



Paris, 04 December 2023

POLITICAL OPINION

relating to the 2024 Work Programme of the European Commission

The Senate European Affairs Committee,

Having regard to Article 12 of the Treaty on European Union,

Having regard to the remarks made by Mrs Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, before the European Parliament on 16 July 2019,

Having regard to the European Commission's response of 26 May 2023 (C(2023) 3568 final) to its political opinion on the 2023 Commission Work Programme of 8 February 2023,

Having regard to the European Commission's 2023 Strategic Foresight Report, entitled "Sustainability and people's wellbeing at the heart of Europe's Open Strategic Autonomy", dated 6 July 2023, COM(2023) 376 final,

Having regard to the State of the Union speech given by the President of the European Commission to the European Parliament on 13 September 2023,

Having regard to the European Commission's communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 17 October 2023 presenting its 2024 work programme, entitled "Delivering today and preparing for tomorrow", COM (2023) 638 final,

Applauds the quality of its political dialogue with the European Commission and, more generally, with the institutions of the European Union; calls, however, on the European Commission to be vigilant with regard to compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality in the legislative initiatives that it presents; calls on the European Commission to present an impact assessment along with each of its legislative initiatives so that its necessity and proportionality can be assessed effectively;

Notes that the European Commission's 2024 work programme is the last to be presented by the current College of Commissioners and also serves as a document providing political guidance for the next European Commission; stresses that the current geostrategic environment, marked by the return of conflicts to the European continent and the emergence of serious threats to European democracies, which also have less room for manoeuvre in their budgets, requires the Member States to show greater solidarity, reflect on their priorities and determine pragmatic common policies;

Approves the European Commission's 2024 work programme, which remains based on the six major ambitions set out in the political guidelines presented in 2019 by Ursula von der Leyen, namely "The European Green Deal", "A Europe fit for the digital age", "An economy that works for people", "A stronger Europe in the world", "Promoting our European way of life" and "A new push for European democracy", while recalling the observations made in its political opinion of 8 February 2023 on the 2023 work programme, which stressed the inadequacy of this presentation in the light of the new challenges facing Europe;

Prefers, therefore, in the interests of both clarity and consistency with the Treaties, to examine here the priorities of European trade policy and its pharmaceutical strategy in the title on the European internal market, alongside other provisions strengthening the European Union's strategic autonomy and the challenges of Europe in space, as well as the new prospects for enlargement of the European Union in a title relating to "a stronger Europe in the world", together with the defence industry, international issues of sovereignty and the neighbourhood policy;

Calls on the European Commission to bolster the sincerity of this programme by introducing two new annexes relating respectively to the decisions and agreements prepared for the coming year on international relations and trade policy and to the delegated acts and implementing acts to be adopted in accordance with Articles 290¹ and 291² of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU);

Questions the very large number of European regulatory initiatives presented by the European Commission as remaining under discussion, in some cases for more than five years, while the end of the current Commission's term of office is imminent; calls on the next College of Commissioners to implement, as proposed in its above-mentioned political opinion of 8 February 2023, a principle of regulatory restraint; considers that this principle, without compelling the Commission to lower its ambitions for reform, should lead it to reduce the number of its regulatory initiatives, shorten the time taken to examine them and eliminate redundant or deficient standards;

Emphasises the need for European institutions to involve national parliaments more closely in the European decision-making process to bring the European Union closer to the citizens of the Member States; reiterates, therefore, its call for the implementation of the conclusions of the working group of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs (COSAC) on the role

¹"A legislative act may delegate to the Commission the power to adopt non-legislative acts of general application to supplement or amend certain non-essential elements of the legislative act."

²"Member States shall adopt all measures of national law necessary to implement legally binding Union acts. Where uniform conditions for implementing legally binding Union acts are needed, those acts shall confer implementing powers on the Commission (...)."

of national parliaments in the European Union, published in June 2022; recalls that these conclusions recommend, in particular, the introduction of a right of legislative initiative for national parliaments (green card), the improvement of procedures for applying the principle of subsidiarity by extending the deadline for examining texts and lowering the threshold for triggering the "yellow card", and the institutionalisation of a right to submit written questions to the European institutions;

