European Parliament
2024-2029

TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2026)0247

Competition policy – annual report 2025

European Parliament resolution of 7 July 2026 on competition policy – annual report 2025 (2025/2134(INI))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in particular to Articles 101 to 109 thereof,

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2022/1925 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2022 on contestable and fair markets in the digital sector and amending Directives (EU) 2019/1937 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Digital Markets Act)[1],

– having regard to the Commission report of 28 April 2026 on the review of Regulation (EU) 2022/1925 of the European Parliament and of the Council on contestable and fair markets in the digital sector and amending Directives (EU) 2019/1937 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Digital Markets Act), in accordance with Article 53 thereof (COM(2026)0178),

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act)[2],

– having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 of 20 January 2004 on the control of concentrations between undertakings (the EC Merger Regulation)[3],

– having regard to the guidelines on the assessment of horizontal mergers under the Council Regulation on the control of

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[1] OJ L 265, 12.10.2022, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/1925/oj.
[2] OJ L 277, 27.10.2022, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj.
[3] OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2004/139/oj.

concentrations between undertakings[4],

– having regard to the guidelines on the assessment of non-horizontal mergers under the Council Regulation on the control of concentrations between undertakings[5],

– having regard to the report of 9 September 2024 by Mario Draghi entitled ‘The future of European competitiveness’ (Draghi report),

– having regard to its resolution of 10 September 2025 on facilitating the financing of investments and reforms to boost European competitiveness and creating a Capital Markets Union (Draghi Report)[6],

– having regard to the report of 17 April 2024 by Enrico Letta entitled ‘Much more than a market – Speed, security, solidarity: Empowering the single market to deliver a sustainable future and prosperity for all EU citizens’ (Letta report),

– having regard to the report of 19 January 2026 by Jörg Kukies and Christian Noyer entitled ‘Financing innovative ventures in Europe’,

– having regard to the Commission communication of 29 January 2025 entitled ‘A Competitiveness Compass for the EU’ (COM(2025)0030),

– having regard to the Commission proposal of 21 January 2026 for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on digital networks, amending Regulation (EU) 2015/2120, Directive 2002/58/EC and Decision No 676/2002/EC and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1971, Directive (EU) 2018/1972 and Decision No 243/2012/EU (Digital Networks Act) (COM(2026)0016),

– having regard to the report of 29 October 2025 entitled ‘Factual summary of the contributions received in the context of the public consultation on the review of the horizontal and the non-horizontal merger guidelines’,

– having regard to the Commission staff working document of 13 October 2025 entitled ‘Evaluation of the Commission Notice on the application of Articles 87 and 88 on the EC Treaty to State aid in the form of guarantees’ (SWD(2025)0330),

– having regard to the Commission staff working document of 13 October 2025 entitled ‘Executive summary of the evaluation of the Commission Notice on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the

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4 OJ C 31, 5.2.2004, p. 5.
5 OJ C 265, 18.10.2008, p. 6.
6 OJ C, C/2026/1472, 9.4.2026, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2026/1472/oj.

EC Treaty to State aid in the form of guarantees (SWD(2025)0331),

– having regard to the Commission study entitled ‘Ex post evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of EU antitrust remedies’[7],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2022/2560 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on foreign subsidies distorting the internal market[8] (Foreign Subsidies Regulation),

– having regard to the Commission communication of 9 January 2026 entitled ‘Guidelines on the application of certain provisions of Regulation (EU) 2022/2560 of the European Parliament and of the Council on foreign subsidies distorting the internal market’[9],

– having regard to the Commission communication of 26 February 2025 entitled ‘The Clean Industrial Deal: A joint roadmap for competitiveness and decarbonisation’ (COM(2025)0085),

– having regard to the Commission communication of 4 July 2025 entitled ‘Framework for State Aid measures to support the Clean Industrial Deal (Clean Industrial Deal State Aid Framework)’[10],

– having regard to the Commission staff working document of 4 November 2025 accompanying the Commission communication on a Clean Industrial Deal State Aid Framework (SWD(2025)0850),

– having regard to Commission Decision (EU) 2025/2630 of 16 December 2025 on the application of Article 106(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to State aid in the form of public service compensation granted to certain undertakings entrusted with the operation of services of general economic interest and repealing Decision 2012/21/EU[11] (SGEI Decision), and the annex thereto,

– having regard to the Commission report of 5 May 2026 entitled ‘Report on Competition Policy 2025’ (COM(2026)0180),

– having regard to the report of 18 December 2025 by the European Securities and Markets Authority entitled ‘CRA Market Share

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7 European Commission, Directorate-General for Competition, *Ex post evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of EU antitrust remedies*, 2025.

