



PLENARY MEETING OF THE LXXII COSAC

SESSION I: PROGRAMME AND RESULTS OF THE HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The 2019–2024 EU institutional cycle is concluded by the Presidency trio of Spain, Belgium and Hungary. Hungary is holding the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the second time after the first semester of 2011. The [motto](#) of this Presidency — Make Europe Great Again — reflects that this is an active and proactive Presidency, as well as the fact that Member States are stronger together than apart.

The Presidency trio has set its priorities within the framework of “[the 18-month Programme of the Council](#)”. The first priority is to develop the Union’s economic base. Accordingly, ensuring the EU’s long-term competitiveness and sustainable and lasting growth features among the priority topics of the Hungarian Presidency. The trio’s second priority is to protect citizens and freedoms. In this context, the Hungarian Presidency’s programme also focuses on improving the security of the Schengen area and on strengthening the Union’s external borders. The third priority of the trio is a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe. In its programme, the Hungarian Presidency intends to reflect on the challenges of the digital and green transition. The fourth priority of the trio is to promote European interests and values worldwide. In this context, the Hungarian Presidency will pay particular attention to a credible enlargement policy and regular political dialogue both with EU Member States and candidate states.

[According to its Presidency programme](#), Hungary intends to work as an honest broker, in the spirit of sincere cooperation between Member States and institutions, by starting the implementation of [the European Council’s Strategic Agenda for 2024–2029](#). Hungary has identified the following seven Presidency priorities.

1. A New European Competitiveness Deal. The Presidency will put strong emphasis on improving the EU’s competitiveness in order to close the growth and innovation gap between the EU and its global competitors; therefore, the adoption of a New European Competitiveness Deal is a top priority. It will pay attention to supporting the SME sector, ensuring a level playing field, removing the barriers hindering the functioning of the internal market, and to creating secure jobs in Europe.

2. Reinforcing European defence policy and enhancing the competitiveness of the defence industry are

essential also because of the ongoing conflicts in different parts of the world, as is cooperation between Member States on defence innovation and procurement.

3. A consistent and merit-based enlargement policy.

The Hungarian Presidency supports the EU’s enlargement policy, in particular cooperation with the Western Balkans. The accession of the region will be beneficial to the Union as a whole in economic, security and geopolitical terms; therefore, preserving the stability of the regions in the EU’s immediate neighbourhood is particularly important for the Presidency.

4. Stemming illegal migration and curbing human smuggling require close cooperation with countries bordering the EU and the key countries of origin and transit. In addition to the external dimension of migration, the programme also places emphasis on the protection of external borders and the financing thereof.

5. Shaping the future of cohesion policy and its impact on the Union’s multiannual financial framework call for rethinking the future of cohesion policy. The aim is to have high-level strategic debate on the future of cohesion policy and its role in promoting competitiveness and employment and in effectively addressing demographic challenges.

6. A farmer-oriented EU agricultural policy. One of the biggest challenges for European agriculture is to ensure Europe’s long-term food security, a fair income for European farmers and sustainable production practices. The Presidency will work to provide political guidance to the forthcoming European Commission on the post-2027 rules for EU agricultural policy in order to create a competitive, crisis-proof and farmer-friendly European agriculture.

7. Addressing demographic challenges. EU Member States are particularly vulnerable to the demographic challenges of the 21st century. Those impacts can be felt everywhere, from economic competitiveness to the sustainability of public finances. Ageing societies, the depopulation of rural areas and the changing world of work require responses at EU level.

The priorities of the Presidency are also reflected in the EU Presidency-related [parliamentary events](#) of the Hungarian National Assembly. ♦

1

LOGO OF THE HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY AND THE PRIORITIES OF THE PRESIDENCY PROGRAMME



Improving the Competitiveness of the EU

The Reinforcement of Defence Policy

A Consistent Enlargement Policy

Shaping the Future of Cohesion Policy

Stemming Illegal Migration

A Farmer-Oriented EU Agricultural Policy

Addressing Demographic Challenges

2

COMPETITIVENESS, 2024

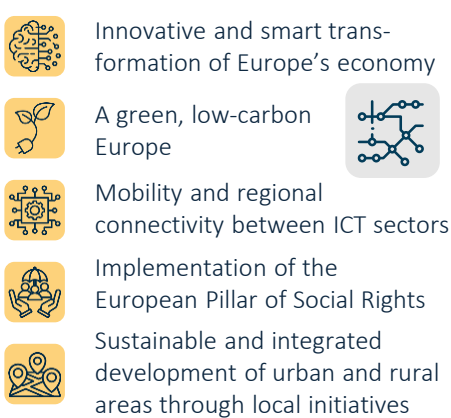
According to IMD's ranking



Of the 67 economies surveyed, four EU countries rank in the top ten.