Solemnly affirms that respect for the linguistic diversity of the European Union's Member States is a fundamental pillar of the accession of those States to the European Union and of the citizens' sense of ownership of European integration, as recognised by the provisions of Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU)³ and Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights;⁴ regrets the de facto monolingualism which is taking root in favour of English in the institutions, bodies and agencies of the European Union and which weakens democratic oversight of their decisions; calls on these institutions, bodies and agencies to comply with the Treaties by ensuring that other working languages, first and foremost French, are used in all decision-making meetings, on their websites, and in the drafting and translation of important European Union documents;

In this context, strongly condemns the European Commission's recruitment procedures, which exclude candidates who speak only French; considers that this decision discriminates against French citizens who want to work in European institutions; supports the Government's legal action against these recruitment decisions;

Finally, stresses that the French Government and the European institutions must continue to promote the European Parliament's seat in Strasbourg, which symbolises Franco-German reconciliation and embodies the Europe of law; in this context, welcomes the European Parliament's decision to bolster its presence on its Strasbourg site with the inauguration of the "*Simone Veil*" building on 20 November;

³ This article states that the European Union shall "*respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced.*"

⁴"*The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.*"

On the new push for European democracy

Takes note of the dialogue established between the European Commission and the Member States since 2020 on respect for fundamental rights within the framework of the annual monitoring cycle on the rule of law; welcomes the progress made on 65% of the recommendations issued to the various Member States by the European Commission in its 2023 annual report,⁵ in particular with a view to strengthening the independence of the judiciary and improving its efficiency; takes careful note of the recommendations made to France calling on it to continue digitising judicial procedures and to provide the judiciary with sufficient operating resources;

Simultaneously laments the scale of corruption in the European Union, the total annual cost of which for the Member States is estimated at €120 billion; notes that it distorts the rules of the internal market and leads citizens of the Member States to distrust their representatives;⁶ welcomes, therefore, the presentation on 8 June by the European Commission of a proposal for a directive which aims to harmonise prevention measures and criminal sanctions against corruption at the European level;

Recalls that, to be credible in their demands to the Member States with regard to the rule of law, the institutions of the European Union must themselves be exemplary and improve their ethical frameworks, as observed by the European Court of Auditors in 2019;⁷ supports the current efforts of the European Parliament to strengthen its internal procedures for preventing conflicts of interest and combating foreign interference as part of the "14-point action plan" announced by its president, Roberta Metsola; welcomes the creation of an ethics body for the European Union in order to establish a genuine culture of transparency and integrity in the European Union;

Stresses that the freedom and independence of the press are essential conditions for democracy; welcomes, therefore, the

⁵ 2023 Rule of Law Report, COM(2023) 800 final, 5 July 2023.

⁶ According to the 2023 Special Eurobarometer, 70% of citizens and 65% of businesses in the Member States of the European Union believe that corruption is widespread in their country.

⁷ Special report 13: "The ethical frameworks of the audited EU institutions: scope for improvement"

progress in the safety and working conditions of journalists noted in the European Union by the above-mentioned report on the rule of law; reminds the European negotiators of its resolutions in reasoned opinions 127 and 36, adopted on 30 June and 11 December 2022, so that the compromises they reach on proposed regulations on "media freedom" and on proposed directives to protect journalists and participants in public debate from abusive legal proceedings comply with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;

Welcomes the priority the European Union has given to promoting gender equality; welcomes in particular the adoption of the European framework for the effective implementation of the principle of equal pay for men and women; also welcomes the European Union's ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (known as the Istanbul Convention) on 1 October this year, and stresses the importance of the European institutions reaching a final agreement on the proposal for a directive on combating violence against women in accordance with its European resolution 46 of 26 November 2021;

Calls, finally, for the adoption of the European disability card and for the strengthening of existing arrangements for the European parking card for people with disabilities by the end of the current term of office;

On the European Green Deal, the common agricultural policy and fisheries

Insists on the implementation of the reform of the European electricity market, which must provide better protection for consumers against the volatility of energy prices, strengthen the Union's industrial sovereignty and encourage the growth of carbon-free energies while respecting the principle of technological neutrality before the end of the current European Commission's term of office; considers it essential that this reform fully preserves the competence of Member States in deciding their energy mix; supports the expansion of long-term contracts and the perpetuation of public intervention for consumers in the event of a crisis in market prices, in the terms set out in its political opinion of 1 June 2023;

