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E-001466/2026
Answer given by Mr Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
(23.7.2026)

1. The EU Treaties provide for European integration at different speeds. The Commission considers that the ambition should always be to reach agreement among all 27 Member States. However, where a lack of progress risks undermining Europe's capacity to act, the EU should use fully the possibilities already foreseen in the Treaties. Examples range from enhanced cooperation to the inclusion of new Member States in the Permanent Structured Cooperation.

2. The Commission's longstanding position is that, if the EU wants to act quickly, efficiently, and therefore strategically, unanimity voting ought to be reconsidered in certain policy areas, including on aspects of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). To that end, the Treaties foresee the possible activation by the European Council of 'passerelle clauses' in key areas such as the CFSP.

3. The competences conferred on the EU are laid down in the EU Treaties, which have been ratified by all Member States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements. These competences can only be changed through a reform of the EU Treaties, which would have to follow the ordinary revision procedure laid down in Article 48(2) to (5) of the Treaty on European Union. This procedure also includes the ratification by all Member States, in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements. Furthermore, national Parliaments play an active role in safeguarding the boundaries of EU competence through the mechanisms introduced by the Lisbon Treaty: under Protocol No. 2 on the Application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality.