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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: European Council meeting (17 and 18 October 2024)
– Draft conclusions

Following the proceedings of the Council (General Affairs), delegations will find below the draft conclusions of the European Council, in accordance with Article 3(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the European Council.

I. UKRAINE

1. The European Council addressed Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in all its dimensions and reviewed progress on the Union's comprehensive support to Ukraine and its people as Ukraine exercises its inherent right to self-defence.
2. 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 reaffirms its continued support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. It also reconfirms the European Union's unwavering commitment to providing continued political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes and as intensely as needed. Russia must not prevail.
3. The European Council reiterates its support for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the principles of the UN Charter and international law, in line with the key principles and objectives of Ukraine's Peace Formula. In follow-up to the Summit on Peace in Ukraine, the EU and Member States will continue their intensive global outreach efforts to build the broadest international support and identify steps forward. The European Council also stresses that no initiative about Ukraine can be taken without Ukraine. The European Union will remain closely involved in the matter and further joint international efforts.

4. The European Council reviewed work done on the delivery of military support to Ukraine. It calls on the Council to swiftly finalise work on the European Peace Facility assistance measures that will further incentivise the delivery of military support to Ukraine. The European Council calls for rapid stepping up of military support and acceleration in its delivery, in particular air defence systems, ammunition and missiles which are urgently needed to protect Ukraine's population and critical energy infrastructure, and underlines the importance of increasing support for Ukraine's defence industry. The European Council also welcomes the progress reached on the extension of the mandate of the EU Military Assistance Mission, takes note of ongoing work on its strategic review, and calls on the Council to swiftly adopt an updated mandate.
5. The European Council underlines the importance of living up to the commitment made at the G7 Apulia Summit to provide together with G7 partners approximately EUR 45 billion (USD 50 billion) by the end of the year to support Ukraine's current and future military, budget and reconstruction needs. In this respect it invites the High Representative and the Commission to engage with Ukraine on each of those components. Subject to EU law, Russia's assets should remain immobilised until Russia ceases its war of aggression against Ukraine and compensates it for the damage caused by this war. In full respect of the security and defence policy of certain Member States, the European Council welcomes the agreement on the use of extraordinary revenues stemming from Russia's immobilised assets, while continuing to address all relevant legal and financial aspects. It will aim at ensuring fair sharing and solidarity between G7 partners as well as with those Member States that are particularly exposed to financial and legal risks.
6. Military support will be provided in full respect of the security and defence policy of certain Member States and taking into account the security and defence interests of all Member States.

7. The European Council strongly condemns the persistent shelling by Russia of Ukraine's critical energy and civilian infrastructure. It supports all efforts, both public and private, to urgently increase Ukraine's energy security before the winter and address the immediate humanitarian and civil protection needs of the Ukrainian population while making Ukraine's energy system more resilient in the long-term. The European Council stresses that any action that endangers the safety and security of nuclear facilities is unacceptable and welcomes the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency to monitor the situation and assist in maintaining nuclear safety and security. In this context, it calls for the further integration of Ukraine's energy system with the Union's energy network, and for concrete action to be taken in this respect. The European Council acknowledges the important role played by Member States in the neighbouring region.
8. The European Council condemns the destruction of port infrastructure and attacks on commercial ships. It opposes the weaponisation of food, which undermines global food security, affecting vulnerable people and regions most in need.
9. The European Union remains ready to further limit Russia's ability to wage war. The European Council reiterates its call for the full and effective enforcement of sanctions and for further measures to counter their circumvention, including through third countries.
10. The European Council strongly condemns third countries' continued support for Russia's war of aggression and urges them to cease all assistance. This includes not only direct military support but also the provision of dual-use goods and sensitive items that sustain Russia's military industrial base. In coordination with international partners, the European Union has responded swiftly to this threat to European and global security, including with a package of new and significant restrictive measures against Iran, which includes the designation of individuals and entities involved with Iran's ballistic missile and drone programmes.