Welcomes the implementation of the EU's Circular Economy Action Plan and the completion of the negotiations of the "Fit for 55" package, which is a set of interdependent standards designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, in accordance with the objectives set out in Regulation (EU) 2021/1119;⁸

Notes that the European Commission intends to begin the process of setting a climate target for 2040 and to present an initiative on industrial carbon management; considers that the economy cannot be decarbonised without appropriate measures to ensure an ecological transition that is "fair for all"; calls, therefore, for an assessment and in-depth work with national parliaments on setting this climate target to find the right balance between the appropriate level of ambition and the required level of realism, taking into account the industrial, social and territorial constraints of the Member States;

Stresses the essential role of the Social Climate Fund and the Next Generation EU recovery plan; calls for these tools to be given long-term funding so that Member States can achieve the European Union's objectives;

Questions the feasibility of the planned timetable for achieving the target of at least 42.5% renewable energy in European energy consumption by 2030 set by Directive (EU) 2023/2413 of 18 October 2023 given Member States' actual deployment capabilities; calls for independent studies to be carried out automatically to assess the impact of renewable energy facilities on the environment and biodiversity, which, like the expansion of renewable energies, are objectives of the "green deal" to which the European Union is committed, as emphasised by the European Court of Auditors in its special report on offshore renewable energies;⁹

Welcomes the European Commission's presentation on 5 July of the proposed directive on soil monitoring and resilience, which aims to require Member States to monitor the state of their soils,

⁸ Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) no. 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999.

⁹ Special report 22/2023: Offshore renewable energy in the EU – Ambitious plans for growth but sustainability remains a challenge

implement sustainable management practices and assess the risks of potentially contaminated soils; recalls that it has long advocated such a directive, in accordance with the guidelines set out in its European Resolution 147 of 23 July 2021; notes that this regulatory framework, as advocated by the Senate, tackles the issues of preventing soil degradation and recommends that a list of potentially polluted sites be established;

Regrets the European Commission's repeated failure to respond to its request to publish an impact assessment of the "Farm to Fork" strategy and therefore reiterates this request in an effort to prevent Member States' agricultural production from being replaced by substitute imports with inferior health, social and environmental standards;

Approves the opening of a strategic dialogue on the future of agriculture in early 2024 to outline an "agricultural roadmap" for the next European Commission; states that it will take part in this dialogue and calls on the French Government and sector professionals to do likewise to protect our food sovereignty, to breathe new life into the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) while adapting it to social and environmental issues and to the prospect of the planned enlargement of the Union, and to encourage the installation of young farmers;

Also calls on the European Union, in accordance with its political opinion of 24 May 2023, to defend and develop small-scale and coastal fishing, which contributes to the preservation of marine biodiversity and Member States' food sovereignty, in all its policies and budget allocations;

On trade policy, the European internal market and the digital transition

Strongly emphasises the urgent need for the Member States and the European Union to restore or safeguard their autonomy in essential areas, particularly in the economy, so that they can decide on their own future; welcomes the European Commission's awareness of the need to reflect this urgency in its annual work programmes since 2021;

Notes that in recent months the European Commission has concluded negotiations on trade agreements with Chile, New Zealand and Kenya, but that negotiations with Australia have

failed; questions the European Commission's willingness to conclude the agreements under negotiation with Mexico and Mercosur quickly; notes that it also wishes to continue negotiations with India, Indonesia, Singapore and the Republic of Korea; reiterates, with regard to the agreement with Mercosur, the need for it to be supplemented by binding commitments from partner countries on compliance with the Paris Climate Accords, the fight against deforestation and the compliance with European standards of agricultural products imported into the EU;

Calls on the European Commission, when negotiating new trade agreements with third countries, to include ambitious social and environmental conditions and to guarantee fair competition, equitable market conditions and reciprocity in access to public contracts; reiterates its call for a revised methodology for negotiating international trade agreements to better involve national parliaments in the negotiation process;

Maintains that the tight timetable at the end of the current term of the European Parliament must not lead the European Union to make undue concessions in an effort to secure a trade deal as quickly as possible;

Considers that the European Union is facing intense international competition and that it must remain a global centre of industrial production; asserts that, to this end, the Union must use all the trade defence tools at its disposal to protect its industry from unfair trade measures implemented by certain third countries; welcomes in this respect the anti-subsidy investigation launched by the European Commission into electric motor vehicles from China;

