

# A new strategic agenda 2019-2024

In recent years, the world has become increasingly unsettled, complex and subject to rapid change. That creates both opportunities and challenges. Over the next five years, the EU can and will strengthen its role in this changing environment. Together, we will be determined and focused, building on our values and the strengths of our model. This is the only effective way to shape the future world, promote the interests of our citizens, businesses and societies, and safeguard our way of life.

This Strategic Agenda provides an overall framework and direction for that response. It is intended to guide the work of the Institutions in the next five years. It focuses on four main priorities:

- protecting citizens and freedoms
- developing a strong and vibrant economic base
- building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe
- promoting European interests and values on the global stage.

Lastly, it sets out how to deliver on those priorities.

## **Protecting citizens and freedoms**

Europe must be a place where people feel free and safe. The EU shall defend the fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens, as recognised in the Treaties, and protect them against existing and emerging threats.

The common values underpinning our democratic and societal models are the foundation of European freedom, security and prosperity. The rule of law, with its crucial role in all our democracies, is a key guarantor that these values are well protected; it must be fully respected by all Member States and the EU.

We must ensure the integrity of our territory. We need to know and be the ones to decide who enters the EU. Effective control of the external borders is an absolute prerequisite for guaranteeing security, upholding law and order, and ensuring properly functioning EU policies, in line with our principles and values.

We are determined to further develop a fully functioning comprehensive migration policy. We will continue and deepen our cooperation with countries of origin and transit to fight illegal migration and human trafficking and to ensure effective returns. Concerning the internal dimension, we need agreement on an effective migration and asylum policy. A consensus needs to be found on the Dublin Regulation to reform it based on a balance of responsibility and solidarity, taking into account the persons disembarked following Search and Rescue operations.

We will take the necessary steps to ensure proper functioning of Schengen.

We will build on and strengthen our fight against terrorism and cross-border crime, improving cooperation and information-sharing, and further developing our common instruments.

We will increase the EU's resilience against both natural and man-made disasters. Active solidarity and the pooling of resources are key in this respect.

We must protect our societies from malicious cyber activities, hybrid threats and disinformation originating from hostile State and non-State actors. Addressing such threats requires a comprehensive approach with more cooperation, more coordination, more resources and more technological capacities.

## **Developing our economic base: the European model for the future**

A strong economic base is of key importance for Europe's competitiveness, prosperity and role on the global stage and for the creation of jobs. As technological, security and sustainability challenges reshape the global landscape, we need to renew the basis for long-term sustainable and inclusive growth and strengthen cohesion in the EU. This requires achieving the upward convergence of our economies and addressing the demographic challenges.

We must ensure that the euro works for our citizens and remains resilient, deepening the Economic and Monetary Union in all its dimensions, completing the Banking and Capital Markets Union and strengthening the international role of the euro.

To maximise our impact, we need a more integrated approach connecting all relevant policies and dimensions: deepening and strengthening the Single Market and its four freedoms, designing an industrial policy fit for the future, addressing the digital revolution and ensuring fair and effective taxation.

The Single Market in all its dimensions is a key asset in that regard. The EU cannot afford to under-utilise the potential of a market of half a billion people, particularly in the area of services. Short-term difficulties cannot be invoked as an argument against a long-term strategy that is bold, all-encompassing, and forward-looking. This must go hand in hand with a more assertive, comprehensive and coordinated industrial policy. The EU needs both, and needs them urgently.

Over the next few years, the digital transformation will further accelerate and have far-reaching effects. We need to ensure that Europe is digitally sovereign and obtains its fair share of the benefits of this development. Our policy must be shaped in a way that embodies our societal values, promotes inclusiveness, and remains compatible with our way of life. To this end, the EU must work on all aspects of the digital revolution and artificial intelligence: infrastructure, connectivity, services, data, regulation and investment. This has to be accompanied by the development of the service

economy and the mainstreaming of digital services.

At the same time, we must step up investment in people's skills and education, do more to foster entrepreneurship and innovation and increase research efforts, in particular by addressing the fragmentation of European research, development and innovation. Investing in our future also means encouraging and supporting public and private investment, including in infrastructure, to finance the growth of our economy and our businesses, including SMEs.

