



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 (24 and 25 March 2022)
– 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.

I. RUSSIAN MILITARY AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

[p.m. reaction to the latest developments]

[p.m. humanitarian situation in Ukraine]

[p.m. refugees]

[p.m. electricity and gas connections as well as nuclear security and safety]

[p.m. reconstruction]

II. SECURITY AND DEFENCE

1. Reaffirming the Versailles Declaration, the European Council held a strategic debate on Security and Defence, taking into account the new security situation in Europe.
2. The European Council endorses the Strategic Compass, which provides the strategic perspective for the next decade and sets out the tools and initiatives required for this new impetus by:
 - a) enabling the European Union to act more quickly and decisively when facing crises;
 - b) securing our interests and protecting our citizens by strengthening the European Union's capacity to anticipate and mitigate threats;
 - c) stimulating investments and innovation to jointly develop the necessary capabilities and technologies;
 - d) deepening our cooperation with partners to achieve common goals.

It invites the Council to immediately take work forward on the implementation of the Strategic Compass.

3. The European Council looks forward to an analysis by the Commission, in coordination with the European Defence Agency, of the defence investment gaps. This will feed into efforts to strengthen the EU's resilience and to increase its security and defence capacity through more and better investments. It invites the Council to advance work on the recent Commission proposals.
4. In order to strengthen the EU's defence capabilities, the full potential of the European Union's funding instruments, in particular the European Defence Fund, should be harnessed. In addition, measures should be taken to promote and facilitate access to private funding for the defence industry, also by making best use of the European Investment Bank.
5. The European Council will regularly assess the implementation of the Strategic Compass and progress in the area of defence. It will provide further guidance if needed.

III. ENERGY

6. The European Union will phase out its dependency on Russian gas, oil and coal imports as soon as possible. The European Council looks forward to the comprehensive and ambitious plan that the Commission will submit to this effect by the end of May 2022.
7. Sustained high-energy prices have a negative impact on citizens and businesses, which is further compounded by the Russian military aggression against Ukraine. The European Council discussed additional concrete short-term options presented by the Commission. *[p.m. to be developed further in light of Commission's input]*
8. Refilling of gas storage across the Union should start now. Member States and the Commission will urgently coordinate measures necessary to ensure adequate levels of gas storage before the next winter, and take forward the proposals by the Commission on EU gas storage policy.

9. The European Council also provided guidance on structural measures, including on how to optimise the functioning of the electricity market.
10. The European Council supports ongoing international efforts aimed at mitigating the increase of oil prices.

IV. ECONOMIC ISSUES

11. The European Council calls for work to be taken forward on the implementation of the Versailles Declaration on building a more robust economic base and fostering investment, notably by reducing our strategic dependencies in the most sensitive areas: critical raw materials, semi-conductors, health, digital and food.
12. The Single Market is the European Union's primary asset for sustainable growth, job creation and for accelerating its green and digital transitions as well as strengthening the resilience of our economies. For the Single Market to realise its full potential for the benefit of European consumers and contribute to boosting productivity and increasing competitiveness of European businesses, the European Council calls for:
 - a) completing the Single Market, in particular for digital and services;
 - b) closely monitoring and preventing bottlenecks as well as removing remaining unjustified barriers and administrative burdens;
 - c) better interconnecting ecosystems across Member States, securing and diversifying supply chains;
 - d) sustaining the EU's capacity as an international standard setter;
 - e) staunchly enforcing Single Market rules and ensuring that international companies comply with harmonised standards.

13. The European Council endorses the policy priority areas of the Annual Sustainable Growth Survey and invites Member States to reflect them in their National Reform Programmes and Stability or Convergence Programmes. It also endorses the draft Council Recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area.
14. *[p.m. contribution on food security that the Commission will put forward as soon as possible]*

V. COVID-19

15. The European Council reviewed coordination efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
16. It took stock of progress in the deployment of international cooperation on global health governance and solidarity, including through an improved roll-out of vaccines and work, under the auspices of the WHO, on a future instrument to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

VI. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

17. The European Council prepared the EU-China summit to be held on 1 April 2022. It exchanged views on relations with China in the new global context.
18. The European Council discussed the prolonged political crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

VII. OTHER ISSUES

19. The European Council will revert to all these issues at a special meeting.