

One Europe, One Market: policy overview

Overview of six policy areas with key proposals, rationale, and timelines from the EC Roadmap (Council note 8473/26, 23 April 2026). Maturity ratings reflect whether proposals are tabled and progressing (✓), expected but not yet tabled (●), or conceptual with no roadmap entry (○).

	Key policy proposals	Rationale / expected benefit	Timing (proposal → agreement) & maturity
A strategic Single Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial Accelerator Act — Streamline permitting and reduce administrative burden for industrial investment • Merger control guidelines review — Align competition policy with need for European-scale firms in digital markets • Public Procurement Act — Embed European preference and security-of-supply criteria in public tenders to use public demand as a lever for European-scale production and lead markets • Circular Economy Act — Create a single market for secondary raw materials and reduce dependency on imported inputs, securing resource resilience for European industry 	<p>These four instruments mark a shift towards a more strategic Single Market that does not merely remove barriers but actively shapes industrial outcomes: faster permitting and merger rules calibrated to European scale allow firms to consolidate into global players, while procurement and circularity turn the bloc’s own demand and resource base into competitive assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Industrial Accelerator Act: Proposed Q1 2026 → End 2026 ✓ Merger control review: No proposal needed → End 2026 ● Public Procurement Act: Proposed Q2 2026 → Q4 2027 ● Circular Economy Act: Proposed Q3 2026 → Q3 2027
Capital markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Integration & Supervision package — Transfer supervisory powers to ESMA; harmonise stock market listing & cross-border trading rules • EU securitisation framework — Simplify rules to deepen capital markets and redirect savings to investment • Supplementary pensions package — Unlock household savings for long-term productive investment • Banking Union completion — European Deposit Insurance Scheme; enable cross-border bank consolidation • EU bond safe asset — Consolidate EU bond issuances under a single permanent framework to create a benchmark safe asset 	<p>EU stock markets capitalise at only ~60% of GDP vs. 200%+ for US exchanges. Fragmented markets raise borrowing costs, limit firm growth, and hamper financing of defence, energy transition and tech. Integration would attract global institutional investors and reduce the cost of capital.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Market integration & supervision: Proposed Q4 2025 → End 2026 ✓ Securitisation framework: Proposed Q2 2025 → End 2026 ✓ Supplementary pensions: Proposed Q4 2025 → End 2026 ● Banking framework amendments: Proposed Q1 2027 → Q4 2027 ○ EU bond safe asset: Concept in paper — no roadmap entry yet

