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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: European Council meeting (18 and 19 December 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. 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. The European Council commends the determination and resilience of the Ukrainian people and its leadership in resisting Russian aggression, which have prevented Russia from achieving its military objectives.
3. 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. The European Union will continue to work closely with Ukraine and support it in its efforts to fully meet all conditions. The European Union will continue to support Ukraine in building a peaceful and prosperous future within the European Union.
4. The European Union supports a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine based on the principles of the UN Charter and international law. Recalling the principles it set out on 6 March 2025, the European Council welcomes the ongoing diplomatic efforts to put an end to the war and urges Russia to agree to a full, unconditional and immediate ceasefire and engage in meaningful negotiations towards a just and lasting peace. For peace to be just and lasting, borders must not be changed by force and any future agreement must respect Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and guarantee Ukraine's long-term security and ability to defend itself.

5. The European Union and its Member States will continue to actively contribute to peace efforts, in accordance with the European Union's aim to promote peace, as enshrined in the Treaties. The path to peace in Ukraine cannot be decided without Ukraine. The European Union will decide on matters of its competence or affecting its security.
6. The European Union and Member States are ready to contribute to robust and credible security guarantees for Ukraine, notably through the Coalition of the Willing and in cooperation with the United States. This will include supporting Ukraine's ability to deter aggression and defend itself effectively. The contribution of the European Union and Member States will be based on their respective competences and capabilities and in line with international law.
7. 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 and deter Russia's aggression, also over the long term.
8. [*p.m. Ukraine financing needs 2026-2027*] 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 underlines the importance of Member States stepping up efforts to address Ukraine's pressing military and defence needs, in particular air defence and anti-drone systems and large-calibre ammunition. In this context, further support for, development of and investment in Ukraine's defence industry remains crucial, including through the establishment of Ukrainian defence production in Member States. It is also important to further strengthen cooperation and integration between Ukraine's defence industry and the European defence industry, drawing on Ukraine's unique experience and know-how. In this context, the European Council welcomes the inclusion of cooperation with Ukraine in the defence industry investment plans of Member States in the framework of the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) instrument.

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 Union remains determined to maintain and increase pressure on Russia to stop its brutal war of aggression and engage in meaningful negotiations towards peace. In this context, the European Council calls on the Council to continue working on a next sanctions package, to be adopted as soon as possible. It also stresses the importance of further coordination with G7 partners on sanctions, and of further reinforcing the anti-circumvention measures.
12. The European Council took stock of efforts to curb Russia's shadow fleet operations, which have effectively decreased Russian energy revenues[, and welcomes the recent adoption of new sanctions to this end]. It calls for further coordinated action by Member States and cooperation with G7 partners, also in relation to port and coastal states and vis-a-vis third-country flag states and the whole shadow fleet ecosystem, to further decrease Russian energy revenues and to continue to address the risks the shadow fleet poses.
13. 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. In particular, it condemns the continued military support provided by Iran, Belarus and the DPRK. The European Council urges all countries to immediately cease any assistance to Russia in its war of aggression against Ukraine, whether direct or indirect, notably through the provision of dual-use goods or components.

14. The European Council strongly condemns Russia's continued large-scale attacks on civilians and on civilian targets in Ukraine, including on infrastructure, hospitals, medical facilities and the energy system. It calls for the immediate cessation of all military activities near Ukraine's nuclear facilities, which pose a serious threat to their safety and security. The European Council also calls for the mobilisation of all efforts to help support Ukraine in repairing, rebuilding and strengthening the resilience of its energy system. The European Union and its Member States, in cooperation with partners, will intensify the provision of humanitarian and civil protection assistance, as well as of energy and relevant equipment, to Ukraine.
15. The European Council reiterates its urgent call on Russia and Belarus to immediately ensure the safe and unconditional return to Ukraine of all unlawfully deported and transferred Ukrainian children and other civilians. Other humanitarian relief efforts and confidence-building measures, notably the exchange of prisoners of war, must be part of the pathway to peace.
16. The European Union remains strongly committed to ensuring full accountability for war crimes and the other most serious crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. In this context, the European Council calls for the operationalisation of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, within the framework of the Council of Europe. It also welcomes the [signing of the] Council of Europe Convention establishing an International Claims Commission for Ukraine and calls for work to continue.
17. The European Council will revert to this issue at its next meeting.

II. MIDDLE EAST

18. 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 internationally agreed political and legal parameters. It recalls the need to stabilise the security environment in Gaza, in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803, including by ensuring the permanent decommissioning of weapons from non-state armed groups, including Hamas.
19. 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.
20. Recalling its previous conclusions, the European Council stresses the need for the rapid, safe and unhindered 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 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 and medical items, to be allowed into Gaza.

21. The European Council underlines the need for international and regional stakeholders to provide support for the reconstruction and development of Gaza. 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. 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.
22. 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. It 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.
23. 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.

Lebanon

24. 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 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 non-state armed groups in Lebanon, including Hezbollah. 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

25. One year after the fall of the Assad regime, the European Council reiterates its support to a peaceful and inclusive transition in Syria. It expresses concern over 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

26. 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.
27. 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, with a 360° approach. Further to the European Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030, it reviewed ongoing work related to Member State-led capability coalitions and priority capability areas with a view 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. The European Council also welcomes the agreement found on the participation of Canada in the SAFE instrument as well as the adoption of the Regulation as regards incentivising defence-related investments in the EU budget. It calls for work to be intensified on all strands identified in October 2025, including the Defence Industry Transformation Roadmap. It also calls on the co-legislators to take work forward on relevant legislative proposals as a matter of priority, including the Defence Readiness Omnibus and the recent proposal to facilitate military mobility. It welcomes all initiatives to accelerate work in this regard[, including the Eastern Flank summit held in Helsinki on 16 December.]
28. 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

29. Following the intensive preparatory work carried out during this semester on the future Multiannual Financial Framework, the European Council takes note of the draft Negotiating Box developed by the Danish Presidency.
30. It calls on the incoming Presidency to continue the work, with a view to reaching an agreement in the European Council before the end of 2026, allowing for timely 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

31. The European Council held a strategic discussion on the way forward on enlargement, including aspects related to internal reforms.
32. 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.

33. 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.
34. [The European Council endorses the conclusions on enlargement approved by the Council on 16 December 2025.]

VI. MIGRATION

35. 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 the light of the progress achieved so far, the European Council calls for intensified work on all strands to continue as a matter of priority.

VII. GEOECONOMY AND COMPETITIVENESS

36. 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

37. 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 EU-Southern Neighbourhood relations through renewed political commitment. The European Council calls for its swift and efficient implementation, supported by the mobilisation of relevant EU policy tools, to address common regional challenges and opportunities in a spirit of co-ownership, mutual interest and joint responsibility.

Fight against antisemitism, racism and xenophobia

38. 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 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, and looks forward to the upcoming presentation by the Commission of an anti-racism strategy.

Fight against disinformation and against foreign information manipulation and interference

39. Following the Commission's 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, it highlights the legal responsibility of platforms in fighting the dissemination of disinformation and illegal content.