Draft outline of the 43ʳᵈ COSAC Bi-annual Report

Chapter I: Agenda for the European Commission and the European Parliament in the new institutional cycle. EU Strategic Agenda.

On 1 December 2024, the new European Commission began its work, thus concluding the process of reshaping the institutional landscape of the European Union in the aftermath of the 2024 European Parliament elections. This is the best moment in time for defining the expectations of national parliaments towards the European Commission and establishing the best possible mutual relations right from the very start.

The European Commission has outlined seven priority tasks for the 2024–2029 period[1]. These include: 1) Europe as a continent of economic growth, enterprise and innovation by ensuring competitiveness, prosperity and fairness (focused in particular on making the capital markets union a reality); 2) Meeting Europe's security and defence challenges, and enhancing preparedness and crisis management; 3) Promoting social fairness, increasing solidarity in our society, and ensuring equal opportunities for all; 4) Building a competitive and resilient agriculture and food system, safeguarding biodiversity, and preparing for a changing climate; 5) Putting citizens at the heart of our democracy to empower all to help shape the future of our European Union; 6) Focusing on our wider neighbourhood to tackle global challenges and promote peace, partnerships, and economic stability; 7) A modern and reinforced EU budget, and ambitious reform agenda to deliver on our goals and prepare the Union for the next years[1].

On 7 June 2024 the European Council agreed on the European Union's Strategic Agenda for 2024–2029[2], which sets out the priorities and strategic guidelines, which will guide the work of all EU institutions. The Agenda outlines three priorities for the European Union to act upon over the next five years. They include: 1) a free and democratic Europe; 2) a strong and secure Europe; 3) a prosperous and competitive Europe[2]. These areas are the core fields of tension, conflict and potential crises that

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1   https://commission.europa.eu/priorities-2024-2029_en/
2   https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/strategic-agenda-2024-2029/

Europe has been facing for some time and will continue to face in the foreseeable future.

The chapter explores best practices and assesses the resources available to parliaments for tackling the priorities set out in the new European Commission's roadmap and the European Union's Strategic Agenda for 2024–2029. From the standpoint of the new institutional cycle, it will be valuable to examine the expectations of national parliaments regarding cooperation with the new European Commission.

Chapter II: Multiannual financial framework

Since 1988, the EU has been functioning with long-term budgets called multiannual financial framework (MFF). Long-term budgets provide a stable framework, with overall spending limits to: (1) align spending with the EU's political priorities, (2) increase predictability of EU finances for co-financers and beneficiaries, (3) ensure budgetary discipline and (4) make it easier to adopt the annual EU budget. Currently, the MFF covers a period of seven years. Combined funds for the MFF 2021–2027 account for 2.07 trillion EUR (in current prices).

The EU has been working on reforms related to values, policies, budget and governance to become fit for the future and prepare for an enlarged union (possible accession of Western Balkan countries in 2030). In this context, the forthcoming MFF 2028–2034 will play a key role. Besides the enlargement, the EU budget will face other challenges. The funds borrowed on the financial markets in order to finance the grant elements of the Next Generation EU program will need to be repaid between 2028 and 2058. Additionally, the EU will certainly take an important role in helping finance the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine.

This chapter seeks to evaluate the current and future role of national parliaments in cooperating with and scrutinizing their governments throughout the MFF development process. In light of the significant challenges facing the EU today, it is vital to establish the roles and powers of both national parliaments and the European Parliament in shaping and monitoring key EU policies during the upcoming institutional cycle. Successfully achieving this will require coordinated efforts from decision-makers at both the national and EU levels.

Chapter III: Towards strengthening the EU's collective effort to improve cyber-resilience and tackle disinformation

Disinformation and foreign information manipulation pose a significant threat to societies. They have the potential to weaken democratic institutions and processes, such as elections, by hindering people's ability to make informed choices or discouraging participation in voting. Additionally, they can deepen societal divisions by turning communities against one another.

Due to the speed of communication, extensive reach and low cost of disinformation campaigns, social media become a critical tool. These platforms also serve as crucial sources for identifying target groups for disinformation efforts. Internet-based information warfare employs tactics such as troll farms (individuals posting targeted comments in line with the goals of the client), bots (automated programs that distribute messages) and fake news (deliberately misleading content). A newest tool in this space is deep fake technology, which uses artificial intelligence to manipulate or generate visual and audio content, creating deceptive imagery and video.

As a result, addressing disinformation and information manipulation has become one of the most urgent challenges for the European Union and its Member States. This chapter aims to explore the issue of cyber-resilience in terms of disinformation in greater depth by collecting best practices from the parliaments of the European Union. It will present whether and how national Parliaments have so far dealt with the EU legislation in that matters. It will also address the relevant measures introduced on the level of Member States.