



European Council

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: European Council meeting (19 December 2024)
– Conclusions

Delegations will find attached the conclusions adopted by the European Council at the above meeting.

The members of the European Council marked the 50th anniversary of the first meeting of the European Council.

The European Council held an exchange of views with the President of Ukraine.

The EU-Western Balkans Summit of 18 December 2024 marks a new momentum for the strategic partnership between the European Union and the Western Balkans.

I. UKRAINE

1. Today, more than 1000 days since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, 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.
2. The European Council reaffirms 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, and underlines the principle that no initiative regarding Ukraine be taken without Ukraine. To this end, the European Union and its Member States will maintain their intensive global outreach efforts and will participate in the discussions affecting Europe's security.

3. The European Council reviewed work done on the delivery of military support to Ukraine. To help Ukraine to defend itself effectively against Russia's aggression, the European Council calls for the urgent stepping up of efforts, in particular on the delivery of air defence systems, ammunition and missiles, as well as on the provision of necessary training and equipment for Ukrainian brigades. The European Council underlines the importance of intensifying work to further support and develop Ukraine's defence industry and to deepen its cooperation with the EU defence industry. It recalls the importance of the implementation of all components of the G7 'Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration Loans for Ukraine' (ERA) initiative, including the military needs component, and calls for decisions under the European Peace Facility to be operationalised as soon as possible. It also calls on the Council to accelerate work to strengthen the EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine.
4. The European Council welcomes the steadfast implementation of the Ukraine Facility. Total payments to Ukraine under the Facility in 2024 will amount to EUR 16.2 billion. In 2025, disbursements from the Facility are expected to reach EUR 12.5 billion. In addition, the European Council welcomes the rapid implementation of the G7 ERA initiative amounting to EUR 45 billion (USD 50 billion) to support Ukraine's current and future military, budget and reconstruction needs. Under this initiative, the European Union plans to start disbursements in January, for a total of EUR 18.1 billion in 2025. All relevant legal and financial aspects will continue to be addressed.
5. The European Council recalls that all 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.

6. The European Council strongly condemns Russia's intensified and deliberate campaign against Ukraine's energy and other civilian infrastructure which aims to weaponise the onset of winter. It calls for material support to be increased and its delivery accelerated in order to help Ukraine keep its electricity infrastructure running. In this context, the European Council commends Member States, notably Ukraine's neighbours, for their exports of electricity to Ukraine and stresses the need to continue increasing these. It also calls for further integration of the energy systems of Ukraine and of the Republic of Moldova with the Union's energy network as a matter of priority.
7. Efforts to further limit Russia's ability to wage war must continue. In this context, the European Council welcomes the adoption of the 15th package of sanctions against Russia, including measures against the 'shadow fleet'. It also reiterates its call for the full and effective enforcement of sanctions and for further means and measures to counter their circumvention, including through third countries. The European Union remains ready to step up pressure on Russia, including by adopting further sanctions. 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.
8. 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 arms transfers and deepening military cooperation between Russia and the DPRK and Iran, as well as the deployment of the DPRK's military forces to Russia and their use on the battlefield against Ukraine represent an international escalation of the war, with serious consequences for international peace and security. The European Council urges all countries to immediately cease any direct or indirect assistance to Russia in its war of aggression against Ukraine.

9. The European Union remains committed to supporting Ukraine's repair, recovery and reconstruction, in coordination with international partners. The Ukraine Recovery Conference hosted by Italy in July 2025 will be important in that context. The European Union will continue to work closely with Ukraine and support its reform efforts on its European path.

II. MIDDLE EAST

10. The European Council addressed the situation and the latest developments in the Middle East. It recalls its previous conclusions on the Middle East.
11. The European Council welcomes the ceasefire agreement of 27 November 2024 between Israel and Lebanon, following the mediation efforts undertaken in particular by France and the United States. It urges the parties to implement the ceasefire as agreed, and calls for the full and symmetrical implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. The European Council recalls in that context the fundamental stabilisation role of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in southern Lebanon. 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. The European Council calls on Lebanese political leaders to take the necessary action to overcome the political and economic impasse, including the swift election of a president.

12. The European Council expresses its deep concern over the consequences of the Israeli legislation adopted on 28 October 2024 on UNRWA's capacity to operate its mandate. The European Council stresses the essential role of UNRWA, which provides crucial support to the civilian population in both Gaza and the wider region. Continued implementation of the UNRWA Action Plan is key.
13. 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.
14. 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. The European Union is ready to contribute to all efforts towards this solution and calls on all parties to refrain from actions that undermine its viability. The European Union will continue supporting the Palestinian Authority to help it address its most pressing needs, build institutional capacities, and implement its reform agenda.

15. Following the fall of Assad’s criminal regime in Syria, the European Council stresses the historic opportunity to reunite and rebuild the country and underlines the importance of an inclusive and Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, in line with the core principles of UN Security Council Resolution 2254. In this respect, the European Union supports the work of the UN Special Envoy for Syria. Syria’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within secure borders should be fully respected, in accordance with international law. The European Council underlines the need to ensure respect for human rights, including women’s rights, non-sectarian governance and the protection of members of religious and ethnic minorities, and to safeguard Syria’s cultural heritage. It calls on all parties to preserve national unity and ensure the protection of all civilians, the provision of public services as well as the creation of conditions for an inclusive and peaceful political transition, and for safe, voluntary and dignified returns of Syrian refugees, as defined by the UNHCR. The European Council also emphasises the importance of the fight against terrorism, of the prevention of re-emergence of terrorist groups, and of the destruction of Syria’s remaining chemical weapons stockpiles. In this context, the European Council invites the Commission and the High Representative to submit to the Council options for measures to support Syria.

