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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	European Council meeting (23 and 24 October 2025) – 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. UKRAINE

1. [The European Council held an exchange of views with Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine.]
2. Recalling its previous conclusions, the European Council reaffirms its continued and unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The European Union will continue to provide, in coordination with like-minded partners and allies, comprehensive political, financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people.
3. Despite sustained diplomatic efforts towards peace over the summer, Russia has increased the intensity of its missile and drone strikes on Ukraine, particularly targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, thus demonstrating Russia's lack of real political will to end its war of aggression and to engage in meaningful peace negotiations. The European Council again urges Russia to agree to a full, unconditional and immediate ceasefire, and reiterates the European Union's support for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine based on the principles of the UN Charter and international law.
4. The European Union and its Member States will continue contributing to peace efforts, notably through the Coalition of the Willing and by intensifying their global outreach, in accordance with the European Union's aim to promote peace, as enshrined in the Treaties.

5. A Ukraine capable of defending itself effectively is an integral part of any future security guarantees. The European Union and Member States are ready to contribute to robust and credible security guarantees for Ukraine, in particular by supporting Ukraine's ability to deter aggression and defend itself effectively, based on their respective competences and capabilities, in line with international law. In this regard, the European Council welcomes the ongoing work to revise the mandates of the EUAM Ukraine and EUMAM Ukraine. Member States are committed to contributing to training and equipping the Ukrainian Armed Forces. The European Council underlines the importance of stepping up support to Ukraine in line with the EU-Ukraine Joint security commitments.
6. The European Council underlines the critical need to ensure that Ukraine remains resilient and has the budgetary and military means to continue to exercise its inherent right of self-defence and counter Russia's aggression.
7. The European Union will continue to provide Ukraine with regular and predictable financial support in the long term. In 2025, the European Union has provided for Ukraine's budget EUR 20.5 billion, of which EUR 6.5 billion have been disbursed under the Ukraine Facility, and EUR 14 billion under the G7 ERA initiative, which is repaid by the windfall profits stemming from immobilised Russian assets. Since the start of Russia's war of aggression, the European Union and its Member States have provided EUR 177.5 billion in support for Ukraine and its people.

8. The European Council is committed to finding ways to help address Ukraine's pressing needs for 2026-2027, including for its military and defence efforts. It therefore calls on the Commission to present as soon as possible concrete proposals involving the possible use of the cash balances associated with the immobilised Russian assets, in accordance with EU and international law, and underpinned by appropriate European solidarity and risk-sharing. In this context, the European Council stresses the importance of ensuring fair burden-sharing and coordination of efforts with G7 partners. 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 its war.
9. The European Council stresses the need for Member States to keep stepping up efforts to address Ukraine's pressing military and defence needs, in particular air defence and anti-drone systems, and large-calibre ammunition. It is crucial to accelerate work to further support, develop and invest in Ukraine's defence industry, including through the establishment of Ukrainian defence production in Member States, and to deepen its cooperation and integration with the European defence industry, drawing on Ukraine's unique experience and know-how.
10. All military support as well as security guarantees for Ukraine 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.
11. The European Council condemns Russia's intensified attacks on Ukraine's energy sector, in particular on gas production. It calls for the mobilisation of all efforts to urgently help address immediate needs following the attacks and to strengthen Ukraine's preparedness for winter. The European Union and its Member States will intensify the provision of humanitarian and civil protection assistance to Ukraine.

