



European Council

**Brussels, 15 December 2022
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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: European Council meeting (15 December 2022)
– Conclusions

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

I. UKRAINE/RUSSIA

1. The European Council reiterates its resolute condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.
2. It reaffirms the Union's full support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, as well as for Ukraine's inherent right of self-defence against the Russian aggression.
3. The European Union remains committed to providing political and military support to Ukraine, notably through the European Peace Facility and the EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine, and by stepping up the bilateral provision of support, in particular air defence capacities and demining assistance.
4. Russia's ongoing campaign of systematic missile strikes against Ukrainian civilians, civilian targets, energy infrastructure and other utilities, to inflict even more suffering on the Ukrainian people, is a crime for which there can be no impunity. It must stop. The European Council calls on all international partners to make similar calls and exert their influence to this end. The European Council also calls on Russia to immediately cease actions endangering the safety and security of civilian nuclear facilities and underlines the European Union's full support for the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

5. The European Union will urgently intensify the provision of humanitarian and civil protection assistance to Ukraine, including in kind, and assist in the restoration of Ukraine's critical infrastructure to help Ukraine get through the winter. In this regard, the European Council invites the European Investment Bank, in close cooperation with the Commission and International Financial Institutions, to step up its support for Ukraine's most urgent infrastructure needs. The European Council also invites the Commission to intensify coordination with European industry and international partners to provide a sustainable supply of priority equipment to Ukraine such as mobile heating stations, power generators, power transformers, and high-voltage and lighting equipment. In this context, the European Council welcomes the outcome of the Paris conference on Ukraine's resilience and reconstruction on 13 December 2022.
6. The European Union will also maintain its support for displaced persons, both within and outside Ukraine. The European Council invites the Member States to intensify contingency planning, with the support of the Commission.
7. The European Union remains committed to providing, along with partners, financial relief to Ukraine, and supporting its resilience and long-term reconstruction. In that context, the European Union has agreed to provide EUR 18 billion of assistance to Ukraine in 2023. The European Council welcomes the G7 agreement to establish a multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform.

8. The European Council welcomes and encourages further efforts to ensure full accountability for war crimes and the other most serious crimes in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including ways to secure accountability for the crime of aggression. It underlines the Union's support for the investigations by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. The European Council also took stock of the options to use frozen assets to support Ukraine's reconstruction and for the purposes of reparation. It invites the Commission, the High Representative and the Council to take work forward, in accordance with EU and international law, stressing that the prosecution of the crime of aggression is of concern to the international community as a whole.
9. The European Council reiterates that it is ready to support Ukraine's initiative for a just peace. To date, Russia has not shown any genuine willingness regarding a fair and sustainable peace.
10. The European Council discussed how to further increase collective pressure on Russia to end its war of aggression and to withdraw its troops from Ukraine. It welcomes the reinforcement of EU restrictive measures against Russia, including through the EU's ninth package of restrictive measures and the international oil price cap, while ensuring a global level playing field. The European Union stands ready to continue to reinforce the restrictive measures. The European Council underlines the importance of ensuring effective implementation and preventing circumvention and its facilitation. It reiterates its call for all countries to align with EU sanctions.
11. The European Council reiterates its condemnation of 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 12 December 2022.
12. The European Union will continue to provide all relevant support to the Republic of Moldova as it deals with the multifaceted impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, notably as regards energy security.

13. In the context of bolstering global food security, the European Council also underlines the importance of the Solidarity Lanes, using their full potential, and of the UN Black Sea Grain Initiative and the Grain from Ukraine programme, stressing the need to continue to ensure the availability and affordability of agricultural products and fertilisers.

II. ENERGY AND ECONOMY

14. The European Council reviewed progress on the implementation of its October 2022 conclusions.
15. The European Council welcomes the progress made and calls on the Council to finalise on 19 December 2022 its work on the proposals for a Council Regulation enhancing solidarity through better coordination of gas purchases, notably through the EU Energy Platform, exchanges of gas across borders and reliable price benchmarks, a Council Regulation laying down a framework to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy and a Council Regulation establishing a market correction mechanism to protect citizens and the economy against excessively high prices.
16. In view of the next storage filling and heating seasons, the European Council underlines the importance of strengthening coordination. In particular, work should continue on the following strands:
 - a) speedy operationalisation of gas demand aggregation and of the joint purchasing mechanism through the EU Energy Platform, as well as acceleration of the discussion with reliable partners to secure the supply of gas in view of winter 2023/2024 with a view to concluding long-term contracts;
 - b) efficient filling of gas storage and close monitoring of filling trajectories;
 - c) close monitoring of gas demand reduction objectives;
 - d) early preparation of contingency plans for winter 2023/2024.