8 OJ L 330, 23.12.2022, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2560/oj.

9 OJ C, C/2026/224, 13.1.2026, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2026/224/oj.

10 OJ C, C/2025/3602, 4.7.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/3602/oj.

11 OJ L, 2025/2630, 19.12.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2025/2630/oj.

Report: 2025 edition’,

– having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (A10-0171/2026),

A. whereas fair and open competition is an essential element for the proper functioning of the single market, job creation, consumer protection and the development of businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); whereas competition policy should primarily aim at ensuring effective competition and consumer welfare, while remaining consistent with other EU policies;

B. whereas EU competition policy must be forward-looking, foster EU solutions and innovation, and protect consumers;

C. whereas SMEs form the backbone of the European economy, and competition policy must take into account their specific needs, ensuring that compliance obligations and enforcement procedures do not place disproportionate burdens on them;

D. whereas safeguarding the single market requires strong, robust, predictable and non-discriminatory competition rules that are applied equally to all market actors, who must be insulated from undue political interference of any kind;

E. whereas increasing market concentration has an impact on income distribution, while competitive markets help ensure that productivity gains are more broadly shared across the economy and support sustainable competitiveness by strengthening purchasing power, internal demand and human capital formation;

F. whereas the institutional and operational independence of national competition authorities (NCAs) and EU enforcement are prerequisites for the credibility and effectiveness of competition policy; whereas safeguarding their decision-making processes from political interference or private-sector pressure is essential to ensure legal certainty, uphold the rule of law and maintain a level playing field across the single market;

G. whereas the Draghi report identifies three main areas for action: first, closing the innovation gap, second, establishing a joint plan to ensure both decarbonisation and competitiveness, reflecting the EU’s strong industrial and innovation base and its comparative advantage in green technologies, and, finally, increasing security and reducing dependencies;

H. whereas in this context the fragmented energy market drives up prices and weakens competition, while current geopolitical tensions may further increase vulnerabilities; whereas deeper integration of the internal energy market, stronger interconnections and effective enforcement of competition law can increase efficiency, resilience and cross-border participation, reduce dependencies on non-EU suppliers and reduce costs to consumers;

I. whereas in parallel, the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI), including generative AI systems, is significantly reshaping competitive dynamics, market structures, value chains and user access to digital services across the EU, with potential implications for competition within digital markets;

Reclaiming the EU’s strategic autonomy through competition policy, innovation and digital sovereignty

1. Recalls the EU’s strong competition framework and its due enforcement as a tool to step up competitiveness across all industries; underlines that EU policies should not be pursued in isolation and that competitiveness concerns cannot be interpreted as shortcomings in competition policy; recalls that EU competition rules must be consistent with the principles enshrined in the Treaties and should support the implementation of EU policies, including those covering industry, trade, consumers, financial services and defence, while ensuring a stable framework that fosters investments, growth and the ability to scale under fair conditions; underlines that competition policy should contribute to the integration and deepening of the European capital markets and support the objectives of the savings and investments union;

2. Highlights that well-functioning competition is a key driver of productivity growth and long-term competitiveness in the EU; notes that stronger competition policy enforcement is associated with higher total factor productivity and a more efficient allocation of labour and capital; stresses therefore that effective competition policy and enforcement contribute to fair employment conditions;

3. Firmly believes that the Draghi and Letta reports should contribute to shaping priorities in the competition field, and calls for these reports to be followed up on as a matter of urgency; takes note of Mario Draghi’s estimate that, in order to protect our EU competitiveness, an additional EUR 800 billion per year is needed; emphasises that consumer interests should remain central, while taking into account the need for competition policy to contribute to key objectives, such as competitiveness, resilience, security, strategic autonomy and sustainability; welcomes the Draghi report’s proposal for a flexible market investigation tool (the ‘new competition tool’) to address market failures which cannot be tackled effectively under the current Articles 101 and 102 TFEU; notes that similar tools have already been successfully implemented at Member State level and suggests that an EU-level new competition tool could help address structural competition issues across the EU; calls on

the Commission to introduce such a tool to complement the existing framework;

4. Recognises the need to strengthen the European defence industrial base; stresses that competition policy must ensure fair access for SMEs and prevent excessive concentration in defence supply chains that could reduce resilience and increase dependency;