In a world where common rules and standards are increasingly questioned, it will be vital to promote a level playing field, including in the area of trade. This means ensuring fair competition within the EU and on the global stage, promoting market access, fighting unfair practices, extraterritorial measures and security risks from third countries, and securing our strategic supply chains. We will continue to update our European competition framework to new technological and global market developments.

## **Building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe**

Europe needs inclusiveness and sustainability, embracing the changes brought about by the green transition, technological evolution and globalisation while making sure no-one is left behind.

As the effects of climate change become more visible and pervasive, we urgently need to step up our action to manage this existential threat. The EU can and must lead the way, by engaging in an in-depth transformation of its own economy and society to achieve climate neutrality. This will have to be conducted in a way that takes account of national circumstances and is socially just.

The climate transition will afford us a real opportunity to modernise and at the same time to become a global leader in a green economy. Our policies should be consistent with the Paris Agreement. The EU cannot be the only one to act: all countries should move forward and step up their climate action.

The success of the green transition will depend on significant mobilisation of private and public investments, on having an effective circular economy, and an integrated, interconnected and properly functioning European energy market that provides sustainable, secure and affordable energy, in full respect of the Member States' right to decide on their energy mix. The EU will accelerate the transition to renewables, increase energy efficiency, reduce dependence on outside sources, diversify its supplies, and invest in solutions for the mobility of the future.

In parallel, we must continue to improve the environment in our cities and our countryside, enhance the quality of our air and waters, and promote sustainable agriculture, which is vital to guaranteeing food safety and fostering quality production. We will lead efforts to fight the loss of biodiversity and preserve environmental systems, including oceans.

Change towards a greener, fairer and more inclusive future will entail short-term costs and challenges. That is why it is so important to accompany the change and to help communities and individuals adjust to the new world.

This requires keen attention to social issues. The European Pillar of Social Rights should be implemented at EU and Member State level, with due regard for respective competences. Inequalities, which affect young people in particular, pose a major political, social and economic risk; generational, territorial and educational divides are developing and new forms of exclusion emerging. It is our duty to provide opportunities for all. We need to do more to ensure equality between women and men, as well as rights and equal opportunities for all. This is both a societal imperative and an economic asset.

Adequate social protection, inclusive labour markets and the promotion of cohesion will help Europe preserve its way of life, as will a high level of consumer protection and food standards, and good access to healthcare.

We will invest in culture and our cultural heritage, which are at the heart of our European identity.

## **Promoting Europe's interests and values in the world**

In a world of increasing uncertainty, complexity and change, the EU needs to pursue a strategic course of action and increase its capacity to act autonomously to safeguard its interests, uphold its values and way of life, and help shape the global future.

The EU will remain a driving force behind multilateralism and the global rules-based international order, ensuring openness and fairness and the necessary reforms. It will support the UN and key multilateral organisations.

The EU will use its influence to lead the response to global challenges, by showing the way forward in the fight against climate change, promoting sustainable development and implementing the 2030 Agenda, and cooperating with partner countries on migration.

The EU will promote its own unique model of cooperation as inspiration for others. It will uphold the European perspective for European States able and willing to join. It will pursue an ambitious neighbourhood policy. It will develop a comprehensive partnership with Africa. Together with global partners sharing our values, the EU will continue to work towards global peace and stability, and to promote democracy and human rights.

But to better defend its interests and values and help shape the new global environment, the EU needs to be more assertive and effective. This requires us to be more united in the stances we take, and more determined and effective in exerting our influence. It also means making more resources available and better using those we already have at our disposal. And it means giving a clearer priority to European economic, political and security

interests, leveraging all policies to that end.

An ambitious and robust trade policy ensuring fair competition, reciprocity and mutual benefits is a central element in that respect, both at the multilateral level in a reformed WTO and in bilateral relations between the EU and its partners.

The EU's CFSP and CSDP must become more responsive and active and be better linked to the other strands of external relations. The EU also needs to take greater responsibility for its own security and defence, in particular by enhancing defence investment, capability development and operational readiness; it will cooperate closely with NATO, in full respect of the principles set out in the Treaties and by the European Council, including the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy of the EU.