III. EU IN THE WORLD

16. The European Council held a strategic discussion on the EU’s global engagement and priorities in the current geopolitical context.

IV. RESILIENCE, PREPAREDNESS, CRISIS PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

17. Following the report ‘Safer together: strengthening Europe’s civil and military preparedness and readiness’, presented by Sauli Niinistö, the European Council reaffirms the importance and urgency of strengthening the resilience, preparedness, crisis prevention and response capacities in the context of the evolving threat landscape and of the increasing number of natural disasters due to climate change and environmental degradation. Building on the Strategic Agenda and the European Council conclusions of June 2023 and March 2024, the European Council considers that enhanced and coordinated military and civil preparedness and strategic crisis management are required, in an all-hazards and whole-of-society approach. This should be done in synergy with NATO where relevant, in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner and without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States and taking into account the security and defence interests of all Member States. This new preparedness mindset is necessary to reinforce the EU’s resilience, protect its values, safeguard its economic success and competitiveness, and adapt to climate change.
18. The European Council encourages further work to enhance the EU’s and its Member States’ resilience, preparedness, crisis-prevention and response capacity in a coherent manner, including with a view to the future preparedness strategy. It invites the Commission, the High Representative and the Council to pursue work on the different work strands and actions at EU level to support Member States, taking into account the specificities of different types of crises and respecting Member States’ responsibilities and competences.

V. MIGRATION

19. The European Council took stock of progress in the implementation of its conclusions on migration. It took note of the recent letter from the President of the Commission, paying particular attention to important ongoing work on: the external dimension; the implementation of adopted EU legislation and the application of existing legislation; the prevention and countering of irregular migration, including through new ways in line with EU and international law; urgent efforts to facilitate, increase and accelerate returns; safe countries of origin; the fight against instrumentalisation, human trafficking and smuggling; as well as safe and legal pathways in line with national competences. The European Council welcomes the Commission's intention to put forward a legislative proposal on returns in early 2025, calls on the co-legislators to advance as a matter of priority on files with a migration dimension, and takes note of the Commission communication on the weaponisation of migration and strengthening security at the EU's external borders.

VI. OTHER ITEMS

Enlargement and reforms

20. Recalling its previous conclusions and the Granada Declaration of 6 October 2023, and in line with its Strategic Agenda, the European Council stresses the continued importance of enlargement as a geostrategic investment in peace, security, stability and prosperity. Building on the new dynamism in the enlargement process, and in line with the merit-based approach, both the Union and aspiring members have a responsibility to make the most of this opportunity.
21. The European Council endorses the conclusions on enlargement approved by the Council on 17 December 2024.

Republic of Moldova

22. The European Council commends the authorities of the Republic of Moldova for the successful conduct of the presidential elections and of the referendum on enshrining EU accession in the Constitution, despite hybrid activities by Russia to undermine the country's democratic institutions. It welcomes the commitment of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova to European integration.
23. The European Union will continue to work closely with the Republic of Moldova to enhance the country's resilience and stability and to support its reform efforts on its European path, including through the implementation of the Growth Plan for the Republic of Moldova and the swift adoption of the Reform and Growth Facility.
24. The European Council invites the Commission to look urgently into further ways to provide assistance to the Republic of Moldova in strengthening its energy security.

Georgia

25. Recalling its conclusions of June and October 2024, the European Council reiterates its serious concerns 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. It regrets the Georgian government's decision to suspend the country's EU accession process until 2028.
26. The European Council strongly condemns the violence against peaceful protesters, politicians and media representatives. The Georgian authorities must respect the right to freedom of assembly and of expression, and refrain from using force. All acts of violence must be investigated and those responsible held accountable.
27. The European Council underlines the Union's readiness to support the Georgian people's European aspirations, and the country's path towards accession should the Georgian authorities reverse their present course of action.

Hybrid activities

28. The European Council strongly condemns Russia's hybrid campaign, including sabotage, disruption of critical infrastructure, cyber-attacks, information manipulation and interference, and attempts to undermine democracy, including in the electoral process, against the European Union and its Member States. In this context, it welcomes the adoption of the first listings under the framework for 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 all means available to prevent, deter and respond to Russia's hybrid activities.

Freedom, security and justice

29. The European Council welcomes the Council Decision to lift the checks on persons at internal land borders with and between Bulgaria and Romania as of 1 January 2025.
30. The European Council endorses the strategic guidelines for legislative and operational planning within the area of freedom, security and justice adopted by the Council on 12 December 2024.

Venezuela

31. The European Council reiterates its concern about the situation in Venezuela. It calls for the release of all political detainees and for Venezuela to uphold its commitments under international law. The European Union will mobilise all the tools at its disposal to support democracy and a peaceful and inclusive transition in Venezuela.

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Following the devastating extreme weather event in Mayotte, the European Council expresses its deepest condolences and stands in solidarity with the population of Mayotte.