Takes note of the fact that, following the major tension caused by the United States' adoption of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the European Commission reports stronger transatlantic relations as a result of the work carried out within the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council; notes, however, that this positive statement should not mask the differences of approach that remain in trade policy, particularly with regard to issues relating to sovereignty;

Recalls that alongside such a redefinition of trade agreement priorities, Europe's response to the challenge of strategic autonomy must lead to an updated European competition policy; welcomes, with this in mind, the pragmatic development of the regime

applicable to State aid and reiterates its desire to see the Commission adopt an updated definition of "relevant markets", the aim being to support the development of European "industrial champions" and to prevent European companies in strategic sectors from having to form alliances with partners in third countries, at the risk of losing their expertise and suffering foreign interference;

Notes that the Single Market Emergency Instrument compensates for the single market's shortcomings in dealing with crises by providing for alert procedures and graduated and proportionate management to ensure the supply of essential goods to citizens and businesses; hopes, however, in accordance with its political opinion of 29 March 2023, that the role of the Member States, which are the ones first responsible for protecting their populations, will be strengthened in the instrument's governance; supports, in accordance with its political opinions of 13 July 2023, the proposal for a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials to the European Union through the diversification of supply sources and the expansion of production, refining and recycling capacities within Member States' territories, as well as through the strengthening of the European manufacturing ecosystem for "net-zero" technology products to secure European industry's leading role in carbon neutrality; solemnly calls on the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission to work towards the final adoption of these major reforms before the next European elections;

Encourages, with the same aim of reinforcing the European Union's strategic autonomy, the acceleration of the European pharmaceutical strategy to secure the European Union's autonomy in the research and production of active ingredients and medicinal products;

Welcomes the agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council on the Data Act, which should provide for a genuine harmonisation of data access rules and the fair use of personal data;

Notes the urgent need for a European legal framework to regulate the use of artificial intelligence (AI) so as to ensure that systems are safe and respect fundamental rights without discouraging innovation; calls therefore on the Council and the European Parliament to reach agreement as soon as possible on the proposal for a regulation laying down harmonised rules on artificial

intelligence (COM(2021) 206 final), in the terms of its political opinion of 30 March 2023;

Takes note of the "SME relief package" presented by the European Commission on 12 September to boost the activity and encourage the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); wishes, in this context, to see a better assessment of the practical consequences of setting a maximum period of thirty days for the payment of invoices owed to SMEs as provided for in the proposal for a regulation on combating late payments, which, due to its automatic nature, seems likely to weaken certain economic sectors;

Calls, in line with its political opinion of 5 October 2022, for an ambitious European compromise on the proposal for a directive on the working conditions of platform workers to guarantee a fair balance at EU level between the freedom to organise work and respect for workers' rights;

Requests the completion of the negotiations begun in 2016 and interrupted in 2021 on the revised regulation on the coordination of social welfare systems, which should help to combat "social dumping" more effectively by notifying social security bodies of workers prior to their posting and clarify unemployment compensation for cross-border workers.

On an economy that works for people and on European social and health policy

Takes note of the European Commission's proposal to revise the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF); calls for the safeguarding of European Union funds that benefit our country, which is already a net contributor, and ensure the effectiveness of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and cohesion policy; hopes that the announced reallocation of appropriations will not affect programmes that are crucial for the European Union's autonomy and future; questions the need for the €1.9 billion increase in administrative expenditure that the European Commission is requesting for its operations;

Stresses the need for the European Union to acquire new own resources rapidly since, in the absence of such resources, new

expenditure will result in an increase in Member States' contributions; points out in this regard that the European Commission has proposed the introduction of three new own resources for the EU budget, based on revenue from the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), resources generated by the proposed carbon adjustment mechanism at the EU's borders, and a fraction of the residual profits of multinational companies, and notes the partial agreements reached on introducing them;

Reiterates its call for national parliaments to be closely involved in the process of establishing these new own resources, especially as they will have to ratify the corresponding Council decision; stresses that the proposal for a new temporary statistical resource based on companies' gross operating surplus does not constitute a truly sustainable own resource; notes, therefore, that the European budget would continue to be financed mainly by contributions from the Member States;

Insists on the urgency of reaching an agreement on the reform of European economic governance by the end of 2023; points out that, in the absence of an agreement, the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact, the implementation of which had been "frozen" since spring 2020, will once again be fully applicable, in particular the requirement for Member States to have a maximum public deficit of 3% of GDP and a maximum public debt of 60% of GDP;

