



European Council

**Brussels, 18 December 2025
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EUCO 24/25

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: European Council meeting (18 December 2025)
– Conclusions

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

I. UKRAINE

1. The European Council held an exchange of views with Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine.
2. The European Council discussed the latest developments as regards Ukraine. It took stock of ongoing work to address Ukraine's pressing financial needs for 2026-2027, in the light of the options presented by the Commission.
3. The European Council agrees to provide a loan to Ukraine of EUR 90 billion for the years 2026-2027 based on EU borrowing on the capital markets backed by the EU budget headroom. By means of enhanced cooperation (Article 20 TEU) in respect of the instrument based on Article 212 TFEU, any mobilisation of resources of the Union's budget as a guarantee for this loan will not have an impact on the financial obligations of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.
4. The above is without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States, and takes into account the security and defence interests of all Member States, in accordance with the Treaties.
5. The text set out in document EUCO 26/25 was firmly supported by 25 Heads of State or Government.
6. The European Council will revert to this issue at its next meeting.

II. MIDDLE EAST

7. The European Council welcomes the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803 on the establishment of the Board of Peace and of a temporary International Stabilisation Force, as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. It calls on all parties to implement the Resolution in its entirety, and in line with relevant international political and legal principles. It recalls the need to stabilise the security environment in Gaza, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2803, including by ensuring the permanent decommissioning of weapons from Hamas and other non-state armed groups.

8. In this context, the European Council reaffirms the EU's strong commitment to international law and to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the two-state solution in accordance with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions where two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, live side-by-side in peace within secure and recognised borders. The European Union will contribute to all efforts towards this solution.
9. The European Union is committed to contributing to this implementation, including through an enhanced mandate for the European Union Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point (EU BAM Rafah) and the European Union Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS), as well as through engagement in the Civil-Military Coordination Centre (CMCC). It stands ready to support the establishment of the Board of Peace and will actively engage with partners on the next steps.
10. Recalling its previous conclusions, the European Council stresses the need for the rapid, safe and unimpeded delivery and sustained distribution of humanitarian aid at scale into and throughout Gaza, including via the Cyprus Maritime Corridor to supplement land routes, in accordance with international humanitarian law, and also stresses the need for the UN and its agencies, and humanitarian organisations, to be able to work independently and impartially. In this respect it calls on Israel not to implement the NGO registration law in its current form. The European Council calls in particular for essential items, such as shelter, winterisation supplies and medical items, to be allowed into Gaza.

11. The European Council underlines the need for international and regional stakeholders to provide support for the reconstruction and development of Gaza, in line with international law. Building on the first meeting of the Palestine Donor Group on 20 November 2025, the European Union will engage with all partners to contribute to recovery and reconstruction efforts and continue to support the Palestinian Authority, including in its ongoing reform agenda. In this respect, the European Council reiterates the importance of implementing the reform programme of the Palestinian Authority so that it can securely and effectively take back control of Gaza. It calls on Israel to urgently release withheld clearance revenues and extend the correspondent banking services between Israeli and Palestinian banks, both being necessary to ensure the proper functioning of the Palestinian Authority and the delivery of essential services to the population.

12. The European Council strongly condemns the massive increase in settler violence against Palestinian civilians, including violence against Christian communities, and the policies and threats of forcible displacement and annexation, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. It urges the Government of Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and protect the Palestinian population of the occupied territories. It calls on the Government of Israel to reverse the expansion of settlements, which are illegal under international law. The European Council reiterates its call for the preservation of and respect for the Status Quo of Jerusalem's holy sites. It also reiterates its call on the Council to take work forward on further restrictive measures against extremist settlers and entities and organisations that support them.

Lebanon

13. The European Council calls for de-escalation in the wider region, and underlines the need to preserve stability in Lebanon. It reiterates its support for the stabilisation of Lebanon's economic and security situation as well as its reconstruction, and supports the Government's efforts to establish the State's monopoly on holding weapons. The European Council reiterates its unwavering support for the fundamental role of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The European Council condemns the recent attacks against UNIFIL and calls for a thorough investigation. Such attacks against UN peacekeepers constitute a grave violation of international law, are totally unacceptable and must stop immediately. The European Council reiterates its call on all parties to respect and implement the terms of the 27 November 2024 ceasefire agreement and for the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. In this respect, it calls for the full disarmament of Hezbollah and other non-state armed groups in Lebanon. The European Union will continue to support the Lebanese State's sovereignty, territorial integrity and State-building efforts, including by contributing to the strengthening of the Lebanese Armed Forces.

Syria

14. One year after the fall of the Assad regime, the European Council reiterates its support for a peaceful and inclusive transition in Syria and underlines the importance of protecting the rights of Syrians from all ethnic and religious backgrounds without discrimination. It expresses concern about foreign interference in Syria's transitional process and urges all actors, both domestic and external, to fully respect Syria's unity, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with international law.

III. EUROPEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY

15. The European Council strongly condemns all recent hybrid attacks against the European Union and its Member States. In the light of Russia's and Belarus' intensified hybrid campaign, it calls for accelerated efforts to strengthen resilience, protect critical infrastructure, and prevent, deter and respond to hybrid attacks throughout the Union, using all relevant policies and instruments, including through further restrictive measures against those countries.