12. The European Union is determined to maintain and increase its pressure on Russia to stop its brutal war of aggression, including through sanctions ending imports of Russian fossil fuels in the EU. In this context, the European Council [welcomes the][calls for a swift] adoption of the 19th package of sanctions. The European Council also underlines the importance of further coordination with G7 partners on sanctions, and of reinforcing the anti-circumvention measures.
13. The European Council calls for further measures to disrupt the operation of Russia's shadow fleet. It calls in particular for effectively addressing the significant environmental and security risks that the shadow fleet poses, notably by enhancing the enforcement of standards related to environment and maritime safety and by strengthening cooperation with flag States.
14. The European Council strongly condemns support by third countries, and actors and entities therein, which enable Russia to sustain its war of aggression against Ukraine. The European Council condemns the continued military support provided by Iran, Belarus and the DPRK. It urges all countries to immediately cease any direct or indirect assistance to Russia in its war of aggression against Ukraine.
15. The European Council urgently calls on Russia and Belarus to immediately ensure the safe return to Ukraine of all Ukrainian children and other civilians unlawfully deported and transferred to Russia and Belarus.
16. The European Council reaffirms the EU's strong commitment to ensure full accountability for war crimes and the most serious crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.
17. The European Council reaffirms the EU's steadfast support for Ukraine's path towards EU membership, and welcomes the significant progress Ukraine has achieved so far under the most challenging circumstances. It takes good note of the assessment of the Commission that the fundamentals, internal market and external relations clusters are ready to be opened, and encourages Ukraine, the Council and the Commission to take work forward on the accession process, in line with the merit-based approach.

18. The European Council will revert to this issue at its next meeting.

II. MIDDLE EAST

19. The European Council welcomes the agreement reached on the initial phase of the Comprehensive Plan to end the Gaza Conflict put forward by President Trump, as well as the outcome of the 13 October 2025 Sharm El-Sheikh Summit for Peace.
20. Welcoming the release of all hostages, the European Council calls on all parties to engage constructively and fully implement the agreement without delay, allowing for a permanent end to hostilities. It calls for immediate, unimpeded access and sustained distribution of humanitarian aid at scale into and throughout Gaza to alleviate the dire humanitarian situation.
21. The European Union will continue to contribute to peace efforts and to actively engage with partners on the next steps. It will support the rapid, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid in coordination with international partners, notably the United Nations and its agencies. The EU stands ready to contribute to Gaza's stabilisation, recovery, and reconstruction.
22. The European Union will continue to support the Palestinian Authority, including in its ongoing reform and in view of its return to Gaza. The European Council calls on Israel to release withheld clearance revenues necessary to ensure the proper functioning of the Palestinian Authority and the delivery of essential services to the population.
23. The European Council stresses the importance of de-escalation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and calls for an end to settler violence, to the expansion of illegal settlements, and to Israel's military operation.

24. The European Council reiterates the European Union's 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. It recalls the High-Level Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution in New York co-led by France and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

III. EUROPEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY

25. The European Council took stock of work aimed at decisively ramping up Europe's defence readiness by 2030. The European Council confirmed its determination to deliver at pace and at scale on this objective, so that Europe is better equipped to act and deal autonomously and in a coordinated way with immediate and future challenges and threats, with a 360° approach.
26. Further to [the presentation by the Commission and the High Representative of the Roadmap on European defence readiness 2030], work on the priority capability areas identified at EU level must be operationalised, with the support of the European Defence Agency (EDA) and on the basis of a coherent overall approach, so that Europe develops the full spectrum of capabilities needed for modern warfare, in full coherence with NATO.
27. In doing so, the Union should reduce its strategic dependencies and strengthen the European defence technological and industrial base accordingly across the Union.
28. The European Council condemns the violation of the airspace of several Member States and stresses the importance of ensuring the defence of all EU land, air and maritime borders. The immediate threats on the EU's Eastern flank and concrete support to Member States need to be addressed as a matter of priority.

29. In light of Russia's intensified hybrid attacks and the recent violations of EU air space, the European Council underscores the importance of close cooperation among Member States to strengthen comprehensively their defence and security capabilities, and of the protection and resilience of EU critical infrastructure.
30. In this regard, to respond to the most immediate needs, the European Council considers that work should in particular focus on concrete projects to reinforce Member States' joint efforts in enhancing their anti-drone and air defence capabilities, making in particular full use of the SAFE instrument.
31. The European Council calls for accelerating the joint development of space assets and services that serve security and defence purposes, in the light of their importance for Europe's strategic autonomy.
32. The European Council calls on Member States to increasingly gear defence investment towards joint development, production, and procurement, with the support of the EDA, as demand aggregation and economies of scale are key to ramping up European defence industry production capacity, lowering costs and fostering interoperability and standardisation. The SAFE [and EDIP] instrument[s] should be fully mobilised to that end. The European Council stresses the importance of the proper functioning and further integration of the European defence market across the Union.
33. The European Council underlines the importance of close cooperation with Ukraine and of its integration with and contribution to the European defence industry, notably as regards defence innovation and cutting-edge technology.
34. The European Council stresses the need to ensure effective political oversight and coordination to keep track of progress and to intensify work by the Defence Ministers in the Council on Europe's defence readiness. This work will be informed by an annual defence readiness report, to be presented to the European Council. The report will assess progress towards closing the existing capability shortfalls, building on the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence.