Points out that the European Commission is proposing to reform the Pact by laying down budgetary rules allowing Member States with a high level of public debt to make major public investments needed for the environmental and digital transitions; notes in this respect the introduction of differentiated debt reduction trajectories for the Member States and the abandonment of the so-called 1/20th rule;¹⁰ calls at the same time for vigilance regarding the introduction of a uniform numerical criterion requiring an annual deficit adjustment of 0.5 points of GDP for Member States whose public deficit exceeds 3% of GDP;

¹⁰ Under the terms of the Treaties, Member States' public debt must not - in principle - exceed 60% of GDP. In this context, the 1/20th rule, which applies to Member States whose debt level exceeds the 60% target, stipulates that they must reduce their debt/GDP ratio each year by at least 1/20th of the difference between their current debt/GDP ratio and the 60% target.

Approves the European Union's actions to clarify corporate social responsibility and points out that current French legislation has been a pioneer in this area; calls for the completion of negotiations on the legislative initiatives currently under discussion on companies' duty of care and on the ban on products using forced labour, in accordance with the conditions set out in its political opinion of 28 June 2022;

Calls once again on the European Union to complete the union of capital markets by introducing an efficient clearing system, harmonising insolvency regimes and updating quotations, and to complete the banking union by putting in place solid rules for managing banking crises and guaranteeing bank deposits;

Notes with caution the progress of the digital euro project with the launch of a two-year preparatory phase by the Governing Council of the European Central Bank (ECB); stresses the need to assess its advantages and disadvantages as a method of payment, as well as the impact on the activities of retail traders and commercial banks and on the respect for the protection of privacy in its implementation;

Welcomes the Council Recommendation of 27 November 2023 specifying the framework conditions for developing the social economy framework conditions, which is a vector for job creation, a factor for integrating young people and people with disabilities, and a response to social and environmental challenges, through the action of cooperatives, mutual societies and associations;

Will examine with interest the conclusions of the Val Duchesse social partner summit in the first half of 2024 and the initiative to improve the functioning of and strengthen the rights of European Works Councils (EWCs);

Supports flexible and appropriate consideration of the specific characteristics of the outermost regions (ORs) and overseas countries and territories (OCTs) in the implementation and funding of all European policies;

On a stronger Europe in the world and Europe in space

Stresses that all the strategic choices of the Member States and the European Union have been durably disrupted since 24 February 2022, the date of Russia's attack on Ukraine; welcomes their joint

efforts to support the Ukrainian people and to draw all the conclusions of this geopolitical shock for European policies, and calls for this European solidarity to be maintained over the coming months;

Notes that, in addition to the financial measures adopted or presented to support Ukraine, 2023 has seen a significant increase in the ceiling of the European Peace Facility to 12 billion euros (in current euros), in particular to meet the needs arising from the war in Ukraine, the rapid release of munitions and missiles in accordance with the conclusions of the European Council meeting of 23 March 2023, the setting up of a task force on joint defence procurement, and the third joint declaration on cooperation between the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO);

Recalls also the adoption of two important texts on the defence industry - the proposed European defence industry reinforcement through common procurement act for 2022-2024 (EDIRPA) and the draft regulation to establish the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP);

Notes that the European Commission's 2024 work programme provides for the presentation of an industrial strategy for European defence to further boost Member States' defence capabilities, as well as the continued implementation of the strategic compass;¹¹

Stresses that the defence industry is a specific area of national sovereignty and warns the European Commission against using this future strategy to unduly extend its remit by means of intrusive feedback or bypassing government authorisations; considers that the development of an industrial strategy for European defence must truly help to consolidate the European defence industrial base; regrets in this respect the recent choices made by several Member States in favour of non-European defence equipment; insists on the need to consolidate the European Defence Fund;

Reaffirms its support for the expertise and leading role of the European Space Agency (ESA), which has allowed the Member States to gain access to space, and for the development of the

¹¹ Adopted by the European Council on 25 March 2022, the "Strategic Compass" is a white paper on the broad guidelines to be followed by the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) between now and 2030.

