

European Council meeting (26 June 2025) - Conclusions

REDACÇÃO



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To: Delegations

Subject: European Council meeting (26 June 2025)

- Conclusions

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

The European Council marks the 40th anniversary of the signature of the Schengen Agreement and stresses that the Schengen area is one of Europe's fundamental achievements, which underpins freedom of movement, enhances security, and fosters cross-border life and the Single Market.

The European Council celebrates three key milestones in the history of the European Union with the signing by Spain and Portugal of their Accession Treaties 40 years ago, the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden 30 years ago, and the signing of the Accession Treaties by Bulgaria and Romania 20 years ago. The European Council recalls the importance of enlargement as a geostrategic investment in peace, security, stability and prosperity.

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I. UKRAINE

1. The European Council held an exchange of views with Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine.
2. The European Council discussed the latest developments as regards Ukraine. The text set out in document EUCO 16/25 was firmly supported by 26 Heads of State or Government.
3. The European Council will revert to the issue at its next meeting.

II. MIDDLE EAST

4. Recalling its previous conclusions, the European Council addressed the situation and latest developments in the Middle East, in particular the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and the latest developments as regards Iran.

5. The European Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the unconditional release of all hostages, leading to a permanent end to hostilities. It deplores the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, the unacceptable number of civilian casualties and the levels of starvation. The European Council calls on Israel to fully lift its blockade on Gaza, to allow immediate, unimpeded access and sustained distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale into and throughout Gaza and to enable the UN and its agencies, and humanitarian organisations, to work independently and impartially to save lives and reduce suffering. Israel must fully comply with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. The European Council recalls the imperative of ensuring the protection of all civilians, including humanitarian workers, at all times, as well as of civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities, schools and UN premises. It deplores the refusal of Hamas to hand over the remaining hostages. The European Council takes note of the report on Israel's compliance with Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement and invites the Council to continue discussions on a follow-up, as appropriate, in July 2025, taking into account the evolution of the situation on the ground.

6. Recalling its conclusions of 17 October 2024, the European Council reiterates its strong condemnation of the escalation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, following increased settler violence, the expansion of illegal settlements and Israel's military operation. It reiterates its call on the Council to take work forward on further restrictive measures against extremist settlers and entities and organisations which support them. The European Council calls for further work on restrictive measures against Hamas.

7. The European Union remains firmly committed to a lasting and sustainable peace based on the two-state solution. 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. It will continue to work with regional and international partners to that end. The European Union will continue supporting the Palestinian Authority and its reform agenda. The European Council looks forward to the forthcoming High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution.

Iran

8. The European Union remains strongly committed to peace, security and stability in the Middle East. The European Council welcomes the cessation of hostilities and urges all parties to abide by international law, show restraint, and refrain from taking action which could lead to a new escalation. The European Union has always been clear that Iran must never be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapon and that it must comply with its legally binding nuclear safeguard obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The European Union will continue to contribute to all diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and to bring about a lasting solution to the Iranian nuclear issue, which can only be achieved through negotiations.

Syria

9. The European Council welcomes the recent lifting of economic sanctions against Syria, as part of the European Union's gradual, reversible approach. It recalls the importance of a peaceful and inclusive transition in Syria, free from harmful foreign interference, of the protection of the rights of Syrians from all ethnic and religious backgrounds without discrimination, and of transitional justice and reconciliation. The European Council condemns the recent terrorist attack at the Mar Elias Church in Damascus and calls for those responsible to be held to account. Syria's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within secure borders should be fully respected, in accordance with international law.

Lebanon

10. The European Council reiterates the European Union's support for the Lebanese people and welcomes the efforts of the new authorities to stabilise the economic and security situation. It supports the Lebanese State's sovereignty and territorial integrity and recalls the fundamental stabilisation role of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in southern Lebanon. The European Council reiterates its call on all parties to implement the terms of the 27 November 2024 ceasefire agreement and for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

III. EUROPEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY

11. Recalling its conclusions of 6 March 2025, the European Council reiterates that Europe must become more sovereign, more responsible for its own defence and better equipped to act and deal autonomously and in a coordinated way with immediate and future challenges and threats, with a 360o approach. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its repercussions for European and global security in a changing environment constitute an existential challenge for the

European Union. To deliver on its objective of decisively ramping up Europe's defence readiness within the next five years, the European Council reviewed progress in the implementation of its previous conclusions.