Relations with strategic partners, including our transatlantic partners, and emerging powers have to be a key component of a robust foreign policy. To that end, there need to be far more synergies between the EU and the bilateral levels. The EU can only engage with other global powers on an equal footing if it avoids a piecemeal approach and presents a united front, backed up by EU and Member State resources.

## **Delivering on our priorities**

The EU must address internal and external challenges in an integrated manner. For external action to be effective, we need a strong internal economic base.

Our Institutions must focus on what really matters. In line with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, the EU must be big on big and small on small. It must leave economic and social actors the space to breathe, to create and to innovate. It will be important to engage with citizens, civil society and social partners, as well as with regional and local actors.

Our Institutions will work in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the Treaties. They will respect the principles of democracy, rule of law, transparency and equality between citizens and between Member States. Good governance also depends on the rigorous implementation and enforcement of agreed policies and rules, which must be closely monitored.

Each institution should revisit its working methods and reflect on the best way to fulfil its role under the Treaties.

The EU must give itself the means to match its ambitions, attain its objectives and carry through its policies.

Institutions and Member States must work side by side and use their considerable resources in a joint endeavour. The talents of regional and local actors should be harnessed for the benefit of the overall effort.

This Strategic Agenda is the first step in a process that will be taken

forward by the Institutions and the Member States. The European Council will follow the implementation of these priorities closely and will define further general political directions and priorities as necessary.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

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## Setting up of judicial counter-terrorism register at Eurojust

The Hague, 20 June 2019

□Eurojust's proposal to the EU Member States on the implementation and functioning of the [European judicial counter-terrorism register](#) on the basis of Council Decision 2005/671/JHA was presented to the national correspondents for terrorism at the annual Eurojust meeting on counter-terrorism. Following the initiative of France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, the setting up of the register was supported by the Special Committee on Terrorism of the European Parliament, whose Chair, Ms Nathalie Griesbeck, was present at the meeting. The proposal also received strong support from the European Commission and the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator (CTC).

The national experts agreed on practical steps in the implementation of the register, which will be launched on 1 September 2019. The register will centralise judicial information on counter-terrorism proceedings from all EU Member States. It will allow Eurojust to proactively support the national judicial authorities by identifying links between investigations and assisting Member States in coordinating more efficiently. Complementary to the criminal analysis carried out by Europol, the register will contribute to reinforcing the judicial response to terrorist threats in the EU Member States.



Mr Ladislav Hamran, President of Eurojust, said: *'To respond to the persistent terrorist threat that concerns the whole of the European territory, strong cooperation between judicial authorities within the European Union and beyond is required. For Eurojust, the register is the first step in a broader endeavour to create tools that will lead to a fast, reliable and secure IT infrastructure called Digital Criminal Justice, which was first presented to the JHA Council in December last year. To face the new challenges posed by technological development and the evolving security threat landscape, prosecutors in the Member States need tools to interact efficiently with their counterparts, as well as with Eurojust.'*

Mr Frédéric Baab, National Member for France and Head of the Counter-

Terrorism Team at Eurojust, stated: *'After the terrorist attacks of 13 November 2015, the French Desk at Eurojust opened a case involving 14 Member States and the USA. In such a case, in which multilateral coordination is needed at EU level, a complete overview of all ongoing investigations in the countries involved is indispensable. For this reason, we worked on the implementation of a counter-terrorism register at Eurojust, which will centralise and cross-check this information and give feedback to the national authorities.'*

Ms Nathalie Griesbeck, Chair of the Special Committee on Terrorism of the European Parliament, pointed out: *'Eurojust is a key actor in the reinforcement of our area of Justice and Security. As Chair of the special committee on terrorism, I am very happy to witness the progress made toward the creation of the European judicial counter-terrorism register. This concrete tool, which the European Parliament strongly supports, will foster the exchange of information and therefore help to make crucial links that could prevent attacks.'*

✖ During the two-day Eurojust meeting on counter-terrorism, the experts also exchanged experience and lessons learned in addressing extreme right- and left-wing groups in Europe. They concluded that the evolving threat from non-jihadist terrorism should not be underestimated and should be addressed efficiently at judicial level.

The participants also discussed how EU Member States and some third States deal with foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and their families, particularly those currently detained in Syria. They highlighted the benefits of sharing experience among the national authorities but also with Eurojust, Europol, the EU CTC and the European Commission.