5. Reiterates the fundamental role of SMEs in strengthening European competitiveness, promoting innovation and creating jobs; calls on the Commission to ensure that the enforcement of competition rules and digital policies takes into account their impact on SMEs;

6. Underlines the importance of reducing energy costs to safeguard EU competitiveness, promoting net-zero energy sources in line with the Taxonomy Climate Delegated Act[12] and the Taxonomy Complementary Climate Delegated Act[13], while ensuring that an open, competitive and sustainable single market is balanced with supply security and increased EU energy autonomy; stresses that fair, well-functioning, competitive, integrated and interconnected electricity markets are essential for strengthening the EU’s industrial competitiveness and supporting more stable and affordable energy prices; underlines the importance of the effective enforcement of competition rules in energy infrastructure and network access in order to safeguard the proper functioning of the single market and to ensure fair pricing and better protect consumers;

7. Notes the strategic role of critical raw materials for the energy transition and the objectives of the Critical Raw Materials Act[14] in

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12 Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2139 of 4 June 2021 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council by establishing the technical screening criteria for determining the conditions under which an economic activity qualifies as contributing substantially to climate change mitigation or climate change adaptation and for determining whether that economic activity causes no significant harm to any of the other environmental objectives (OJ L 442, 9.12.2021, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2021/2139/oj).

13 Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/1214 of 9 March 2022 amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2139 as regards economic activities in certain energy sectors and Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2178 as regards specific public disclosures for those economic activities (OJ L 188, 15.7.2022, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2022/1214/oj).

14 Regulation (EU) 2024/1252 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a framework for ensuring a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials and amending Regulations (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1724 and (EU) 2019/1020 (OJ L, 2024/1252, 3.5.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1252/oj).

reducing geopolitical dependencies and strengthening supply chain resilience, and calls for competition policy to support competitive markets across the value chain and pan-European investments;

8. Emphasises the key role competition plays in creating digital market alternatives and reducing dependence on and dominance of non-EU providers; encourages key infrastructure to be built to boost Europe's autonomy and innovation, including cloud services, AI infrastructure (data centres and connectivity), financial market infrastructure and resilient, interoperable and competitive European payment systems, in order to ensure open and contestable markets and reduce strategic dependencies; observes evolving business practices and market structures, and potential new forms of harmful conduct like tacit collusion and algorithmic collusion on prices, and emphasises the need to align enforcement priorities with this evolving landscape, supported by data-driven analysis and evidence;

9. Calls for a level playing field in strategic sectors and for the EU to use all available tools, including the Foreign Subsidies Regulation (FSR), public procurement rules and a robust merger review framework, to ensure that EU companies can compete on merit and that non-EU market participants are not advantaged by foreign state subsidies; stresses the importance of strengthening the resilience, diversification and security of European supply chains in strategic sectors promoting European capabilities and solutions, where appropriate, without compromising open markets;

10. Underlines that competition authorities need improved data accessibility to ensure effective competition enforcement; stresses the importance of improving data collection, facilitating access to procurement data for national competition authorities, and strengthening fraud detection mechanisms in their enforcement of competition policy; calls, furthermore, on competition authorities to promote simplified procedures, enhance transparency and improve market access for emerging SMEs;

11. Underlines the importance of Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEIs) for financing large strategic EU projects; calls on the Commission to streamline and simplify IPCEI notification procedures as they are burdensome, in particular for SMEs, and to ensure proportionality, provide clear and predictable criteria for admissibility, and enhance transparency and legal certainty throughout the assessment process;

12. Welcomes the enforcement of the FSR as a necessary tool to create a level playing field and address market distortions caused by foreign subsidies; welcomes the FSR guidelines; maintains that State aid that is not allowed under the EU Treaties should also not be allowed from non-EU countries; calls for rigorous assessment of competition distortions via the FSR and the appropriate screening of foreign

direct investment alongside traditional trade defence instruments; calls on the Commission to strengthen the enforcement of the FSR with regard to online platforms and marketplaces established in non-EU countries; calls on the Commission to ensure that SMEs and smaller transactions are not disproportionately burdened by FSR compliance obligations;

13. Underlines that, according to the latest Eurobarometer survey and the Eurobarometer post-electoral survey in 2024, respondents expect the EU to prioritise addressing inflation, rising prices and the cost of living; stresses that ensuring fair and effective competition is an important element in tackling these challenges and should therefore remain a priority within competition policy;

