



Council of the  
European Union

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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Permanent Representatives Committee  
Subject: European Council meeting (23 and 24 March 2023)  
– Draft guidelines for conclusions

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*With a view to the forthcoming meeting of the European Council, delegations will find below the state of progress regarding the various topics on its agenda. Where possible, first indications are given on the elements the President of the European Council intends to include in the draft of the conclusions.*

*Member States are invited to provide their reactions, in order to help guide the preparations for the draft European Council conclusions which will be submitted in one week.*

## I. UKRAINE [draft conclusions]

1. The European Council reiterates its resolute condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a manifest violation of the UN Charter, and recalls the European Union's unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and its inherent right of self-defence against the Russian aggression.
2. The European Council welcomes the UN General Assembly Resolution on 'Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine', which was adopted with broad support from the international community. It reiterates its support for President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula. The European Union will continue to work with Ukraine on the 10-point peace plan.
3. Russia must stop its aggression and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. International humanitarian law, including on the treatment of prisoners of war, must be respected. Ukrainians forcibly transferred and deported to Russia, in particular children, must immediately be allowed to return safely.
4. The European Union is firmly committed to ensuring full accountability for war crimes and the other most serious crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including the crime of aggression. In this context, the European Council welcomes the agreement to create the new International Centre for Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression (ICPA) in The Hague and reiterates its support for the investigations of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

5. The European Union remains committed to maintaining and further increasing collective pressure on Russia. The European Council underlines the importance and urgency of the effective implementation of sanctions at national level and of a coordinated approach to more effectively prevent and counter their circumvention in third countries. The European Union will continue to work with partners to counter false Russian narratives and disinformation about the war.
6. The European Union stands firmly and fully with Ukraine and will continue to provide strong political, economic, military, financial and humanitarian support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes. The European Union and its Member States are increasing their efforts to help meet Ukraine's pressing military and defence needs. [The European Council welcomes the swift agreement in the Council to facilitate the immediate provision of ammunition for Ukraine, including through joint procurement and the mobilisation of appropriate funding.]
7. The European Union remains committed to supporting Ukraine's repair, recovery, and reconstruction. In this context, the European Council reiterates the EU's full support for establishing an international mechanism for compensation for damage, loss and injury, as well as a register to document evidence and claims. Together with partners, the European Union will continue to step up work towards the use of Russia's frozen and immobilised assets for Ukraine's reconstruction and for the purposes of reparation, in accordance with EU and international law.
8. The European Council condemns the continued military support for Russia's war of aggression provided by Iran and Belarus. It urges all global actors to immediately stop providing material and other support for Russia's war of aggression.
9. The European Union will continue to provide all relevant support to the Republic of Moldova, including support to help strengthen Moldova's resilience, security, economy and energy supply.

10. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has a negative impact on global food security and affordability. In that context, the European Council [welcomes] [calls for] the extension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which – together with the EU's Solidarity Lanes and the Ukrainian 'Grain from Ukraine' initiative – is instrumental in bolstering global food security.

## **II. COMPETITIVENESS, SINGLE MARKET AND THE ECONOMY**

The European Council will follow up on its conclusions of December 2022 and February 2023.

It will discuss Europe's long-term strategy to boost competitiveness and productivity and to harness the full potential of the Single Market. *[p.m. Commission communications on the Single Market at 30 and on a long-term competitiveness strategy] [p.m. Capital Markets Union]*

The European Council will review progress on the different strands of action to make the EU's economic, industrial and technological base fit for the green and digital transitions and will provide further guidance. In that context it will call for work to be taken forward on the expected proposals for a Net Zero industry act and a European critical raw materials act and will take note of the expected Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework for State aid.

The European Council is expected to hold a strategic discussion on the geopolitical aspects of trade and the contribution of trade relations to the EU's competitiveness.

The European Council will be invited to endorse the Council conclusions of 14 March 2023 on the economic governance review and invite the Commission to submit relevant legislative proposals.

On the European Semester, conclusions will:

- endorse the policy priority areas of the Annual Sustainable Growth Survey 2023 and invite Member States to reflect them in their national Recovery and Resilience Plans;
- endorse the draft Council recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area.

### **III. ENERGY**

The European Council will take stock of the action taken to address high energy prices, reduce gas demand, ensure security of supply and phase out dependency on Russian fossil fuels.

The European Council is expected to call on the Commission and the Member States to ensure preparedness and contingency planning in view of the next gas storage filling and heating seasons. In that context, it is expected to call on all stakeholders involved to make full use of the joint purchasing mechanism ‘AggregateEU’ through the EU Energy Platform to further improve the security of gas supplies at affordable prices. It will invite the Commission to promptly finalise the assessment of the emergency measures adopted in 2022 and where necessary to propose the extension of their application.

The European Council will call on the co-legislators to reach prompt agreement on all relevant proposals to accelerate the green transition and to take work forward without delay on [the proposed revision of the EU’s internal electricity market design].

#### IV. OTHER ITEMS

In the light of events, the European Council may address specific foreign policy issues.

*p.m.: migration. The Council Presidency and the Commission will inform the European Council on progress in the implementation of the conclusions on migration of 9 February 2023.*

*p.m.: Donors' Conference in support of the people of Türkiye and Syria following the earthquake*

*p.m.: UK*

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