This year's meeting was attended by judicial and law enforcement experts from various EU Member States, acting as national correspondents for Eurojust for counter-terrorism, the Liaison Prosecutors and national experts from North Macedonia, Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine and the USA, the EU CTC, the European Commission and the European Parliament, as well as Europol, Frontex and INTERPOL.

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**[EASO publishes the updated Country of Origin Information \(COI\) Report Methodology and Writing and](#)**

# Referencing Guide for EASO COI reports

***Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published an updated version of the 2012 EASO COI Report Methodology. This methodology was developed for the purpose of producing and publishing different types of EASO COI reports. The use of this methodology is binding for the production of EASO COI reports.***

EASO aims to cooperate with EU+ countries<sup>1</sup> in order to meet target users' needs and share the burden through joint efforts to produce COI. The EASO COI Report Methodology constitutes a code of conduct for participants in each phase of the COI production process.

The methodology explains the guiding principles for COI in the first chapter, which are: Neutrality and Objectivity, Relevance and Usability, Transparency and Publicity, Validity and Quality. After a chapter on the initiation and production process of EASO COI reports, the methodology focuses on researching and drafting COI. Here, quality standards for sources and information are explained and elaborated, as well as the selection and validation of sources. The third chapter discusses the phase of researching and presenting information, focusing on drafting methods such as summarising and synthesising, and on referencing sources. The final chapters discuss quality control, editing and proofreading, publication and follow up of a COI product. Finally, annexes on review and a glossary of the used terms are presented.

The first version of this COI report methodology was published in June 2012. Since then, EASO has developed a portfolio of distinct types of COI reports, depending on specific user needs and available resources. As a result, EASO identified the need to clarify certain concepts and revise the methodology. A working group was formed by EASO composed of COI experts from seven EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Slovak Republic, Sweden), who discussed the key issues and provided input for the revision.

The new draft of the methodology was sent for comments to EASO's COI Strategic Network, UNHCR and civil society organisations specialised in producing COI. Finally, EASO organised a COI methodology conference in Brussels on 15-16 November 2017 with COI practitioners from the EU+ countries, international organisations, and civil society. At the conference, EASO facilitated discussions and sought feedback from participants on aspects of the new methodology. Taking into account the results of these consultations, the revised methodology was finalised and endorsed by the EASO Management Board on 29 May 2019.

The EASO COI Report Methodology can be [downloaded](https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2019_EASO_COI_Report_Methodology.pdf) from the EASO COI portal via the following link:  
[https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2019\\_EASO\\_COI\\_Report\\_Methodology.pdf](https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2019_EASO_COI_Report_Methodology.pdf).

Simultaneously and accompanying the EASO COI Report Methodology, the EASO COI



Writing and Referencing Guide was published. The guide is aimed at COI researchers who (co-)draft EASO COI reports written in English. The guide is intended to be a clear, useable, and practical desk companion for researchers/drafters. The purpose of this guide is also to support a diverse community of EU+ COI drafters, harmonise approaches to EASO writing/referencing, and work consistently across EASO COI publications.

The Writing and Referencing Guide was created after researching best practices and elements of existing COI style guidelines from EASO, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Sweden, UNHCR, ACCORD, Canada, and others. A wide range of professional referencing and citation systems were also consulted. The European Commission English Style Guide and the EU Interinstitutional Style Guide were also used in the development of this Guide, among others.

In 2017 and 2018, a working group composed of COI experts from seven EU+ countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Slovak Republic, Sweden) discussed and provided input to the content of this Guide. It was reviewed for internal consistency by a COI expert from Estonia. The EASO COI team and management also provided feedback.

The Writing and Referencing Guide can be downloaded from the EASO COI portal via the following link:

[https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2019\\_EASO\\_COI\\_Writing\\_and\\_Referencing\\_Guide.pdf](https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2019_EASO_COI_Writing_and_Referencing_Guide.pdf).