14. Underlines that strict and consistent competition policy enforcement contributes to strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion across the EU and its outermost regions; notes that there are persistent economic and infrastructural gaps between internal, rural, peripheral, outermost and island regions, and calls on the Commission to take into account the territorial impact of competition decisions, in order to promote appropriate cohesion policies accompanying the development of the single market, while ensuring the uniform application of competition rules;

15. Welcomes the signing of the EU-UK Competition Cooperation Agreement[15], a key step in strengthening coordination between the respective competition authorities;

More independent and more effective EU competition enforcement

16. Calls on the Commission to explore avenues towards strengthening the independence of EU competition enforcement;

17. Stresses that strengthening the existing enforcement capacity is essential in the short term; calls on the Commission to ensure as a matter of urgency that its Directorate-General for Competition is sufficiently staffed with the necessary resources and technical expertise to effectively enforce antitrust law, the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and merger rules;

18. Underlines the importance of competition enforcement being conducted in an impartial, politically independent manner; calls on the Commission to present an impact assessment on the merits of establishing a dedicated European competition authority, examining

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[15] Council Decision (EU) 2025/2376 of 4 November 2025 on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland regarding cooperation on the application of their respective competition laws (OJ L, 2025/2376, 24.11.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2025/2376/oj).

subsidiarity, the proper delineation between competition and regulatory functions, democratic accountability to Parliament, and the potential implications for the European Competition Network (ECN); stresses the need for adequate staffing, expertise and powers;

Competition in the digital age and enforcement of the DMA amid global challenges

19. Urges the Commission to fully enforce the EU competition rulebook, including the DMA, in a consistent, impartial and legally robust manner, to safeguard Europe's regulatory autonomy against political pressures; notes with concern external pressure surrounding the DMA and warns against foreign interference;

20. Underlines that effective enforcement can only be achieved if rules to address the abuse of dominance (Article 102 TFEU) and the DMA work together, combining ex ante and ex post approaches; calls on the Commission to streamline and better articulate the competition and digital rulebook;

21. Welcomes the publication of the Commission's report on 28 April 2026 on the review of the DMA; notes the Commission's conclusion, in this first review of the DMA, that the DMA is fit for purpose and does not need to be amended at this stage, although it identifies particular areas of focus going forward, namely AI and cloud computing services, while highlighting that the DMA should not be seen in isolation when it comes to regulatory tools aiming to capture the AI or cloud value chain;

22. Calls for the process of the DMA review, which is expected to take place every three years, to be transparent, evidence-based, proportionate, targeted and ambitious, while ensuring regulatory stability and avoiding unnecessary expansion of obligations for market participants; insists that the periodic review of the DMA, every three years, should assess systematically the effectiveness and practical impact of existing obligations, legal certainty for market participants, the DMA's interaction with sector-specific regulation, and the need for any adjustments to gatekeeper designation thresholds in the light of market developments; calls on the Commission to systematically include SMEs in the DMA review consultations;

23. Stresses that increasing concentration in cloud services may undermine competition, innovation and the EU's strategic autonomy; highlights that practices such as bundling, cloud marketplaces and contractual mechanisms, including credits and spend commitments, can reinforce vendor lock-in and limit switching or multi-cloud strategies; stresses that cloud obligations must be updated; notes that, following the market investigations into cloud computing

services that were opened in November 2025, the Commission published its preliminary position on 25 June 2026, stating that Microsoft Azure and Amazon Web Services should be designated as gatekeepers for cloud computing services[16], while its investigation into whether the DMA can effectively address practices that may limit competitiveness and fairness in cloud computing services remains ongoing[17]; calls on the Commission to use the cloud services market investigation to adjust DMA obligations and ensure that they effectively address the barriers that prevent users from switching providers;

24. Recalls that enforcement of the DMA is still suboptimal; supports stronger enforcement of the DMA in relation to all market participants falling under the scope of its regulation regardless of nationality and encourages the Commission to conclude open investigations within the time frames provided for under the DMA; notes that effective DMA enforcement requires adequate and sustainable resources; calls on the Commission and the budgetary authorities to ensure that adequate and stable resources are allocated to DMA enforcement through the EU budget; calls therefore for sustainable finance solutions to be explored, while respecting institutional balance, notably for introduction of a ‘DMA fee’, similar to the fee under the DSA, to be explored;

