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Brussels Info Flash

11 September 2026

H/Advisors' Analysis

Commission moves to make public procurement a strategic lever for Europe's competitiveness

Brussels wants simpler rules and more flexible procedures, while using public contracts to support innovation, resilience and European strategic autonomy

The European Commission has proposed a new **Public Procurement Regulation** to modernise and simplify a framework that represents around **15% of EU GDP.** The reform would merge existing procurement rules into a single directly applicable regulation, reducing complexity for public buyers and companies and generating an estimated **€650 million** in annual administrative savings. It would also create a single digital procurement marketplace, making it easier for businesses to take part in tenders across the EU.

The proposal also marks a shift towards a more strategic use of public procurement. The Commission wants the **Best Price-Quality Ratio** to become the standard award method, ensuring that public buyers consider not only price, but also **environmental, social, innovation, security** and **resilience** criteria. It also introduces a horizontal **European preference** framework, allowing the EU to address security of supply risks, unfair access to foreign procurement markets and strategic dependencies.

The text will now be negotiated by the **European Parliament** and the **Council**. Politically, the reform reflects the recommendations of the **Draghi** and **Letta** reports and confirms that Brussels wants procurement to become more than an administrative process: a tool to strengthen Europe's competitiveness, industrial base and strategic autonomy.

Highlights of the week

- **Defence and Ukraine support**: The Commission approved €6.1 billion for Ukraine's defence needs and launched the EU-Ukraine Drone Alliance.
- **Health and pharma resilience**: The Commission moved on medical radioisotopes, insulin supply security and respiratory virus therapeutics.
- **Energy and environment**: Key files included Europe's largest industrial carbon capture project and EP votes on electricity grids and the ETS.
- **Finance and investment**: The main finance angles were the Netherlands' RRF payment, macro-financial assistance to Jordan and investment-focused EU partnerships.

Main Issues in the EU

The Council

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- **EU long-term budget.** European Council President António Costa met Maltese Prime Minister Robert Abela in Valletta, calling for agreement on the 2028-2034 EU budget by the end of 2026 and linking it to competitiveness, defence, cohesion, agriculture, strategic autonomy and developments in the Mediterranean.

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- **EU long-term budget and competitiveness.** European Council President António Costa met Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, calling for agreement on the 2028-2034 EU budget by the end of 2026 and linking it to defence readiness, competitiveness, energy affordability, cohesion, agriculture and continued support for Ukraine.

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- **Informal Agriculture Ministers meeting.** Agriculture ministers met informally under the Irish Presidency to discuss agriculture-related priorities and initiatives.

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- **Informal Agriculture Ministers meeting.**

The Commission

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- **Ukraine defence support.** The Commission approved an additional €6.1 billion for Ukraine to procure air and missile defence, ammunition, drones and electronic warfare capabilities, and hosted the first meeting of the EU-Ukraine Drone Alliance.

- **Trade and investment agreements.** The Commission presented the EU-India Free Trade Agreement and the EU-Ecuador Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreement to the Council, aiming to strengthen market access, investment and economic ties with key partners.

- **Turkish Cypriot community.** The Commission adopted the 2026 EU Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community, providing €34 million to support socio-economic development and the reunification process in Cyprus.

- **Health preparedness.** The Commission and the European Investment Bank signed a €30 million investment agreement with Ethris to support innovative therapeutics and vaccines against respiratory viruses.

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- **Macro-financial assistance to Jordan.** The Commission disbursed €150 million in macro-financial assistance to Jordan, the second tranche under the EU's fourth €500 million MFA programme.

- **European Capitals of Culture.** The Commission proposed to renew and strengthen the European Capitals of Culture framework beyond 2033, simplifying selection and reinforcing legacy, sustainability and youth participation.

- **EU-US border security.** The Commission proposed Council decisions on the signing and conclusion of an EU-US Enhanced Border Security Partnership framework agreement, setting conditions for reciprocal information exchange with data protection safeguards.

- **Medical radioisotopes.** The Commission presented a strategy to secure the EU's long-term supply of medical radioisotopes, aiming to reduce dependencies on foreign suppliers and strengthen the European supply chain.

- **Outermost regions**. The Commission adopted a new strategic vision for the EU's outermost regions, aiming to strengthen their development, resilience and role in the EU's global reach.

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- **Ceuta emergency assistance**. The Commission granted Spain €114.7 million in emergency assistance to help manage the situation in Ceuta following the large-scale border crossings on 30-31 July.

- **Public procurement**. The Commission proposed new rules to simplify and modernise the EU public procurement framework, aiming to support strategic investments in public services and infrastructure.

- **Affordable Housing Act.** The Commission proposed new EU rules to help Member States and cities address housing affordability and availability in high-pressure areas.

- **European Innovation Act.** The Commission proposed a new European Innovation Act to help innovative European ideas develop, scale up and compete globally.

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- **Displaced workers.** The Commission proposed €1.1 million from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to support 351 dismissed paper industry workers in Finland.

- **Agri-food innovation.** The Commission adopted a new strategic approach to boost research, innovation, deployment and uptake across Europe's agri-food sector.

- **Insulin supply resilience.** The Commission approved €400 million in German State aid for Sanofi to strengthen the security of supply of human insulin and insulin analogues in the EEA.

- **Belgian State aid.** The Commission concluded that public funding for three Flemish land management associations did not constitute State aid.

- **Merger control.** The Commission cleared the acquisition of a logistics property in Hamburg by Prologis and NBIM under the simplified merger review procedure.

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- **NextGenerationEU.** The Commission positively assessed the Netherlands' fourth €661 million payment request under the Recovery and Resilience Facility, covering reforms and investments in innovation, education and energy efficiency.

- **Industrial decarbonisation.** The Commission inaugurated Europe's largest commercial carbon capture and storage project at Yara's Sluiskil plant in the Netherlands, expected to capture up to 800,000 tonnes of CO_2 annually.

- **Product safety.** The Commission and national authorities presented the 2026 product safety sweep, showing improved online marketplace compliance while identifying remaining gaps in product information requirements.

- **Czech State aid.** The Commission approved a €53 million Czech State aid measure to finalise the construction of a multifunctional hall in Brno.

- **Merger control.** The Commission cleared ABF and Wilmar's acquisition of joint control of Hebei Mauri under the simplified merger review procedure.

- **EU-Greenland partnership.** The EU, Greenland and Denmark signed a new Joint Declaration, with the Commission announcing a €200 million Global Gateway package to strengthen cooperation with Greenland.

The European Parliament

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- **Electricity grids package.** The ITRE Committee voted on the review of the trans-European energy networks rules, aimed at better integrating electricity infrastructure across Member States.

- **Emissions Trading System.** The ENVI Committee voted on a proposal to halt the automatic cancellation of excess allowances in the EU ETS market stability reserve.

- **EU-China relations.** The AFET Committee voted on recommendations for the future of EU-China relations, covering trade imbalances, Ukraine, the Indo-Pacific and human rights.

- **Irish Presidency priorities.** MEPs from the JURI and ITRE committees discussed the priorities of the Irish Presidency with the responsible Irish ministers.

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- **Affordable housing.** MEPs from the Special Committee on the Housing Crisis hosted Commissioner Dan Jørgensen for the launch of the EU Affordable Housing Act, focusing on affordability, housing shortages and market pressure.

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- **Irish Presidency priorities.** MEPs from the IMCO Committee discussed the priorities of the Irish Presidency with the responsible Irish minister.

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