be debated in the framework of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Labour and Social Policy, to be held in Madrid on 13-14 July.

Equality

In the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the defence of human rights as a driver of EU external action, the Presidency will maintain efforts to protect women and girls.

Efforts will be focused on applying the tools developed by the European Union in the framework of the Temporary Protection Directive, the Ukraine solidarity platform and the 10-Point Plan, paying particular attention to combating human trafficking.

In the legislative sphere, the Presidency will advance the proposal for a Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence and the proposal for a revision of the Directive on preventing and combating trafficking of human beings and protecting its victims.

Moreover, the Presidency will commit decisively to guaranteeing access to all sexual and reproductive rights, ensuring that Europeans can take all decisions regarding their sexual lives with freedom, trust and security, placing particular importance on promoting sexual education in the education and public health systems.

We will also promote equal pay and the guarantee of the right to care of all persons, paying particular attention to the visibility, recognition and, above all, the distribution and co-responsibility of care work. Efforts will also be made to advance the European Care Strategy, following the approval of the corresponding Recommendations.

In addition, we will champion the idea of a Europe committed to equal treatment and equal opportunities and to combating all forms of discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Our aim is to tackle this issue across policies, making

this fight an essential pillar of the acquis of European values. We will pay particular attention to the application of the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025.

The Presidency will advance work on the proposal for a Directive on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment and will seek to push forward with the proposal for a Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

At the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Equality, to be held on 23-24 November in Pamplona, the Presidency will address sexual freedom, and violence against women and girls, among other thematic lines.

Social security and inclusion

The Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU will work to strengthen the social protection of all Europeans, focusing on guaranteeing adequate minimum income, improving social protection for the self-employed, and strengthening coordination of their social security rights at the EU and international levels.

In regard to security and pensions, the Presidency will seek to strengthen the European social shield, paying particular attention to the social protection of the self-employed; the modernization of employment and income protection models; and the coordination of social security systems to favour labour mobility and European job market integration. To achieve these goals, the Presidency will continue negotiations regarding ongoing legislative dossiers and will propose an initiative on international remote work.

The Presidency will also work towards Conclusions on the promotion of social protection for the self-employed, as well as in relation to the digitalization of social security systems.

The EPSCO agenda will include a debate on the legislation applicable to international remote workers in the EU and its impact on the coordination of social security systems.

The Spanish Presidency will foster social inclusion by strengthening the European social shield through two major lines of action. Firstly, by defining social return on investment metrics in public policy, with Presidency Conclusions on flexible and coherent income protection models. And secondly, by working towards Recommendations on minimum income, promoting initiatives to reduce the non-take up of benefits, and sharing the outcomes of inclusion itineraries.

Health

In the sphere of health, three principal priorities will be promoted: improving the protection of vulnerable groups in the European Union, fostering preparedness and response initiatives for facing new health alerts, and aligning the European health agenda with the 2030 Agenda and the One Health approach.

The Presidency will advance towards the creation of a European Health Data Space (EHDS), as an initiative with great potential for improving the effectiveness of policies on healthcare and research. This Space will regulate the primary and secondary uses of health data, giving citizens more control.

The proposal for a Regulation on standards of quality and safety for substances of human origin intended for human application is another dossier that the

Spanish Presidency will seek to advance with a view to the creation of a new European information system, which will have great importance in terms of oversight over the centres involved in obtaining the different substances and their use. This, in turn, will help to keep them up-to-date with new scientific developments.

The financial base of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) will be strengthened by agreeing on a regulation specifying the cost-based fees and remuneration to be charged by the Agency. This regulation will also stipulate the cost-based remuneration to be received by the competent authorities of the Member States for the services they offer in undertaking the statutory activities of the Agency.

The healthcare agenda will also focus on the disease prevention and health promotion culture in the European Union with respect to issues such as childhood obesity and lifelong vaccination, and will strengthen the capabilities of health systems in areas where the pandemic has exposed shortcomings, such as strategic autonomy in healthcare provision.

The Presidency will also develop new EU actions on diseases and health issues prevalent in Europe, such as HIV and mental illness. This will be one of the main themes of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Health to be held in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria on 27-28 July.

Consumer affairs

Consumers have an essential role to play in transforming the production system into a model that is more sustainable, from social, environmental and economic standpoints.

In line with the New Consumer Agenda 2020-2025 approved by the European

Commission, the rights of vulnerable consumers will be strengthened, the rights and role of consumers in the green transition and the circular economy will be promoted, and patterns of consumption will be aligned with the digital transition.