25. Calls on the Commission to make full and proactive use of all enforcement instruments provided for under the DMA, including further market investigations, non-compliance proceedings, inspections, interim measures, fines and periodic penalty payments, in order to prevent circumvention and ensure effective compliance;

26. Acknowledges the existence of a legal base for structural remedies against the abuse of market dominance; is aware that EU competition rules stipulate that structural remedies should only be used as a last resort if behavioural remedies have proven ineffective, but nonetheless regrets the Commission’s reluctance to address market dominance through structural remedies;

27. Welcomes the Commission’s recognition, in its first review of the DMA, that the future-proofing tools incorporated by the co-legislators are crucial in enabling the framework to respond to developments in markets and technologies; calls therefore on the Commission to enforce the DMA, in a consistent and future-proof manner, in relation to technological developments, by addressing AI-driven services and cloud-based infrastructure in a timely manner, in

16 https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commission-reaches-preliminary-position-amazons-and-microsofts-market-leading-cloud-services-should.

17 European Commission, ‘Commission launches market investigations on cloud computing services under the Digital Markets Act’, European Commission website, 18 November 2025.

order to prevent new forms of lock-in, foreclosure or gatekeeping practices, including where gatekeepers leverage control over data, computing resources or integrated services to the detriment of emerging AI developers and innovative market entrants;

28. Welcomes the fact that the Commission is already monitoring the deployment of AI tools within designated core platform services under the DMA; notes that, in its first review of the DMA, the Commission reports that, with respect to AI services, it has started addressing various fairness and contestability issues that featured prominently in the public consultation, for instance, through its regulatory dialogue with gatekeepers on ensuring that default settings can be changed easily and that AI services have equal access to operating systems; notes that two specification proceedings were opened in January 2026 in relation to Alphabet that also have an AI dimension relating to interoperability and access to search data; calls on the Commission to develop and apply new theories of harm to address the further entrenchment of the incumbents and assess, within the upcoming DMA review, whether the current list of core platform services adequately reflects market realities, including in areas such as AI models, AI chatbots and cloud services, main virtual assistant services and connected TV operating systems; calls on the Commission to include SMEs, start-ups, industry associations, academic experts and consumer organisations across all Member States in the DMA review consultations;

29. Stresses that DMA enforcement applies to all designated gatekeepers regardless of nationality or origin, and calls on the Commission to apply DMA obligations consistently; welcomes the coordination between the Commission and NCAs on DMA-related conduct; urges the Commission to take decisive action accordingly;

30. Calls on the Commission to examine, in the context of the implementation of the Digital Single Market Directive[18], potential abuses by gatekeepers under the DMA in their negotiations with press publishers, and in particular to examine whether such negotiations comply with the FRAND (fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory) obligations, ensuring equitable remuneration, transparent terms and non-discriminatory access to online audiences;

31. Calls on the Commission to make full use of Article 13 DMA to address any circumvention by gatekeepers of their obligations under Articles 5 and 6 DMA;

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[18] Directive (EU) 2019/790 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market and amending Directives 96/9/EC and 2001/29/EC (OJ L 130, 17.5.2019, p. 92, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/790/oj).

Antitrust

32. Urges the Commission to make appropriate use of interim measures to stop any practices that harm competition, especially in fast-evolving digital markets; calls on the Commission to modernise Regulation (EC) 1/2003[19] and Commission Regulation (EC) 773/2004[20] to improve the efficiency, legal certainty and proportionality of EU antitrust enforcement; supports a clarified framework for interim measures in cases of serious and irreparable harm to competition, with appropriate due process safeguards;

33. Calls on the Commission to address excessively long antitrust investigations; calls for binding procedural time limits on antitrust investigations to prevent undue delays that harm legal certainty and the rights of defence;

34. Urges the Commission to conduct a comprehensive study on the deterrent effect of its fines; insists that sanctions must be sufficiently high to surpass the illicit economic benefit derived from the infringement;

35. Stresses the importance of effective actions for damages as a complement to public antitrust enforcement, ensuring that victims of infringements of Articles 101 and 102 TFEU can obtain full compensation; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the effective implementation of the Antitrust Damages Directive[21] and to remove remaining barriers to private enforcement;

36. Reaffirms the need for strong and effective cooperation between the Commission and NCAs within the ECN as well as with relevant private and public stakeholders and consumer organisations; underlines that NCAs must remain politically independent and adequately resourced, and that the ECN+ Directive[22] should be fully

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19 Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2003 of 16 December 2002 on the implementation of the rules on competition laid down in Articles 81 and 82 of the Treaty (OJ L 1, 4.1.2003, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2003/1/oj).