Kourou space platform; welcomes, in accordance with its European resolution 149 of 9 August 2022, the agreement reached on 17 November on the proposal for a regulation on "secure connectivity", which provides for the deployment of a constellation of satellites to bolster the security of European communications, and recommends the presentation of a European initiative to combat space pollution;

Approves the principle of the agreement reached on 6 November 2023 between the main Member States involved in the Ariane 6 programme to guarantee the financing of flights by the European heavy launcher, and welcomes the proactive stance taken by the French authorities; simultaneously regrets the decisions taken that lead to a de facto privatisation of the manufacture and operation of light launchers and to the introduction of intra-European competition;

Takes note of the communication from the European Commission requesting the opening of accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova and, subject to certain conditions, with Bosnia-Herzegovina and the recognition of candidate status for Georgia; points out that these proposals must now be debated by the European Council on 14 and 15 December 2023;

Maintains that the merits of such an enlargement must be assessed in the light of the "Copenhagen criteria",¹² which subject candidate countries to the threefold requirement of stable institutions respecting democracy, the rule of law and human rights, a viable market economy and the adoption of the Community acquis, subject to the European Union's capacity to take in new members;

Acknowledges the important and lasting contribution of the tools and instruments of the Eastern Partnership in bringing Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia closer to the European Union, within the framework of a neighbourhood policy that has helped to strengthen political and economic ties between the EU and these three countries and to modernise their economies through the conclusion of association and free trade agreements;

¹² These criteria for accession to the European Union were defined at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993 and refined at the Madrid European Council in 1995.

Recommends building on the achievements of this Eastern Partnership policy by evolving it alongside the negotiations that may be opened with Ukraine and Moldova and the possible recognition of candidate status for Georgia, while continuing to pursue it with regard to the three other countries it covers;

Supports the European Union's efforts to reaffirm the Western Balkan countries' vocation as Europeans; calls on these countries to take advantage of the recently announced European aid package to reform their institutions and economies to bring them closer to European Union standards and boost their pre-accession efforts;

Finally, stresses the need for the European Union to give fresh impetus to its initiatives for a renewed Euro-Mediterranean partnership to work with the countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean to create a region of peace, stability and prosperity;

On a Europe of freedom, security and justice

Calls on the Council and the European Parliament to definitively adopt the New Pact on Migration and Asylum and its global approach combining migration policy, asylum policy and control of the European Union's external borders before the next European elections; approves the principle of a new strategy to combat migrant smuggling; supports the joint efforts of the Member States, the European External Action Service and the European Commission, under France's leadership, to develop the external aspect of European migration policy;

Reaffirms the need to ensure joint parliamentary scrutiny by the European Parliament and national parliaments of the European border and coastguard agency Frontex, in accordance with the provisions of Article 112 of Regulation 2019/1896 and its political opinion of 14 December 2022;

Notes that the ETIAS system, which will require a travel authorisation for third-country nationals who do not need a visa to travel to the European Union prior to their stay in a Member State, and the entry-exit system, which will allow these nationals to be registered automatically at the European Union's external borders, are priority projects for securing these borders and making entry more fluid; regrets the delays in their implementation and hopes

that they will enter into force immediately after the 2024 Summer Olympics in France;

Recalls that the European Commission, when presenting its draft European normative framework to prevent and combat sexual abuse of children online, stressed the urgency of adopting this reform; notes, however, that this draft has still not been adopted; therefore solemnly calls on the Member States, the European Parliament and the European Commission to implement this important reform without delay, in accordance with the recommendations of its political opinion of 15 February 2023;

Notes once again the resurgence of natural disasters in Europe, in particular storms, fires and floods, such as in the Pas-de-Calais region last November; encourages the European Union, therefore, to step up its flood prevention capabilities and its support for Member States' civil protection efforts to demonstrate European solidarity in the face of these crises;

Welcomes the extent of the European Commission's initiatives aimed at strengthening the network of European universities, particularly the launch of a pilot project for a "European Degree" label, and France's important role in these European initiatives; hopes that the place of the French language in these initiatives will be fully guaranteed; considers it important to assess the implementation of these initiatives;

Recalls, in accordance with its political opinion of 1 March 2022, that the European Union, with its Member States' rich history, is heir to a cultural, artistic and linguistic heritage that is unique in the world, to which every citizen must have access; expresses its support for the "New European Bauhaus" programme set out in the European Commission's communication of 15 September 2021, and calls for an extension of the "European Heritage Label" created by the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011.