



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

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

In accordance with Article 3(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the European Council, delegations will find attached the draft conclusions prepared by the President of the European Council, in close cooperation with the member of the European Council representing the Member State holding the six-monthly Presidency of the Council and with the President of the Commission.

The European Council held an exchange of views with United Nations Secretary-General Guterres.

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I. UKRAINE

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 and proxies 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. The European Council condemns in the strongest terms sexual and gender-based violence. Russia must immediately ensure the safe return of Ukrainians forcibly transferred or deported to Russia, in particular children.

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 through the establishment of an appropriate mechanism for the prosecution of 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[in][against] Ukraine (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 stepping up efforts to ensure effective implementation of sanctions at European and national level and is firmly committed to effectively prevent and counter circumvention in third countries. The European Council invites the Council and the Commission to strengthen all necessary enforcement instruments and to develop, together with Member States, a fully coordinated approach to that effect. The European Union will intensify its 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, without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States.]

7. The European Union remains committed to supporting Ukraine's repair, recovery, and reconstruction, in coordination with international partners. In this context, the European Council reiterates the EU's full support for establishing an international mechanism to register the damages Russia has inflicted. 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. In line with its conclusions of 23-24 June 2022, the European Council underlines the importance of proceeding with Ukraine's EU accession process.
9. The European Union will continue to provide all relevant support to the Republic of Moldova, including support to help strengthen the country's resilience, security, stability, economy and energy supply.
10. The European Council condemns the continued military support for Russia's war of aggression provided by Iran and Belarus. It urges all countries not to provide material or other support for Russia's war of aggression.
11. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its weaponisation of food have undermined global food security and affordability. In that context, the European Council [welcomes] [calls for] the extension of the UN 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

12. *[p.m.: the text for the draft conclusions on the following elements will be submitted following the presentation of the relevant Commission contributions:*

- Europe’s long-term strategy to boost competitiveness and productivity and to harness the full potential of the Single Market [including Capital Markets Union];*
- action to make the EU’s economic, industrial and technological base fit for the green and digital transitions.]*

13. The European Council held a strategic discussion on the geopolitical aspects of trade and the contribution of trade policy to the EU’s competitiveness.

14. The European Council endorses:

- [the Council conclusions of 14 March 2023 on the economic governance review, and invites the Commission to submit relevant legislative proposals, taking into account Member States’ converging views and areas identified for additional discussions;]
- the policy priorities of the Annual Sustainable Growth Survey, and invites Member States to reflect them in their National Reform Programmes and Stability or Convergence Programmes;
- the draft Council Recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area.

III. ENERGY

15. The European Council took 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.
16. Whilst the energy situation in the European Union has improved, the European Council calls 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 calls 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. The European Council invites the Commission to promptly finalise the assessment of the emergency measures adopted in 2022 and where necessary to propose the extension of their application.
17. The European Council invites 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

18. The Council Presidency and the Commission informed the European Council about progress in the implementation of the 9 February 2023 conclusions on migration.
19. Following the tragic earthquake of 6 February 2023, the European Council welcomes the [outcome of the]Donors' Conference in support of the people in Türkiye and Syria [and calls for the quick and effective disbursement of the assistance pledged].