20 Commission Regulation (EC) No 773/2004 of 7 April 2004 relating to the conduct of proceedings by the Commission pursuant to Articles 81 and 82 of the EC Treaty (OJ L 123, 27.4.2004, p. 18, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2004/773/oj).

21 Directive 2014/104/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 November 2014 on certain rules governing actions for damages under national law for infringements of the competition law provisions of the Member States and of the European Union (OJ L 349, 5.12.2014, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/104/oj).

22 Directive (EU) 2019/1 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 to empower the competition authorities of the Member States to be more effective enforcers and to ensure the proper functioning of the internal market (OJ L 11, 14.1.2019, p. 3, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1/oj).

and consistently transposed and implemented across all Member States; calls for enhanced convergence of enforcement standards, timely information-sharing, and clear allocation of competences to avoid duplicated proceedings; stresses that the ECN needs to move towards a fully integrated form of cooperation, with a view to enhancing cost efficiency and improving the handling of cross-border aspects, including by enabling joint investigations and joint decision-making; calls for the ECN to further guide companies, especially SMEs, in applying the competition rulebook;

37. Calls on the Commission and NCAs to establish easily accessible and SME-friendly complaint mechanisms for anti-competitive practices, ensuring the swift and effective handling of cases;

38. Notes current investigations of non-EU companies, including the Commission’s preliminary investigation into Visa and Mastercard fees; calls on the Commission to ensure that the payments market remains competitive, transparent and accessible for consumers and businesses; emphasises the need to review the Interchange Fee Regulation[23] to assess its effectiveness in addressing rising fees; calls on the Commission to conclude ongoing investigations in the payments sector without undue delay; emphasises that the digital euro is a crucial opportunity to reduce the over-reliance on non-EU card schemes, and to strengthen competition and the EU’s strategic autonomy in the payments sector, including by helping to ensure more competitive pricing conditions for businesses, in particular SMEs;

39. Underlines the importance of competition in the banking sector and completion of the banking union; calls on the Commission to use all available instruments to ensure fair competition and monitor trends in the banking sector during high inflation periods; stresses the importance and urgency of the Commission’s upcoming report on the competitiveness of the EU banking sector and expects the Commission to adopt the report by July 2026; welcomes, furthermore, the upcoming assessment of the functioning of

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[23] Regulation (EU) 2015/751 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2015 on interchange fees for card-based payment transactions (OJ L 123, 19.5.2015, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2015/751/oj).

Directive 2002/87/EC[24] and the Solvency II Directive[25] on aspects relating to the level playing field among insurance and banking market participants;

40. Notes the existence of oligopolies in the provision of certain services that are critical for EU financial market participants, such as market aggregators and connectivity providers that are characterised by limited numbers of providers, significant difficulty switching from one provider to another, or asymmetrical pricing power to the benefit of the provider, which ultimately inflates costs for investors; further notes that the three largest credit rating agencies and the four biggest companies in the audit market still hold market shares of over 90 %; urges the Commission to investigate existing oligopolies and take the appropriate measures to the benefit of EU competition;

41. Recalls that the European Central Bank has noted that food prices remain high, affecting vulnerable consumers in particular; expresses concern about the high market concentration at certain levels of the agricultural and food supply chain; urges the Commission to assess the scale and impact of buying alliances, and further analyse their effects not only on prices but also on farmers' and agri-food producers' ability to supply healthy, safe and sustainable products to consumers; invites the Commission to assess whether additional guidelines are needed on the application of Article 102 TFEU on exploitative abuses, including excessive or unfair prices, in order to improve legal certainty and make enforcement more effective in highly concentrated consumer markets;

Merger control

42. Stresses that Europe lacks large-scale companies capable of competing globally in numerous key strategic areas; considers scaling up within the single market as a strategic EU imperative to mobilise investments, drive competitiveness, invest in innovation and enable EU companies to compete effectively on global markets, as highlighted by the Letta report; stresses that the completion of the single market and the removal of internal barriers remain key

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24 Directive 2002/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2002 on the supplementary supervision of credit institutions, insurance undertakings and investment firms in a financial conglomerate and amending Council Directives 73/239/EEC, 79/267/EEC, 92/49/EEC, 92/96/EEC, 93/6/EEC and 93/22/EEC, and Directives 98/78/EC and 2000/12/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 35, 11.2.2003, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2002/87/oj).

