



European Council
The President

Brussels, 9 December 2025

Dear colleagues,

I would like to invite you to our December European Council. We will hold crucial discussions, with a priority focus on two issues: Ukraine and security on our continent; and the European Union's multiannual financial framework for 2028-2034.

I look forward to seeing you already the day before, on Wednesday 17 December, for the **EU - Western Balkans Summit**, starting at 18h00.

We will start the meeting of the European Council with a discussion about **Ukraine**. Recent developments highlight the need for urgent EU action. At the October European Council we committed to addressing Ukraine's pressing financial needs for 2026-2027, including for its military and defence efforts. At our next meeting we have to decide, based on the ongoing preparatory work, how to implement that commitment. As I write this letter, diplomatic efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine are ongoing. In this context, we will discuss how best to continue defending Europe's interests and how to strengthen Ukraine's negotiating position. An important part of that equation needs to be increased pressure on Russia.

Secondly, I would like us to focus on the **next Multiannual Financial Framework**. The Danish Presidency has considerably advanced preparatory work. Our discussions will be an occasion to take stock of progress so far and provide guidance for the next phase of negotiations. Intense work will be necessary to reach an agreement, by the end of 2026, on the next MFF and its financing. Keeping to this timetable is important. It will allow the Union to have the new funding programmes in place right from the start of 2028. It will also demonstrate that, in a world marked by unpredictability, the European Union is able to decide in a timely and prudent way when defining the budgetary foundations for its action.

The current geopolitical context highlights the importance of **enlargement** as the EU's most important geostrategic investment in peace, security, stability and prosperity. Through the merit-based approach, reform processes have a profoundly transformative effect in the candidate countries. Given the progress some candidate countries have made in their accession paths, some may meet the necessary conditions to join the European Union in the not-too-distant future. The December European Council meeting will be a timely occasion for us to hold a discussion on the way forward.

I would also like us to exchange views on the **gloeconomic situation** and its implications for EU competitiveness. European competitiveness does not exist in a vacuum. It is important that we discuss the pressures, but also the opportunities, that arise in a world marked by rising gloeconomic competition and in which rules-based economic relations and traditional partnerships can no longer be taken for granted. How can the EU best defend itself from external economic and political pressures? How do we accelerate our agenda of trade diversification? How does the EU acquire the necessary degree of strategic autonomy for our economies to remain competitive? These are some of the questions that I would like to address at our December meeting, in the context of our ongoing discussions about the EU's competitiveness agenda.

The situation in the **Middle East** requires our continued attention. The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2803 offers an opportunity to advance towards peace. The European Union has a role to play in contributing to the full implementation of the ceasefire in Gaza, and in ensuring that this process remains on a path to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the two-state solution.

We will also take stock of the implementation of our previous decisions on **European Defence and Security**, aimed at decisively ramping up Europe's defence readiness by 2030. Recent events show that Russia and Belarus have intensified their hybrid campaign in Europe. This reminds us that we need to accelerate efforts on all strands towards our defence readiness.

Continuing our usual practice, we will also take stock of progress in the implementation of previous conclusions on **migration**. We expect the Commission President's letter to inform our discussion, as the European Union continues to deliver in this area.

As ever, I will endeavour to keep our meeting to one day. But my main priority is to deliver on the important decisions that must be taken, namely on Ukraine financing.

We will start on Thursday 18 December at 10h00 with our traditional exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament. After that, we will hear from President Zelenskyy. We will then continue our work at 27.

I look forward to seeing you in Brussels,



António COSTA