16. Recalling that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its repercussions for European and global security in a changing environment constitute an existential challenge for the European Union, the European Council took stock of progress in the implementation of its previous conclusions on European defence and security aimed at decisively ramping up Europe's defence readiness by 2030, reducing strategic dependencies and addressing critical capability gaps, including in the area of space, with a 360° approach. Further to the presentation of the European Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030, it reviewed ongoing work related to Member State-led capability coalitions, to priority capability areas and to launching concrete projects in the first half of 2026, including with the support of the SAFE and European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) instruments, as well as work related to strengthening the European Defence Agency. It welcomes initiatives in this regard, including the holding of the Eastern Flank summit in Helsinki on 16 December 2025.

17. The European Council welcomes the adoption of the Regulation as regards incentivising defence-related investments in the EU budget and the presentation of the Defence Industry Transformation Roadmap. The European Council calls for work to be intensified on all strands identified in October 2025. It also calls on the co-legislators to take work forward on relevant legislative proposals as a matter of priority, such as the Defence Readiness Omnibus and the recent proposal to facilitate military mobility. The European Council welcomes the agreement found on the participation of Canada in the SAFE instrument.
18. The above is without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States, and takes into account the security and defence interests of all Member States, in accordance with the Treaties.

IV. NEXT MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

19. Following the intensive preparatory work carried out during this semester, the European Council took note of the presentation of the draft Negotiating Box developed by the Danish Presidency and held an exchange of views on the future Multiannual Financial Framework.
20. It calls on the incoming Presidency to continue the work, with a view to a timely agreement. An agreement before the end of 2026 would allow for the adoption of legislative acts in 2027, which is necessary to ensure that EU funding reaches beneficiaries without interruption in January 2028.

V. ENLARGEMENT AND REFORMS

21. The European Council held a strategic discussion on the way forward on enlargement, including aspects related to internal reforms.

22. Recalling its previous conclusions, the European Council stresses the continued importance of enlargement as a geostrategic investment in peace, security, stability and prosperity. It is a driver for improving the economic and social conditions of European citizens, reducing disparities between countries, and must foster the values on which the Union is founded. Looking ahead to the prospect of a further enlarged Union, both future Member States and the EU need to be ready at the time of accession. Aspiring members need to continue their reform efforts, notably in the area of rule of law, in line with the merit-based nature of the accession process and with the assistance of the EU. In parallel, the Union needs to lay the necessary internal groundwork and reforms. This will make the European Union stronger and enhance European sovereignty.
23. As the enlargement process is moving forward, the European Council invites the Commission to present its in-depth policy reviews so that this work advances in parallel.

VI. MIGRATION

24. Recalling its previous conclusions, and following the recent letter from the President of the Commission, the European Council took stock of progress in their implementation. In this light, the European Council calls for intensified work on all strands to continue as a matter of priority, in line with EU and international law.

VII. GEOECONOMY AND COMPETITIVENESS

25. The European Council held a strategic discussion about the geoeconomic situation and its implications for the EU's competitiveness.

VIII. OTHER ITEMS

Pact for the Mediterranean

26. Thirty years after the Barcelona Process was launched, the European Council welcomes the Council conclusions of 20 November 2025 on the Pact for the Mediterranean (One Sea, One Pact, One Future). The Pact is an opportunity to reshape the EU's relations with its Southern Mediterranean partners through renewed political commitment. The European Council calls for its swift and efficient implementation, supported by the mobilisation of relevant EU policy tools and through synergies with the Union for the Mediterranean, to address common regional challenges and opportunities in a spirit of co-ownership, mutual interest and joint responsibility.

Fight against antisemitism, racism and xenophobia

27. Following the recent antisemitic attack in Sydney, the European Council extends its deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims and stands in solidarity with Australia and with Jewish communities worldwide. The European Council reiterates its condemnation in the strongest possible terms of all forms of antisemitism and hate, intolerance, racism and xenophobia, including anti-Muslim hatred. It looks forward to the upcoming presentation by the Commission of an anti-racism strategy.
28. The European Council invites the Commission and the Member States to intensify the follow-up to the Council declaration on fostering Jewish life and combating antisemitism of 15 October 2024, including as regards the protection of Jewish institutions.

Fight against disinformation and against foreign information manipulation and interference

29. Following the Joint Communication on the European Democracy Shield, the European Council recalls the importance of strengthening Europe's democratic resilience. It stresses the need to tackle disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) and to protect free and pluralistic media. In this context, the European Council highlights the legal responsibility of platforms in fighting the dissemination of disinformation and illegal content. The European Council reaffirms the EU's regulatory autonomy in the digital sphere.

Macro-regional strategy for the Atlantic

30. The European Council invites the Commission, in cooperation with Member States, to develop an EU macro-regional strategy for the Atlantic by June 2027, taking into account the existing Atlantic Maritime Strategy and the Atlantic Action Plan.