To address today's reality in Europe, we must protect vulnerable consumers, including not only those in economic difficulties but also those persons who, due to age, disability or other factors, are facing straitened circumstances.

The Presidency will support the rights of consumers and enable them to play an active role in the green transition, within the framework of the European Green Deal and the One Health approach. As areas for special attention, the Presidency will focus on the circular economy, product repairability, and measures to combat planned obsolescence.

The Presidency will work to adapt consumer regulations to the digital transformation, in order to ensure consumers' rights are protected, both online and offline.

In the field of consumer affairs, the Presidency will promote the adaptation of European legislation to meet the challenges posed by the digital world and the fourth industrial revolution. Other areas to which special attention will be paid include consumer education, corporate responsibility, transparency, accessibility and the quality of information offered to consumers.

To achieve these objectives, the Presidency will promote the revision of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation and of the Directive on Toy Safety, as well as the proposed Directive on Sustainable Consumption of Goods Promoting Repair and Reuse, and the new Directive on

Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition.

An Informal Ministerial Meeting on Consumer Affairs will be held in Bilbao on 24 July to address the role of consumers in the green transition and the circular economy and to foster an assessment of the New Consumer Agenda in the light of recent crises and developments in consumer affairs.

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council configuration



Education is at the heart of the European project. During the European Year of Skills, the Spanish Presidency will work for the future of our young people, structuring an inclusive, digital and competitive educational framework, while also seeking to mitigate the impact that the economic, health and social crises have had on young people.

The Spanish Presidency will also strengthen the cultural dimension as a fundamental pillar in the consolidation of a spirit of European citizenship, leading a strategy to support the recognition of culture as an essential public good. In this same spirit, we will promote sport as a fundamental component of European society, as a driver of transformation, employment, progress and development, as well as a tool for inclusion and cohesion that fosters and promotes freedom, respect and tolerance.



Education

The Spanish Presidency will complete the mid-term review of the European Education Area 2025 by promoting its social, democratic, and digital pillars.

In the social sphere, the Presidency will develop the educational dimension of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. In this regard, the second conference on ending sexual harassment in academia will be held in Bilbao on 23-24 October.

Education plays a crucial role in empowering active citizenship, which is essential for the vitality of our democracies, at the national and EU levels. This is why the Presidency will promote Council Conclusions on the contribution of education to strengthening common European values and democratic citizenship.

Moreover, in the context of the digital transformation of our societies, the acquisition and development of digital skills is fundamental to citizens' personal, social and professional growth and development.

With this in mind, the Spanish Presidency will propose two Council Recommendations on improving digital skills in education and training and on the key enabling factors for successful digital education and training.

The importance of these skills, and of professional training, ongoing training and lifelong learning, are underscored in the European Year of Skills. In this framework, work will be done to improve the integration of companies into the training system.

In the sphere of higher education, the Presidency will support the development of online certificates recognized across the EU and the automatic recognition of professional qualifications. The Second

European University Alliance Forum will be held in September in Barcelona.

The topics for discussion at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Education and Youth to be held in Zaragoza on 18-19 September are the European Youth Work Agenda, equitable access to quality education, education in European values, and the link with the European Year of Skills.



Youth

The Presidency will pay particular attention to the issue of mental health problems among young people.

The EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) is an essential instrument for addressing the challenges faced by this key sector of our citizenry.

With the aim of strengthening the Strategy, and of placing the future of young people at the heart of the European project, the Spanish Presidency will undertake to strengthen European instruments for youth. In addition, the EU Youth Conference to be held in Alicante in October will promote dialogue between youth organizations and political authorities.



Culture

The Presidency will promote the development of cultural landscapes, convinced of their benefits for the socioeconomic development of local communities, and of their potential to serve as a fundamental tool for addressing demographic and climate challenges.

The Spanish Presidency will foster good practices in sustainable heritage management, with a view to universal access and to unlocking its potential as a

driver of territorial cohesion. This will be one of the thematic lines of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Culture and Sport to be held in Cáceres on 25-26 September.

In addition, the Spanish Presidency will propose a policy debate at EU level on the need to improve the working, social security and tax conditions of artists through the promotion of the proposed European Status of the Artist and of cultural workers, which would establish a common framework and enable cross-border mobility.

In the specific sector of video games, the Presidency will support its cultural and creative dimension through the launch of a common European video game industry strategy.