17. The European Council calls for the swift finalisation of discussions on the Renewable Energy Directive, the Energy Efficiency Directive and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.
18. The European Council reiterates the importance of stepping up investment in innovation, infrastructure and interconnections, storage, renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, in order to phase out the Union's dependency on Russian fossil fuels, accelerate the green transition and ensure security of supply.
19. The European Council looks forward to the proposal and impact assessment on the structural reform of the EU's electricity market, including on the effect of gas prices on electricity prices, making it fully fit for a decarbonised energy system and facilitating the uptake of renewable energy, to be submitted by the Commission in early 2023.
20. In light of the impact of high energy prices in Europe, the European Council underlines the importance of safeguarding Europe's economic, industrial and technological base and of preserving the global level playing field. It underlines in particular the importance in the current global context of an ambitious European industrial policy to make Europe's economy fit for the green and digital transitions and reduce strategic dependencies, particularly in the most sensitive areas, while ensuring a level playing field. The European Council recalls in that context the need for a coordinated response to enhance Europe's economic resilience and its global competitiveness while preserving the integrity of the Single Market. In this respect and to respond to the impact of high energy prices, the European Council invites the Commission to conduct an analysis and to make proposals by the end of January 2023 with a view to mobilising all relevant national and EU tools as well as to improving framework conditions for investment, including through streamlined administrative procedures.

21. The European Council stresses the importance of close coordination and of common European level solutions, where appropriate, and invites the Council and the Eurogroup to closely monitor economic developments and further reinforce coordination, in order to deliver a determined and agile policy response.
22. In addition to short-term measures, the European Union must take on the long-term challenges, in particular the growth and innovation gap between Europe and its global competitors. In this respect, the European Council invites the Commission to present, in early 2023, a strategy at EU level to boost competitiveness and productivity.

III. SECURITY AND DEFENCE

23. In line with recent European Council conclusions and following previous decisions, the European Union is taking more responsibility for its own security and, in the field of defence, pursuing a strategic course of action and increasing its capacity to act autonomously. Strengthening the industrial and technological base of the European defence sector will contribute to this.
24. The European Council underlines the importance of the transatlantic bond as reflected in both the EU's Strategic Compass and the NATO Strategic Concept.
25. The European Council took stock of work carried out to implement its previous conclusions, the guidance provided in Versailles on 10 and 11 March 2022, the Strategic Compass as well as the findings and recommendations of the joint communication on 'the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward'. This work needs to be accelerated. In this context, the European Council:
 - a) calls on the European Parliament and the Council to swiftly adopt the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act (EDIRPA);

- b) calls on the Commission and the European Defence Agency to intensify ongoing efforts to identify needs and to facilitate and coordinate joint procurement, in particular to replenish stocks, notably in light of the support provided to Ukraine;
- c) calls on the Commission to rapidly present a proposal for a European Defence Investment Programme to reinforce the capacity and resilience of the European defence technology and industrial sector, including SMEs, and to fill strategic gaps and reduce technological and industrial dependencies;
- d) calls for the implementation of military mobility infrastructure projects, including dual-use infrastructure projects, to be further accelerated;
- e) reiterates the commitment to invest in the capabilities necessary to conduct the full range of missions and operations, including a rapid deployment capacity, and calls on the Member States to make full use of collaborative instruments and frameworks to this effect;
- f) calls for investment in strategic enablers, such as cybersecurity and space-based connectivity, as well as in the resilience of critical infrastructure;
- g) calls for a strong EU Policy on Cyber Defence, building on the recent joint communication of the Commission and the High Representative;
- h) calls for the swift implementation of the EU Hybrid Toolbox, thereby strengthening the Union's ability to counter hybrid threats and campaigns effectively;
- i) calls for civilian CSDP to be strengthened, with a view to the adoption of a new Civilian CSDP Compact by May 2023.

26. The European Council reaffirms the importance of the Union's commitment to support its partners in the field of security and defence, especially through instruments such as the European Peace Facility and CSDP missions and operations. Reiterating the global dimension of the European Peace Facility, the European Council welcomes the agreement in the Council ensuring its financial sustainability.

IV. SOUTHERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

27. The European Council held a strategic discussion on relations with the Southern Neighbourhood.

V. TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

28. The European Council held a strategic discussion on transatlantic relations.

VI. OTHER ITEMS

Croatia

29. The European Council welcomes Croatia's entry into the Schengen area as from 1 January 2023.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

30. The European Council endorses the Council conclusions of 13 December 2022 on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process, and agrees to grant the status of candidate country to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Iran

31. Recalling the Council conclusions on Iran of 12 December 2022, the European Council strongly condemns the recent death penalty sentences pronounced and carried out in the context of the ongoing protests in Iran. It calls on the Iranian authorities to immediately end this practice and to annul without delay the recent sentences. The European Union strongly opposes the use of the death penalty at all times and in all circumstances, as an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity. The European Council reiterates its call on the Iranian authorities to halt the unjustifiable use of force against peaceful protestors, particularly against women.

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The European Council recalls the European Union's determination to have both Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 implemented as agreed in October 2021 and calls on the Commission to monitor ongoing negotiations of the multilateral convention (MLC) on Pillar 1 and to put forward if appropriate a proposal by the end of 2023 in case of absence of agreement on a Pillar 1 solution.