	Key policy proposals	Rationale / expected benefit	Timing (proposal → agreement) & maturity
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Grids package — 8 Energy Highways; binding 2-year permitting timelines; €1.2 trillion investment through 2040 • ETS review — Preserve and recalibrate the Emissions Trading System as a long-term price signal • Energy security package — Reduce external dependencies and strengthen supply resilience • Network charges & renewable/efficiency frameworks — Harmonise charges and set up updated regulatory frameworks 	<p>In 2024, 72 TWh of renewable electricity was curtailed due to grid bottlenecks (≈Austria’s annual consumption), costing €8.9bn. Better interconnection could cut curtailment 30 TWh/year by 2030 and reduce system costs ~€9bn/year by 2040. Price gaps of tens of euros across borders distort the Single Market level playing field. Increasing interconnection will help foster the electrification of our economy in parallel to the mobilisation of the ETS revenues that could help accelerate the decarbonisation of the industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ European Grids package: Proposed Q4 2025 → Q3 2026 ✓ Energy Highways (projects): Launch from April 2026 onwards ● ETS review: Proposed Q3 2026 → Q1 2027 ● Energy security package: Proposed Q2 2026 → Q2 2027 ● Network charges & frameworks: Proposed Q2–Q3 2026 → Q2–Q4 2027
Digital & AI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Networks Act — Single-passport authorisation for cross-border telecom operators; replaces fragmented national rules • Revised Cybersecurity Act — Harmonised EU-wide standards; common framework for high-risk vendors • Cloud & AI Development Act — EU-based sovereign cloud framework; harmonised eligibility standards for providers • Chips Act 2 & Quantum Act — Strengthen European semiconductor and quantum computing capacity • AI Gigafactories — EU investment in large-scale AI compute infrastructure • Digital Euro & European Business Wallet — Modernise monetary and payment architecture; streamline business identity 	<p>Europe lags in 5G, cloud and AI; non-European providers dominate cloud infrastructure. 27 separate national cybersecurity frameworks create structural weakness. Full deployment of the Digital Networks Act could contribute up to €400bn to EU GDP by 2035. Technological sovereignty is increasingly a security imperative as defence relies on civilian digital infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ EU Cybersecurity Act: Proposed Q1 2026 → End 2026 ✓ Digital Euro: Proposed Q2 2023 → End 2026 ✓ European Business Wallet: Proposed Q4 2025 → End 2026 ● Digital Networks Act: Proposed Q1 2026 → Q4 2027 ● Cloud & AI Development Act: Proposed Q2 2026 → Q4 2027 ● Chips Act 2 & Quantum Act: Proposed Q2 2026 → Q2–Q3 2027 ● AI Gigafactories: Proposed Q2 2026 → launch Q4 2026
Simplification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Inc. (28th regime) — Optional EU-wide company law framework as regulation; central digital company register 	<p>Replacing 27 national rule sets with a single EU framework is itself simplification. EU Inc. lets any company opt into a uniform European legal framework, removing cross-border bottlenecks for raising capital and organising growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ EU Inc.: Proposed Q1 2026 → End 2026 ✓ Omnibus packages: Throughout 2025 → End 2026 ✓ Omnibus VII (Digital/AI): Proposed Q4 2025 → Jun 2026
Research & innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5th freedom for knowledge — Free circulation of knowledge, research, data, skills and education alongside the four existing freedoms 	<p>Europe struggles to translate its strong research base into globally competitive industries. Fragmented higher education and research career</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● European Research Area Act: Proposed Q3 2026 → Q4 2027

	Key policy proposals	Rationale / expected benefit	Timing (proposal → agreement) & maturity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Research Area Act — European Degree; EU research career framework; strengthen university alliances • 10th EU Framework Programme (FP10) — Mission-oriented research with multiannual funding and industrial partnerships 	frameworks limit talent mobility. Pooled university alliances and mission-oriented research would attract investment and scale European innovation rather than allowing it to migrate to other jurisdictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 5th freedom: Concept in paper — no standalone roadmap entry ○ FP10: Linked to ERA Act & MFF negotiations — no independent timeline
Social & territorial cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated cohesion policy — Tackle development traps, brain drain and low-productivity regions left behind by integration • Action Plan for Services of General Interest — Guarantee access to high-quality public services across all EU territories • European Affordable Housing Plan — Coordinate action on affordable housing at EU, national, regional and local levels • Fair labour mobility package & Skills Portability Initiative — Ensure workers’ rights and portable qualifications support free movement 	Without cohesion, Single Market deepening loses political legitimacy. Affordable housing shortages already constrain freedom of movement. Workers’ rights must be preserved in new frameworks such as EU Inc. Ensuring the benefits of integration are broadly shared is a precondition for the political sustainability of the whole agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fair labour mobility package: Proposed Q3 2026 → Q3 2027 ✓ Skills Portability Initiative: Proposed Q3 2026 → Q3 2027 ○ Affordable Housing Plan: Called for “without delay” — no roadmap timeline ○ Services of General Interest plan: Concept only — no roadmap entry ○ Updated cohesion policy: Aspirational — no standalone roadmap initiative

✓ Mature — proposal tabled, clear timeline, politically advanced • In development — expected but not yet tabled ○ Early stage — concept defined, no roadmap timeline