



European Council

**Brussels, 21 October 2022
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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: European Council meeting (20 and 21 October 2022)
– Conclusions

Delegations will find attached the conclusions adopted by the European Council at the above meeting.

I. UKRAINE/RUSSIA

Russia's escalating aggression

1. The European Council addressed Russia's escalating war of aggression against Ukraine, which is putting European and global peace and security at risk. The European Council is determined to counter disinformation aimed at negating our collective efforts to defend the sovereignty of Ukraine and rules-based international order. It reiterates that Russia bears the sole responsibility for the current energy and economic crises.
2. The European Council condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent indiscriminate Russian missile and drone attacks targeting civilians and civilian objects and infrastructure in Kyiv and across Ukraine. It likewise condemns Russia's actions at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and underlines the European Union's support to the International Atomic Energy Agency's efforts to maintain the safety, security and safeguards of the facility.
3. Recalling the statement of 30 September 2022, and in line with the UN General Assembly Resolution of 12 October 2022, the European Council reiterates its unequivocal condemnation and firm rejection of the illegal annexation by Russia of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. As in the case of Crimea and Sevastopol, the European Union will never recognise this illegal annexation. Russia's unilateral decisions deliberately violate the UN Charter and blatantly disregard the rules-based international order. Russia has no legitimate basis for any action on the territory of Ukraine.
4. The European Council reaffirms its full support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. In accordance with the UN Charter and international law, Ukraine is exercising its inherent right of self-defence against the Russian aggression. It has the right to liberate and regain full control of all occupied territories within its internationally recognised borders.

5. The European Council demands that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, as the UN General Assembly demanded, and that Russia stop all hybrid attacks against Ukraine.
6. War crimes committed against Ukrainians, of which there is growing evidence, and the continuous destruction of civilian infrastructure are a gross violation of international law. The European Union reiterates its firm commitment to holding Russia, and all perpetrators and accomplices, to account, and its strong support for the investigations by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. The European Council acknowledges Ukraine's efforts to secure accountability, including for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. It invites the High Representative and the Commission to explore options so that full accountability can be ensured.
7. The European Union has further reinforced its restrictive measures against Russia and stands ready to continue to do so. The European Council stresses the importance of ensuring effective implementation, preventing circumvention and its facilitation, and calls on all countries to align with EU sanctions. Efforts in this regard should be stepped up. The European Council discussed how to further increase collective pressure on Russia to end its war of aggression.
8. The European Council stresses the importance of united EU practices on visa issuance in relation to Russian applicants, and welcomes the European Commission's updated guidelines.
9. The European Union will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes. It will continue to provide strong political, military and financial support to Ukraine, including for its liquidity needs, and step up its humanitarian response, in particular for winter preparedness. The decision to conduct an EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine was adopted by the Council, as well as the recent decision to further increase the European Peace Facility assistance measures in support of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. The European Council commends the work on the ground of the civilian EU Advisory Mission in Ukraine.

10. The European Council calls for the timely provision of the remaining EUR 3 billion in macro-financial assistance for Ukraine. It invites the Commission to present, and the Council to work on, a more structural solution for providing assistance to Ukraine. The full potential of the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with Ukraine should be used to ease its access to the Single Market.
11. The European Union is determined to support Ukraine's relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction, together with international partners and financial institutions. Ahead of the International Expert Conference in Berlin on 25 October 2022, the European Council discussed the governance and financing of these efforts, including reforms. Furthermore, recalling its conclusions of 30-31 May 2022, the European Council invites the Commission to present options in line with EU and international law aimed at using frozen assets to support Ukraine's reconstruction.
12. Ukraine has stated its readiness for a just peace, which should include respect for its territorial integrity and sovereignty as protected by the UN Charter; safeguarding Ukraine's ability to defend itself in the future; ensuring its recovery and reconstruction, including exploring avenues to do so with funds from Russia; and pursuing accountability for Russian crimes committed during the war.
13. The European Council calls on the Belarusian authorities to stop enabling the Russian war of aggression by permitting Russian armed forces to use Belarusian territory and by providing support to the Russian military. The Belarusian regime must fully abide by its obligations under international law. The European Union remains ready to move quickly with further sanctions against Belarus.
14. The European Council also strongly condemns the military support to Russia's war of aggression provided by the Iranian authorities, which must stop. In this regard, the European Council welcomes the EU sanctions adopted on 20 October 2022.

Food security

15. Russia, by weaponising food in its war against Ukraine, is solely responsible for the global food security crisis it has provoked. Russia's war of aggression has triggered disruptions of agricultural production, supply chains and trade that have driven world food and fertiliser prices to unprecedented levels. The EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes have made possible the export of significant volumes of Ukrainian crops, agricultural products and fertilisers to the countries most in need. The European Union will continue to improve the efficiency of all the Solidarity Lanes. The European Council supports the call by the United Nations Secretary-General for the extension of the UN Black Sea Grain Initiative beyond its current period ending in November. EU sanctions against Russia do not prohibit the export of agricultural or food products between third countries and Russia.

II. CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

16. The European Council strongly condemns the acts of sabotage against critical infrastructure, such as those against the Nord Stream pipelines. The European Union will meet any deliberate disruption of critical infrastructure or other hybrid actions with a united and determined response. The European Council calls on the Member States to take urgent and effective measures, and to cooperate with each other, the Commission and other relevant actors, with a view to enhancing the resilience of critical infrastructure. Work should be taken forward quickly on the proposal for a Council recommendation on a coordinated approach by the Union to strengthen the resilience of critical infrastructure, including the early implementation of the revised Directive on security of network and information systems (NIS 2 Directive) and the Directive on the resilience of critical entities.

III. ENERGY AND ECONOMY

17. In the face of Russia's weaponisation of energy, the European Union will remain united to protect its citizens and businesses and take the necessary measures as a matter of urgency.
18. The European Council has agreed that in light of the ongoing crisis, efforts to reduce demand, to ensure security of supply, to avoid rationing, and to lower energy prices for households and businesses across the Union need to be accelerated and intensified, and the integrity of the Single Market has to be preserved.

The European Council calls on the Council and the Commission to urgently submit concrete decisions on the following additional measures, as well as on the Commission proposals, having assessed their impact notably on existing contracts, including the non-affectation of long-term contracts, and taking into account the different energy mixes and national circumstances:

- a) voluntary joint purchasing of gas, except for binding demand aggregation for a volume equivalent to 15% of storage filling needs, according to national needs, and the speeding up of negotiations with reliable partners to seek mutually beneficial partnerships by exploiting the Union's collective market weight and making full use of the EU Energy Platform, which is open also for the Western Balkans and the three associated Eastern Partners;
- b) a new complementary benchmark by early 2023 that more accurately reflects conditions on the gas market;

- c) a temporary dynamic price corridor on natural gas transactions to immediately limit episodes of excessive gas prices, taking into account the safeguards set out in Article 23(2) of the draft Council Regulation proposed on 18 October 2022;
- d) a temporary EU framework to cap the price of gas in electricity generation, including a cost and benefit analysis, without modifying the merit order, while preventing increasing gas consumption, addressing the financing and distributional impacts and its impact on flows beyond the EU's borders;
- e) improvements to the functioning of energy markets to increase market transparency, alleviate liquidity stress and eliminate factors that amplify the volatility of gas prices, while ensuring the preservation of financial stability;
- f) fast-tracking of the simplification of permitting procedures in order to accelerate the rollout of renewables and grids including with emergency measures on the basis of Article 122 TFEU;
- g) energy solidarity measures in case of gas supply disruptions at national, regional or Union level, in the absence of bilateral solidarity agreements;
- h) increased efforts to save energy;

- i) mobilising relevant tools at national and EU level. At the same time, the immediate priority is to protect households and businesses, in particular the most vulnerable in our societies. Preserving the Union’s global competitiveness is also key. All relevant tools at national and EU level should be mobilised to enhance the resilience of our economies, while preserving Europe’s global competitiveness and maintaining the level playing field and the integrity of the Single Market. The European Council is committed to close coordination of policy responses. It stresses the importance of close coordination and of common European level solutions, where appropriate, and is committed to achieving our policy objectives in a united manner. The Council will continue to closely monitor economic developments and is committed to further reinforce our coordination, in order to deliver a determined and agile policy response.
19. The European Council reiterates the need to step up investments in energy efficiency, future-proof energy infrastructure, including interconnections, storage, and innovative renewable technologies.
20. The European Council invites the Commission to speed up work on the structural reform of the electricity market, including an impact assessment, and calls for further progress towards a full Energy Union serving the dual objective of European energy sovereignty and climate neutrality.
21. The European Council remains seized of the matter.

IV. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

22. The European Council held a strategic discussion on the European Union's relations with China.
23. It also discussed preparations for the upcoming EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit on 14 December 2022. The summit will be an opportunity to further deepen the European Union's Strategic Partnership with ASEAN and to underline our shared attachment to international law and internationally agreed norms and standards, as well as to emphasise the importance of common interests that bind our two regions in a longstanding partnership.
24. The European Council took stock of preparations for the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Sharm el-Sheikh (COP27) and for the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Part Two) in Montreal. In the face of increasingly intense and frequent extreme weather events, including heatwaves, wildfires and floods, and unprecedented biodiversity loss across the globe, it stressed the extreme urgency of strengthening the global response to the climate emergency and to the biodiversity crisis. In order to keep the 1.5 °C objective within reach, the European Council calls on all Parties, in particular major economies, to revisit and strengthen their nationally determined contributions in time for COP27. The European Council also calls for the adoption of an ambitious, comprehensive and transformative post-2020 global biodiversity framework to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.
25. The European Council condemns the unjustifiable and unacceptable use of force by the Iranian authorities against peaceful protestors, in particular against women, and welcomes the EU restrictive measures adopted on 17 October 2022 against the perpetrators of these serious human rights violations. It calls on Iran to immediately stop the violent crackdown against peaceful protestors and release those detained, in full respect of their civil and political rights.