The Spanish Presidency will guarantee the protection of freedom of expression as a fundamental value of the EU, advancing towards the approval of the European Media Freedom Act, with the aim of promoting and protecting the pluralism, independence and sustainability of the media. In line with this objective, the Presidency will move forward with the negotiations for the Regulation establishing a common framework for media services.

Sport

The Spanish Presidency will place particular emphasis on three aspects of sport: women and equality in sport, making sport spaces safe spaces, and eradicating hate acts.

Equality constitutes a guiding principle of the 2021-2024 EU Work Plan for Sport. The Presidency will apply this principle by promoting the training, visibility and leadership of women in sport, and by combating sexual violence in sport. These aspects will be discussed at the Conference

on Gender Equality in Sport to be held in Madrid in mid-November.

In addition, by working to make sport spaces safe spaces, the Spanish Presidency will seek to establish strategies that minimize the risks to which athletes and fans may be exposed during their participation in sporting events, competitions and training sessions.

These strategies must include safe infrastructure and facilities, safety guarantees at sports events, health in sport and the creation of safe spaces to ensure protection against harassment, abuse, inappropriate behaviour or violence of a racist or any other nature.

Finally, the Presidency will promote a debate on the best channels for effectively and definitively eradicating hate acts from sport, as expressions that are incompatible with the values and principles of the European Union.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council configuration



The European Union, as the top global trader of agri-food products, shoulders an enormous responsibility with respect to food security. The EU agri-food sector provides significant economic and social benefits, not only to European citizens and rural areas, but also at a global level, as a guarantor of food security and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. For this reason, the Spanish Presidency will continue the work to combat the effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, such as market distortions and the rise in costs due to supply chain restrictions affecting raw materials, energy and fuel. In the face of these challenges, the EU must promote sustainable and efficient agricultural and fishing policies that safeguard the quality of life of the persons engaged in these sectors and guarantee food security in Europe.

Agriculture

The Spanish Presidency will focus on fostering and promoting the agri-food technologies that will be essential to the transition towards a more sustainable model of production, enabling climate change preparedness and reducing our dependence on imports in an unstable geopolitical scenario.

The promotion of new technologies will help ensure that the EU remains at the cutting edge in terms of agri-food technology and innovation, including as regards new genomic techniques.

The Presidency will step up the negotiations on the proposed revision of EU legislation on plant and forest reproductive material, and on the proposed legislation for plants produced by certain new genomic techniques. Furthermore, we will initiate debates on the proposal to revise animal welfare legislation, ensuring the competitiveness, profitability and future of European livestock farming.

In view of the current context, we will work to guarantee and increase food security, as well as the safety and protection of animal and plant health and of the environment. The Presidency will continue the work on the proposed Regulation on the sustainable use of plant protection products, and legislation on protective measures against plant pests.

The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will help ensure that the agri-food sector is able to meet the needs identified. The Spanish Presidency will prioritize analysis of the advances achieved by the CAP Strategic Plans, launched in 2023, as an essential tool for favouring best practices in farming and for ensuring the stability of returns.

The EU food quality policy is of strategic importance to rural economic development and sustainability. The Presidency will champion the geographical indications and other quality schemes for agri-food products, wines and beverages guaranteeing sustainable production and quality, due to their rootedness in the region and commitment to the Green Deal objectives.

The Spanish Presidency intends to spotlight the opportunities offered by rural areas, drawing inspiration from the EU's long-term vision for rural areas and the EU Rural Pact. The Presidency will hold a high-level Conference on the future of rural areas.

The impetus of new technologies will help the EU to maintain its leadership in all areas, including new genomic technologies. This issue will be discussed at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture to be held in Cordoba on 4-5 September.

Fisheries

As regards fisheries, the Spanish Presidency will promote the decarbonization of the fishing industry, fostering the search for sustainable alternatives that are economically and functionally viable, through investment in sustainability, innovation and digitalization.

Efforts will also be focused on strengthening the role of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in guaranteeing the food supply and independence of the European Union, ensuring a level playing field for EU external fishing operations, as well as the sustainable maintenance of activity and market balance through the common market organization.

We will endeavour to streamline the decision-making procedure so that an agreement can be reached on the Total Allowable Catches (TACs), establishing multi-annual TACs and including socioeconomic analyses in the scientific reports.

These priorities will be discussed at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Fisheries to be held in Vigo on 17-18 July.

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