11. The European Union will continue to work closely with Ukraine and support its reform efforts on its European path.
12. The European Union remains committed to supporting persons displaced by this war, both in Ukraine and in the European Union, including through adequate and flexible financial assistance to the Member States who carry the largest burden of the medical, education and living costs of refugees.

II. MIDDLE EAST

13. The European Council is deeply alarmed by the dramatic military escalation in the Middle East and the risk this represents for the entire region. It calls on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint, put an end to all hostilities immediately and fully abide by international law, including international humanitarian law. The European Union is fully committed to helping de-escalate the situation and reduce tensions.
14. The European Union remains committed to continuing to provide its needs-based assistance to people in the Middle East with particular attention to the most vulnerable, scaling up its humanitarian engagement given the increasing needs.
15. The European Council condemns in the strongest terms the Iranian attacks on Israel on 1 October and Iran's seriously destabilising actions throughout the Middle East through terrorist and armed groups – including the Houthis, Hezbollah, and Hamas - which constitute a serious threat to regional stability. It reiterates Israel's right to defend itself and the European Union's commitment to Israel's security and to regional stability. International humanitarian law must be respected by all parties and the dangerous cycle of attacks and retaliations must end.

16. The European Council expresses its utmost concern regarding the military escalation in Lebanon, and condemns the loss of civilian life and the forced displacement caused by the escalating violence and indiscriminate attacks. It recalls the need to ensure that civilians are protected at all times, that civilian infrastructure is not targeted and that international law is respected. Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected. The European Council calls for an immediate ceasefire across Lebanon and for full and symmetrical implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. It also calls on all partners to respond to the growing humanitarian crisis in Lebanon and the European Union will continue to provide support to the people affected. The European Council reiterates the Union's strong support for the state institutions of Lebanon, including the Lebanese Armed Forces. It calls on all partners of Lebanon to contribute to strengthening the Lebanese Armed Forces and reaffirms the Union's readiness to facilitate international coordination of such efforts as appropriate.
17. The European Council expresses grave concern regarding the attacks by the Israeli Defence Forces against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which left several peacekeepers wounded. Such attacks constitute a grave violation of international law and are totally unacceptable. These attacks must stop immediately. The European Council recalls that all actors have an obligation to take necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of UN personnel and property and to respect the inviolability of UN premises at all times. The European Council supports the fundamental stabilisation role of UNIFIL in southern Lebanon, and calls on all parties to protect and support UNIFIL's important mission. The European Council urges all parties to fully uphold their obligations to guarantee the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel at all times, and to allow UNIFIL to continue to implement its mandate.

18. Following the tragic anniversary of Hamas' brutal terrorist attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023, the European Council condemns once again in the strongest possible terms such unjustified acts of deliberate violence and stands with the families of the victims and the hostages taken by Hamas.
19. The European Council reiterates its call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the unconditional release of all hostages, the urgent improvement of access and sustained distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale throughout Gaza, and an enduring end to hostilities, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2735. To this end, it supports the mediation efforts of Egypt, Jordan, Qatar and the United States. The European Council deplores the unacceptable number of civilian casualties, especially women and children, in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as the catastrophic levels of hunger and imminent risk of famine caused by the insufficient entry of aid into Gaza. It also recalls the need to fully implement the International Court of Justice orders.
20. The European Council recalls its June 2024 conclusions and strongly condemns the further escalation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, following increased settler violence, the expansion of illegal settlements and Israel's military operation. It invites the Council to take work forward on further restrictive measures against extremist settlers and against entities and organisations which support them.
21. The European Council reiterates the EU's unwavering commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace based on the two-state solution and the Union's support to the Palestinian Authority to help address its most pressing needs and support its reform agenda. The European Union will actively support and engage with international partners on concrete steps towards the implementation of the two-state solution. The European Council stresses that a credible pathway to Palestinian statehood is a crucial component of that political process.