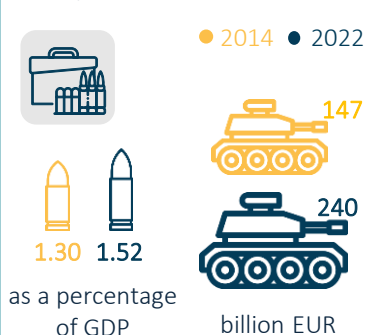
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EU COHESION POLICY PRIORITIES, 2021–2027



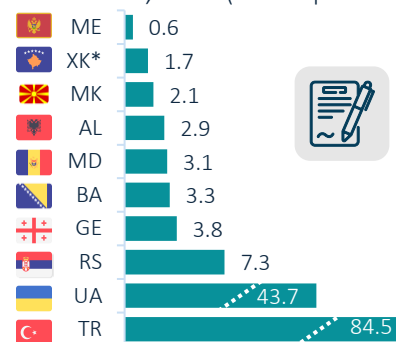
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EU-27 DEFENCE EXPENDITURE



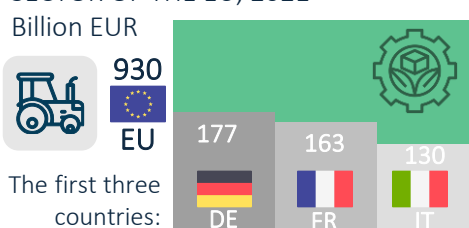
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POPULATION OF CANDIDATE COUNTRIES, 2021 (million persons)



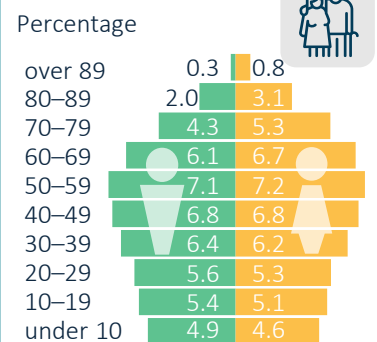
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PRODUCTION VALUE OF THE FOOD SECTOR OF THE EU, 2021



7

AGE PYRAMID OF THE EU, 2024

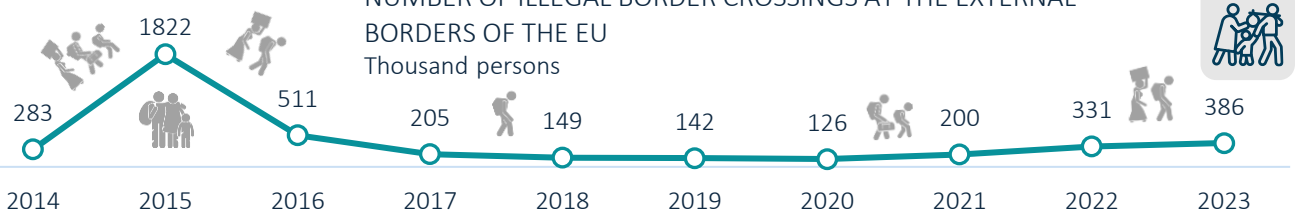


* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244(1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence. Kosovo is a potential candidate country.

8

NUMBER OF ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSINGS AT THE EXTERNAL BORDERS OF THE EU

Thousand persons



SOURCES

1 [Priorities](#) and the [logo](#) of the Hungarian Presidency (19 June 2024) | 2 IMD: [World Competitiveness Rankings, 2024](#) | 3 European Commission: [Priorities for 2021–2027](#) | 4 European Defence Agency: [Defence data 2014, 2022](#) | 5 UN: World Population Prospects, 2022 | 6 Eurostat [\[sbs_sc_owv\]](#) | 7 Eurostat [\[urt_proj_19rp\]](#) | 8 Frontex: [Detections of illegal border-crossings statistics](#)