25 Directive 2009/138/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the taking-up and pursuit of the business of Insurance and Reinsurance (Solvency II) (OJ L 335, 17.12.2009, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2009/138/oj).

priorities in this regard; notes that structural barriers to scaling up within the EU may result in innovative EU companies being acquired by non-EU players, with potential negative effects on long-term competition and innovation capacity in the EU; considers therefore that merger control should take full account of the ability of EU companies to invest in innovation;

43. Considers that competition policy should not create unnecessary obstacles for companies that need to scale up in order to compete globally, while noting that not all EU companies are in need of scaling up; underlines that the EU thrives on the vital link between big and small enterprises; considers that competitive scale should primarily result from fair competition, robust antitrust enforcement and the deepening of the single market, which are the foundation of the EU social market economy and remain the true driver of innovation;

44. Calls on the Commission to apply merger policy dynamically, based on an economic and legal assessment, analysing fully the concept of consumer welfare in the assessment of competition, and to consider the broader economic effects of mergers, adapt the policy to new market realities including digital ecosystems, AI, energy and defence, and analyse the effects of concentrations in the long term, taking a forward-looking approach; encourages the Commission to continue to monitor the evolution of market power in Europe, including the impact of mergers on sustainability, innovation and long-term resilience;

45. Calls for an ambitious and evidence-based revision of the EU merger guidelines so they are better aligned with new market realities and the EU's priorities in fostering a more resilient and competitive Europe while continuing to safeguard a high level of consumer welfare; insists that, while remaining grounded in competition analysis and safeguarding effective competition on national markets and within the single market, merger control should assess pan-European mergers in a forward-looking manner and ensure that any consolidation creating 'EU champions' enhances consumer welfare, market contestability and long-term resilience, particularly in key sectors such as telecoms, banking, payments, defence and energy; calls for the new merger control guidelines to ensure legal certainty for businesses in creating pan-European players fostering pro-competitive scaling up, while ensuring that national intervention powers, including veto powers, are used only in duly justified and proportionate cases;

46. Calls on the Commission to adopt a forward-looking and dynamic approach to mergers, taking into account efficiency gains, including, for example, economies of scale and sustainability gains, as early as possible in the procedure, while ensuring transparency and predictability and allowing companies to form alliances when they

contribute to innovation, climate resilience and security, and reflecting an approach to the assessment of market power and sector-specific realities that extends beyond prices and market shares and also includes effects on wages and employment conditions;

47. Recalls that competition safeguards consumer choice, market diversity and affordable prices; notes the decision by Warner Bros. Discovery stockholders on 23 April 2026 approving the merger agreement with Paramount Skydance; calls on the Commission to apply rigorous merger control in the audiovisual and media sector, monitoring the impact of market consolidation in the single market and enabling EU players to scale up;

48. Notes that online platforms under the scope of the DMA have acquired nearly 700 smaller companies since 2000, while the Commission was only notified about 19 of these transactions, as most fell below the turnover-based notification thresholds; calls on the Commission to detect ‘killer acquisitions’ (i.e. when a company acquires control of an innovative company to eliminate them as a possible source of future competition) and to adapt regulation in order to prevent such acquisitions, particularly in digital, AI, pharma and other strategic sectors; maintains that a single market legal base should be added to the EC Merger Regulation if it is reviewed, so as to fully involve the co-legislators, in a manner similar to that of the DMA; urges the Member States to give national competition authorities ‘call-in’ powers so they can review mergers and acquisitions, if this is not already the case, while ensuring legal certainty and avoiding undue burden on SMEs and start-ups;

49. Acknowledges the increasing trend of foreign investment and multi-club ownership in European sports, as well as the rise of dynamic ticket pricing, and calls on the Commission to take into account the implications of this development when supporting efforts to safeguard the financial integrity and competitive balance of European sport; calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider all regulatory options, including the prohibition of dynamic pricing at live sports and cultural events in the Digital Fairness Act, with a view to protecting consumers and upholding the social and public value of sport and culture;

State aid

50. Underlines the need for a thorough analysis of State aid rules, particularly for companies operating in strategic sectors such as energy, technology and innovation; stresses the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of State aid in agriculture, logistics and transport; notes the divergent fiscal capacities of Member States, warns that fragmented State aid creates an uneven playing field and calls on the Commission to monitor these effects; considers that any