22. The European Council affirms its full and unwavering support to the UN Secretary-General and stresses the essential role of the UN and its agencies, notably UNRWA which provides crucial support to the civilian population, both in Gaza and the wider region. It condemns any attempt to abrogate the 1967 agreement between Israel and UNRWA or to otherwise attempt to obstruct its capacity to operate its mandate.
23. The European Council also discussed the situation in the Red Sea and calls on the Houthis to stop immediately all attacks and to allow maritime security to be restored. It underlines the crucial contribution of EUNAVFOR ASPIDES in promoting maritime security and freedom of navigation.

III. ENSURING A RULES-BASED INTERNATIONAL ORDER

24. In a time of heightened conflict and tension, alongside an alarming trend of disregard for international law, the European Council reaffirms its unwavering commitment to effective multilateralism and to the rules-based international order with the United Nations at its core, steadfastly upholding the UN Charter and the rules and principles enshrined in the UN Charter, including those of sovereignty and territorial integrity, political independence and self-determination.
25. The European Council remains committed to ending impunity and ensuring accountability for violations of international law and international humanitarian law, throughout the world, and recalls the importance of supporting and implementing decisions of international courts.
26. The European Council welcomes the adoption of the Pact for the Future which aims at reinvigorating the multilateral system, and making the United Nations fit for the future.

IV. COMPETITIVENESS

27. Following its conclusions of April 2024, and in line with the 2024-2029 Strategic Agenda, the European Council calls for more efforts to enhance the Union's competitiveness, strengthen its economic resilience and achieve the full potential of the Single Market, ensuring a level playing field both internally and globally. It highlights the urgency of taking effective action.
28. The European Council calls on all EU institutions, Member States and stakeholders, as a matter of priority, to take work forward, notably in response to the challenges identified in the reports by Enrico Letta ('Much more than a market') and Mario Draghi ('The future of European competitiveness').
29. This issue will be addressed at the informal meeting in Budapest in November and the European Council will continue to regularly provide strategic guidance with a view to ensuring the implementation of our ambitious competitiveness deal.
30. The European Council endorses the integrated country-specific recommendations as discussed by the Council, thus allowing the conclusion of the 2024 European Semester.

V. MIGRATION

31. [The European Council held an in-depth strategic discussion on migration in all its dimensions and across all routes. It recalls that migration is a European challenge that requires a European response.
32. The European Council calls on the Council, the Member States and the Commission to strengthen work on all strands of action in the comprehensive approach to migration outlined in February 2023. In that regard, the European Council stresses the importance of implementing adopted EU legislation, in order to best address the current challenges.

33. The European Council also calls for enhanced cooperation with countries of origin and transit, through comprehensive mutually beneficial partnerships, to address root causes and to fight trafficking and smuggling with a view to preventing loss of life and irregular departures. Safe and legal pathways in line with national competences are key for regular and orderly migration.
34. The European Council calls for determined action at all levels to facilitate, increase and speed up returns from the European Union, using all relevant EU policies, instruments and tools, including diplomacy, development, trade and visas. It invites the Commission to propose a new legislative proposal, as a matter of urgency.
35. The European Council recalls the EU's determination to ensure effective control of the Union's external borders through all available means, including with the support of the European Union. It reaffirms its commitment to countering the instrumentalisation of migrants for political purposes.
36. In addition, new ways to prevent and counter irregular migration should be considered, in line with international law.
37. The European Council recalls the importance of the proper functioning of the Schengen area, in accordance with the revised Schengen Borders Code.
38. The European Council will revert to the matter.]

VI. MOLDOVA

39. The European Council underlines the European Union's steadfast support for the Republic of Moldova and its accession path. It commends the consistent commitment of the authorities of the Republic of Moldova to the reform process and invites them to pursue reforms and to strengthen the country's resilience and stability.

40. The European Council condemns Russia's persistent foreign information manipulation and interference to attempt to undermine democratic elections and the choice of the Moldovan people for a prosperous, stable and peaceful European future.
41. The European Council welcomes the adoption of the third package of sanctions against those responsible for actions aimed at destabilising, undermining or threatening the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Moldova. The European Council reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the Republic of Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

VII. GEORGIA

42. The European Council reaffirms the Union's readiness to support the Georgian people on their European path. At the same time, it reiterates its serious concern regarding the course of action taken by the Georgian government, which runs counter to the values and principles upon which the European Union is founded.
43. The European Council recalls that such a course of action jeopardises Georgia's European path, and de facto halts the accession process. It calls on Georgia to adopt democratic, comprehensive and sustainable reforms, in line with the core principles of European integration. The European Council will continue monitoring the situation closely.
44. The European Council expects the upcoming parliamentary elections to be free and fair, in line with international standards and with unhindered access for international and domestic election observers. The European Council stresses the need to protect free and pluralistic media.