35. The European Council calls on the Council to strengthen the European Defence Agency so that it can play its full role in the field of defence capabilities development, research and acquisition.
36. Recalling the commitment to substantially increase expenditure on Europe's defence and security, the European Council reviewed work on financing and on cooperation to invest more efficiently in the field of defence. It welcomes the progress achieved since March 2025 with regard to the activation of the national escape clauses, the mid-term review of the EU cohesion policy, and the SAFE [and EDIP] instruments.
37. The European Council acknowledges the progress made on the 'Defence Readiness Omnibus', welcomes the proposal on incentivising defence related investments in the EU budget and looks forward to a swift agreement. It calls on the Commission to present new proposals on simplification as soon as possible.
38. The European Council also welcomes the efforts by the European Investment Bank in stepping up, simplifying and accelerating its support to European security and defence capabilities. It encourages the EIB Group to further explore ways to finance industries, companies, and help start-ups to scale up in the security and defence sector.
39. The European Council underlines the importance of innovative technologies and disruptive solutions and calls on the Commission to present a roadmap for defence industry transformation.
40. The European Council reiterates its invitation to the Commission and the High Representative to present further proposals to strengthen military mobility throughout the Union.
41. 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.

42. The European Council will continue to provide strategic guidance and review progress on the implementation of the defence readiness objective.

IV. **COMPETITIVENESS AND TWIN TRANSITION**

43. The European Council held an in-depth discussion on how to further reinforce EU competitiveness, building on its conclusions of March and June 2025 and focussing on simplification, a competitive green transition and a sovereign digital transition. The European Council will keep all strands of the competitiveness and Single Market agenda under review.

Simplification

44. The European Council reaffirms the need to urgently advance an ambitious and horizontally-driven simplification and better regulation agenda at all levels – EU, national and regional – and in all areas to ensure Europe’s competitiveness, without undermining predictability, policy goals, high standards and the integrity of the Single Market.
45. Welcoming the progress achieved so far, the European Council urges the Commission and the co-legislators to accelerate their work, as a matter of utmost priority, on all files with a simplification and competitiveness dimension. In particular, the European Council welcomes the work done on the simplification omnibus packages on investment, CBAM, as well as stop-the-clock on sustainability reporting, battery due diligence and chemicals. It urges the co-legislators to swiftly conclude work on the proposed simplification omnibus packages on sustainability reporting and due diligence, agriculture, small mid-caps and digitalisation, defence readiness and chemical products, with a view to their adoption as soon as possible, notably on sustainability reporting by the end of the year.

46. The European Council calls on the Commission to swiftly bring forward further ambitious simplification packages among others on automotive, military mobility, digital, environment, and food safety, as well as a review of the REACH regulation.
47. The European Council also reiterates the need to avoid over-regulation and the introduction of new administrative burdens throughout the legislative and implementation processes at all levels, and calls for legislative and regulatory self-restraint.
48. The European Council calls on the Commission to intensify its efforts to stress-test the EU acquis. In this context, it invites the Commission to:
- identify additional potential for strengthening simplification and competitiveness, including in the context of the report assessing the overall situation of the banking system in the Single Market envisaged for 2026;
 - explore new proposals with the aim to streamline and accelerate planning and permitting procedures in Member States;
 - intensify simplification efforts regarding delegated and implementing acts.
49. The European Council calls on the Council (General Affairs) to assess the legislative work programme of the Commission in the light of these objectives.