State aid granted should be consistent with EU law and principles, including EU environmental and social policy objectives;

51. Welcomes the Clean Industrial Deal State Aid Framework (CISAF); calls for the CISAF to be implemented in a targeted and proportionate way, ensure minimum burden on Member States, prevent subsidy races and preserve the integrity of the internal market, while including strong safeguards on transparency, proportionality and environmental effectiveness;

52. Recalls that temporary, targeted State aid can be appropriate in times of crisis; reiterates the importance of the CISAF in supporting vulnerable sectors, in the context of rapidly increasing fuel prices due to the current geopolitical situation; notes nevertheless the European Court of Auditors' findings (Special Report 21/2024) identifying shortcomings in the Commission's monitoring of State aid in times of crisis and calls for stricter State aid notification monitoring by the Commission and enhanced State aid reporting and transparency in line with the European Court of Auditors' recommendations;

53. Notes that more than three quarters of State aid is concentrated in only two Member States, highlighting risks of fragmentation and an uneven level playing field in the internal market;

54. Highlights the role of State aid as a tool to reduce economic disparities between the most developed EU regions and islands, inland areas, outermost regions, economically disadvantaged zones, and all parts of the EU affected by natural constraints; calls for greater flexibility and fewer restrictions on State aid for the EU's islands and more vulnerable regions;

55. Expects the review of the General Block Exemption Regulation[26] to solve the current issues regarding the definition of 'undertaking in difficulty' and to modernise and simplify State aid rules in order to reduce red tape and boost the EU's competitiveness; welcomes the opening of the public consultation to collect input on the scope and content of the review;

56. Welcomes the adoption of the revised SGEI Decision, to enable Member States to support the provision of decent, sustainable, energy-efficient, socially inclusive and affordable housing projects, also for middle-income households; calls on the Commission to monitor the implementation of the revised SGEI Decision and to assess whether the thresholds and conditions are sufficiently flexible to meet Member States' needs; calls for simplified notification

[26] Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty(OJ L 187, 26.6.2014, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/651/oj).

procedures for SGEI-related State aid measures that do not present significant competition risks;

57. Invites the Commission to assess the impact of market concentrations in the real-estate sector and related markets, such as construction and property management, to ensure that effective competition helps contain prices and improve access to housing;

58. Notes the distortionary effects of aggressive tax planning and of tax systems, including preferential tax agreements, on fair competition, as they may stifle innovation and jeopardise the contestability of markets, especially for SMEs; welcomes the Commission recommendation of 14 July 2020[27] to not grant financial support to companies with links to tax havens, while protecting honest taxpayers; calls for companies established in countries listed on the EU's list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes, as adopted by the Council, to be excluded from receiving State aid and invites the Commission to assess whether the current framework contributes to broader efforts to combat aggressive tax planning and tax haven practices;

Parliamentary involvement

59. Deplores the lack of information it receives on the revision and implementation of competition rules and stresses that Parliament should be sufficiently involved in shaping competition policy; further emphasises the need to be transparent with Parliament on all discussions with non-EU countries that may affect DMA enforcement;

60. Calls, in that context, for a structured and regular dialogue between the Commission and Parliament on competition policy, including on the review and implementation of competition rules; calls on the Commission to provide Parliament's competent committee with timely and comprehensive information on significant enforcement decisions, legislative proposals and significant major soft-law instruments; calls for the conclusion of an interinstitutional agreement to formalise Parliament's role in competition policy oversight, including consultation on priority-setting for guidelines and frameworks;

61. Cautions against the over-reliance on soft-law instruments such as guidance and temporary frameworks in which Parliament's involvement is limited; invites the European Council to adopt a decision under Article 48(7)(2) of the Treaty on European Union

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[27] Commission Recommendation (EU) 2020/1039 of 14 July 2020 on making State financial support to undertakings in the Union conditional on the absence of links to non-cooperative jurisdictions (OJ L 227, 16.7.2020, p. 76, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2020/1039/oj).

providing for the adoption of legislative acts in the area of competition policy in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure;

62. Promotes the exchange of best practice in international forums, such as the International Competition Network and the Competition Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; calls on the Commission to strive for continued dialogue and cooperation at international level, including via second-generation cooperation agreements that allow for more effective information exchange between competition authorities, while regretting that this has not been sufficiently pursued in the past; calls on the Commission to develop a strategy for the EU to take a leading role at international level in promoting effective competition;

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63. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.