45. The European Council reaffirms the European Union's unwavering support for Georgia's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. It underlines the Union's continued commitment to peaceful conflict resolution and its policy of non-recognition and engagement.

VIII. OTHER ITEMS

Hybrid threats

46. The European Council strongly condemns Russia's intensifying campaign of hybrid activities targeting the European Union, its Member States and partners. It welcomes the adoption of EU restrictive measures in view of Russia's destabilising activities. The European Union and the Member States will continue to strengthen their resilience and make full use of the EU hybrid toolbox to prevent, deter and respond to Russia's hybrid activities.

High energy prices

47. The European Council discussed the situation resulting from the persistently high electricity prices in some parts of Europe and invites the Commission to urgently submit proposals addressing this issue.

Sudan

48. The European Council expresses its deepest concern about the catastrophic humanitarian situation arising from the conflict in Sudan and strongly condemns the indiscriminate and direct targeting of civilians which is worsening the humanitarian catastrophe. All parties must abide by their obligations under international law to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian access. The European Council reiterates its urgent call to all parties to the conflict to seek an immediate cessation of hostilities, leading to a sustainable resolution of the conflict, through dialogue. The European Union will continue to provide humanitarian support and calls on the international community to swiftly disburse the pledges made at the International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan and neighbouring countries.

Venezuela

49. The European Council remains extremely concerned about the situation in Venezuela and the human rights violations reported following the 28 July 2024 presidential election. It urges the Venezuelan authorities to respect the democratic will of the Venezuelan people and to end violence, repression and harassment of the opposition and civil society. Political prisoners must be released. Only complete and independently verifiable results will be accepted and recognised. The European Union will continue to work with regional partners to support the Venezuelan people in their democratic aspirations. It stands ready to support a constructive and inclusive transition with guarantees for both sides, to resolve the country's political impasse and restore democratic institutions peacefully.

Morocco

50. The European Council takes note of the European Court of Justice's recent judgements relating to the 2019 EU-Morocco agreements. The European Council and the Council will continue to define foreign policy in accordance with the Treaties. The European Union remains committed to the UN process aiming to reach a just, realistic, pragmatic, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to the issue of the Western Sahara, based on compromise in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions, and in particular Resolution 2468 of 30 April 2019. The European Council reaffirms the high value the European Union attaches to its strategic partnership with Morocco and reiterates the need to preserve and continue strengthening close relations with Morocco in all areas of the Morocco-EU partnership.

Haiti

51. The European Council remains extremely concerned about the situation in Haiti. It calls for the full deployment of the Multinational Security Support Mission to assist the Haitian National Police in combating gang violence and restore the rule of law. It also calls for new targeted sanctions against individuals and entities responsible for violence, with the objective to help restore peace, security, stability, democracy and the rule of law in Haiti.

Conference of the Parties of United Nations Conventions

52. The European Council took stock of preparations for the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan (COP29), for the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Cali, to Colombia (COP16), and for the Conference of the Parties of the Convention Combat Desertification in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (COP16), and calls for ambitious action given the context of increasing damage and disruption due to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. In a demonstration of global solidarity, the European Council reiterates the Union's commitment to deliver on financing goals, and calls on third countries to also deliver their share.

Fight against all forms of discrimination

53. The European Council welcomes the approval of the Council declaration of 15 October 2024 on fostering Jewish life and combating antisemitism. It reiterates its serious concerns about recent alarming incidents and condemns in the strongest possible terms all forms of discrimination, including antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred, intolerance, racism and xenophobia.

[p.m.: EU- Gulf Cooperation Council Summit]
