EU Half-Year Review: An Outlook on What's Next in 2026

The August recess in the EU institutions has come to an end, and legislators are entering the final months of policymaking in 2026. The first half of the year has seen significant developments across the institutions, with the European Commission introducing new proposals while the Council of the EU and European Parliament advance and finalise negotiations on existing legislative files. The institutions' commitment to maintaining this progress has been reinforced by the joint **One Europe, One Market Roadmap**, which has highlighted the necessary legislative developments that are still needed to strengthen the Single Market, while also introducing deadlines for when agreement needs to be reached on the files.

Building on our EU Policy Outlook 2026 from earlier this year, this brief provides an overview of key legislative files currently undergoing negotiations within the institutions and highlights the most awaited proposals to be on the lookout for in the latter half of 2026.

Ongoing processes

One of the defining aspects of EU policymaking during this mandate has been the negotiations surrounding the **Omnibus Simplification Packages**. With a goal of reducing administrative burdens by €37.5 billion by 2029, these ambitious packages consolidate amendments to several legislative acts into a single proposal to improve efficiency and coherence across the Single Market. With the first three packages having been adopted and one proposal still pending,[1] there are still nine proposals being negotiated on the topics of **small mid-caps, defence readiness, chemicals, digital, environmental legislation, automotive, food and feed safety,[2] taxation, and energy product legislation**. All but

[1]The Omnibus packages on Sustainability (which we organised an event on in January), Investment, and CAP were adopted between December 2025 and February 2026; the "Citizens Omnibus" proposal is expected by Q4 2026.
[2] Which our member ZPP is organising an event on in September.

the final two of these are scheduled for adoption by the end of this year;[3] however, the feasibility of this timeline is questionable, as none of these packages have entered the trilogue stage yet and only four (small mid-caps, chemicals, food and feed safety, and digital) have reached partial adoption where certain elements of the proposals were expedited.

The **Industrial Accelerator Act** presented in March of this year could have a significant impact on Europe's manufacturing, carbon-intensive industries, and automotive sectors, with its introduction of a "Made in EU" requirement for certain public procurement schemes. While this initiative has great potential,[4] disagreements between Member States alongside delays in the Parliament make the end of 2026 timeline set out in the Roadmap highly unlikely. The **Grids package** – which was the subject of an EEA event in March – is targeted to reach agreement in Q3 of this year, which, while ambitious, does appear feasible based on the progress made so far. Finally, the 28th Regime Corporate Legal Framework, more commonly known as **EU Inc.**, is meant to be finalised by the end of the year, but given that the first-reading vote is scheduled for October it is more likely that trilogues will continue into 2027.

In the digital sector, there are three key files (not counting the Digital Omnibus) under negotiation that the institutions aim to conclude by the end of this year. First, the Parliament's position on the **Digital Euro package** first presented in June 2023 was adopted in July, with trilogues now underway. Second, the Council adopted its position on the **European Business Wallet** in June, and while the Parliament is still considering amendments before its position can be voted on, it appears plausible the trilogues may be concluded before the end of the year. Finally, though the Roadmap indicated a 2026 target for the adoption of the **Cybersecurity Act 2**, the limited progress so far since the proposal's presentation in January suggests that deliberations are likely to continue into 2027.

Additionally, three highly relevant digital files were presented earlier this year, and though they're not planned for adoption before 2027, we will be monitoring their negotiations very closely. The **Digital Networks Act** – which we held an event on in January – is being shaped within the two institutions, with a target for agreement set for Q4 2027. The Tech Sovereignty Package presented in June included proposals for both the **Chips Act 2.0** and **Cloud and AI Development Act** to strengthen Europe's ability to operate independently in the digital world, and these are planned for adoption by Q2 2027 and Q4 2027, respectively.

[3] The taxation and energy product omnibuses have their target for agreement set in Q4 2027.

[4] Read our member ZPP's Position Paper on the IAA for more insights on how it is likely to affect European businesses.

In the defence sector, the momentum of last year's initiatives can also be seen in this year. Provisional agreement was reached in June on the aforementioned **Defence Readiness Omnibus**, with the Parliament's plenary vote on the file scheduled for mid-September. Similarly, the **Programme for agile and rapid defence innovation (AGILE)** has also made incredibly quick progress with the plenary sitting date set for October, less than seven months after the initial proposal. The **Military Mobility Regulation** is also moving ahead steadily and has entered the trilogue negotiations.[5]

Last but certainly not least, co-legislators are currently finalising their positions for the **2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework**, with negotiations set to begin in 2027. Though there are several points of contention surrounding this nearly €2 trillion budget – particularly regarding the budget's exact size, the consolidation of separate cohesion and CAP funding programmes under the umbrella of **National and Regional Partnership Programmes**, and the introduction of new Own Resources – the Parliament's timeline indicates a goal of having its position finalised by November and reaching a preliminary agreement with the Council by next June at the latest. Negotiations for the sectoral programmes making up the MFF are taking place in parallel, notably including on the next **Connecting Europe Facility** and the new **European Competitiveness Fund**.

Pending proposals

The Commission's Work Programme for 2026 and the Roadmap also indicate several proposals which were either meant to already have been presented or will be brought forward in the coming months. The highlights of these are as follows:

Delayed from Q2	Expected Q3	Expected Q4
Public Procurement Act	Review of the EU Emissions Trading System	Energy Union Package
Quantum Act	Circular Economy Act	Digital Fairness Act
Energy security package	Establishment of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Frameworks	Update of rules on unfair trading practices in the food chain
	European Biotech Act II	
	Simplifying defence and sensitive security procurement	

[5] Read more about the industrial impact of the proposal here: ZPP Position on the Proposed Military Mobility Regulation.

Conclusions

The first half of 2026 has seen substantial movement on several major legislative files, while the coming months will bring further negotiations on pending proposals, the conclusion of ongoing processes, and the presentation of new initiatives. With many of the deadlines set out in the One Europe, One Market Roadmap approaching, the EEA will continue to follow these developments closely and engage with the relevant files throughout the remainder of the year, keeping our members informed and ensuring that their interests are reflected in the policymaking process.