A competitive green transition

50. The existential threat posed by climate change underpins the Union's commitment to the Paris Agreement and drives the Union's determination to harness the full potential of the industrial renewal and transformation of its economies and societies required to create the clean technologies, markets, industries and high-quality jobs of the future. Enhancing the Union's competitiveness and advancing the green transition are mutually reinforcing objectives that must be pursued together.

51. For such a fundamental transformation to succeed, it must be just, pragmatic and socially balanced, providing affordable solutions across the economy and throughout the Union, so as to secure Europe's competitiveness and prosperity for present and future generations.
52. The European Council recalls the need to intensify collective efforts to ensure Europe's industrial renewal and decarbonisation in a technologically neutral manner. It underlines in this context that particular attention should be paid to traditional industries, notably the automotive, shipping, aviation and energy-intensive industries, such as steel and metals and chemicals, so that they remain resilient and competitive in a global market. In this regard, it welcomes the recent Commission proposal to protect the European steel sector from unfair impacts of global overcapacity. Further efforts are also needed to strengthen innovation and the Union's competitive edge in clean and digital technologies.
53. In this context, the European Council held a strategic discussion on how to support the achievement of the EU's intermediate climate target for 2040. It invites the Commission to develop further the necessary enabling framework to support European industry and citizens throughout the transition. [*p.m.: Letter from the President of the Commission on climate and competitiveness*] It expects the co-legislators to promptly take work forward.

A sovereign digital transition

54. In the face of geopolitical shifts, rapid technological change, and growing global competition for innovation, talents and investments, it is crucial to advance Europe's digital transformation, reinforce its sovereignty and strengthen its own open digital ecosystem.

55. In this regard, the European Council recalls that the Union's values, interests, and regulatory autonomy underpin EU action, including in the digital sphere. This means the EU will continue to foster human-centric technological solutions that protect individuals and their data, and safeguard digital accountability, transparency and societal resilience. The protection of minors in the digital sphere is particularly important.
56. In addition, the Union's digital infrastructure and technological base must be protected, including by addressing risks arising from hybrid threats, cyber security challenges, and strategic dependencies. In order to avoid over-reliance on external suppliers, the European Council also underlines the importance of developing European technological capabilities and diversifying sources of critical raw materials.
57. To that end and to strengthen Europe's competitiveness, the Union must offer an environment conducive to stepping up innovation in the private sector, facilitating the emergence of startups and scaling up European technological solutions. Market fragmentation, infrastructure gaps and high energy prices continue to hinder the growth potential of this technological transformation and must also be addressed. The European Council underlines that particular efforts are required to advance the rollout of connectivity infrastructure, deepen the Single Market for electronic communications, as well as to promote the development and deployment of sustainable digital systems, networks and technologies. It also calls for digitalising the Single Market and supporting the uptake of digital technologies across the European economy.
58. The European Council takes note of the recent Commission initiatives on AI and Quantum. It invites the Commission to maintain ambition for Europe's sovereign digital transformation in its upcoming proposals, including on EU cloud and AI development.

V. HOUSING

59. The European Council discussed the various dimensions of the pressing housing challenges faced by many citizens in the European Union, including access to affordable housing.
60. The European Council calls on the Commission to swiftly present an ambitious and comprehensive plan for affordable housing, whose aim should be to support and complement Member States in their efforts.

VI. MIGRATION

61. The European Council took stock of progress in the implementation of its previous conclusions on migration[, including in the light of the recent letter from the President of the Commission.] The European Council calls for work to be intensified on all strands identified in June 2025 and on the co-legislators to take work forward as a matter of priority on relevant legislative proposals.

VII. OTHER ITEMS

Republic of Moldova

62. The European Council commends the authorities of the Republic of Moldova for safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process of the recent parliamentary elections, despite hybrid activities by Russia to undermine the country's democratic institutions. The European Union will continue to work closely with the Republic of Moldova to enhance the country's resilience and stability.

63. The European Council reaffirms the EU's steadfast support for the Republic of Moldova on its accession path and welcomes the significant progress achieved so far. It takes good note of the assessment of the Commission that the fundamentals, internal market and external relations clusters are ready to be opened, and encourages the Republic of Moldova, the Council and the Commission to take work forward on the accession process, in line with the merit-based approach.

p.m.: Pact for the Mediterranean