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[1] EU Member States, Switzerland and Norway

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## Action on climate is urgent and citizens must remain at the heart of future energy policies, insist Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič and EESC President Luca Jahier



The fight against climate change and the promotion of sustainable energy were high on the agenda at the July plenary session of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). At the end of the mandate of the current European Commission, Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President responsible for the Energy Union and EESC President, Luca Jahier engaged in a fruitful discussion

on the future of Europe and took a firm stand: citizens must continue to be involved and consulted in the decisions on the transition to a carbon-neutral society.

## Fighting climate change

*There is recognition across Europe that action on climate is urgently needed,* said **Mr Šefčovič** at the EESC plenary on 20 July 2019, adding that climate had become one of the central electoral topics in the EU and that *In Europe we are finally looking at climate change as an opportunity to refocus and reorganise our economy.*

On the same page was **Mr Jahier** who maintained that the goal of climate neutrality by 2050 was key to the future of Europe and wondered whether, despite much progress made in the fight against climate change, there would still be sufficiently ambitious policies and resources to underpin the long-term ambition of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

Through the Energy Union project, the Commission has developed a vision for a carbon-neutral Europe. According to **Mr Šefčovič**, *We have proven that we don't need to choose between economic growth and climate. It is possible to grow our economy (by 58%) and cut emissions at the same time (by 22%).* This is backed by the 4 million "green jobs" in the EU, of which 1.4 million are in the renewable energy sector alone.

## The Energy Union, a reality

Mentioning the *Fourth Report of the State of the Energy Union*, adopted on 9 April 2019, **Mr Šefčovič** highlighted that the Energy Union had become reality. *We promised to provide Europe with energy that is secure, sustainable, competitive as well as affordable. Now we can say that we have achieved not only this, but so much more. We have kick-started a deep transformation and modernisation of our economies,* he emphasised, referring to decentralised and decarbonised energy production and consumption, infrastructure deployment, and smart technologies.

**Mr Jahier** congratulated **Mr Šefčovič** for being so responsive to civil society organisations, underlining in particular the central vision of the Energy Union initiative in the past five years. *Citizens are put at the core, they take ownership of the energy transition, benefit from new technologies to reduce their bills, participate actively in the market, and vulnerable consumers are protected,* he commented.

## Implementing the Energy Union with citizens at its core

With reference to the next step, **Mr Šefčovič** indicated that now that the Energy Union in Europe had been put on a very firm footing, we needed to make sure that it was properly implemented on the ground. He then specified that the Commission had already presented its recommendations to the Member States

regarding their first ever National Energy and Climate Plans and that every Member State was now planning policies along the guidelines of the Energy Union.

*By creating the legislative framework of the energy transition, the Commission has strongly delivered on what it promised, noted Mr Jahier, who also added that, looking ahead, it would now be important to see the Energy Union become a reality on the ground in the near future. On this subject, he also expressed a concern. He wondered whether future energy policies would still seek to put the citizens “at the core of the Energy Union” and in particular how it would be possible to help enterprises and workers to play a crucial role in this transition leading to a sustainable growth for all in the years to come.*

## **The need for a permanent dialogue with citizens and a social pact**

In this respect, to accompany the energy transition, Mr Jahier stressed the need to establish a permanent citizens’ dialogue including meaningful participation in decision-making processes and a social pact between governments, authorities, social partners and civil society (opinion [SC/051](#) on the Strategy for long-term EU greenhouse gas emissions reduction, adopted at the July plenary). *We will bring the EU closer to citizens, through involving them directly in policy-making processes and in putting into practice the transition to a climate-neutral Europe*, he concluded.

Referring to the EESC call for an agreement on a social pact, Mr Šefčovič also underlined that it was necessary to actively engage with citizens in climate policy-making, and pointed out: *The Energy Union cannot be built in Brussels, but back in the Member States. The transition must be done comprehensively – making sure that no region, sector or social group is left behind. It must be a socially fair transition owned by all actors.*

## **Background**

For further information on the work carried out by the EESC on [climate change](#) and [energy](#), please consult our website.

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## **ESMA AGREES POSITION LIMITS UNDER MIFID II**

ESMA’s opinions agree with the proposed position limits regarding:

ESMA found that the proposed position limits are consistent with the objectives established in MiFID II and with the methodology developed for

setting those limits. ESMA will continue to assess the notifications received and issue opinions in order to ensure that the position limits are set in accordance with the MiFID II framework.