12. The European Council recalls that a stronger and more capable European Union in the field of security and defence will contribute positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to NATO, which remains, for those States that are members of it, the foundation of their collective defence.

13. The European Council stresses the need to continue to substantially increase expenditure on Europe's defence and security, and invest better together, noting also the commitment made at the June 2025 NATO Summit by the Member States that are also members of NATO. The European Council invites Member States to coordinate among themselves the implementation of relevant commitments. Recalling its conclusions of 20 March 2025 on continued work on the relevant financing options, the European Council reviewed the work done.

14. In this context, the European Council welcomes the adoption of the Regulation establishing the Security Action For Europe (SAFE) and the imminent activation of national escape clauses under the Stability and Growth Pact. The European Council asks the co-legislators to rapidly examine, with a view to a swift agreement, the proposal on incentivising defence-related investments in the EU budget and to advance work on the proposal to address security and defence challenges in the context of the mid-term review of cohesion policy, while recalling the voluntary basis of any such use of funds. It recalls the importance of mobilising private financing for the defence industry, welcomes the efforts by the European Investment Bank in this regard, and invites it to pursue efforts to adapt its practices for lending to the defence industry, notably by continuing to re-evaluate the list of excluded activities and by increasing the volume of available funding in the field of security and defence, while safeguarding its operations and financing capacity.

15. Considering the urgency of strengthening the European defence technological and industrial base across the Union so that it is in a position to better produce and supply equipment in the quantities and at the accelerated pace needed, the European Council reiterates the importance of demand aggregation, harmonisation of requirements, standardisation and joint procurement, as well as the proper functioning and further integration of the European defence market across the Union.

16. Work on capabilities in the priority areas identified at EU level must be accelerated, in full coherence with NATO. The European Council encourages the rapid development and delivery of collaborative projects in that regard, including by making full use of SAFE. In particular, the European Council welcomes the work to identify concrete opportunities and to aggregate demand in the framework of the European Defence Agency. It underlines the need for Member States to swiftly take

work forward, including towards the execution of most advanced short-term projects and the launch of longer-term initiatives, with the support of the European Defence Agency, the High Representative and the Commission. In this context, specific attention should be devoted to strategic enablers and innovation in the field of defence, in order to harness the full potential of new technologies.

17. The European Council encourages further work to enable the European defence industry, including SMEs and mid-caps, to scale up production. In particular, following the political agreement reached in the Council on the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) proposal, the European Council urges the co-legislators to conclude negotiations swiftly. It also encourages them to advance rapidly on the 'Defence Readiness Omnibus' proposals.

18. The European Council underlines that the defence of all EU land, air and maritime borders contributes to the security of Europe as a whole, in particular as regards the EU's eastern border, considering the threats posed by Russia and Belarus.

19. In addition, considering the threats on the rest of the EU borders, the European Council stresses the importance of their defence.

20. The European Council invites the Commission and the High Representative to present further proposals to strengthen military mobility, thereby allowing defence equipment and personnel to be moved efficiently across the Union.

21. The European Council underlines the importance of working together with like-minded partners, who share our foreign and security policy goals. It welcomes in that regard the EU's recent Security and Defence Partnerships with the UK and Canada.

22. The European Council will review progress at its October 2025 meeting and discuss the next steps in the implementation of its defence readiness objective. It invites the Commission and the High Representative to present a roadmap to that end.

23. 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. EU IN THE WORLD

24. The European Council discussed preparations for upcoming summits with third countries and relations with partners, in the light of the current global political and economic context.

V. COMPETITIVENESS

25. The European Council exchanged views on economic developments. It underlines that boosting Europe's competitiveness and further integrating the Single Market are key for sustaining Europe's prosperity and social model, and will contribute to strengthening the EU's global influence and position as a predictable, reliable and credible partner, including by enhancing the international role of the euro.

26. Recalling its conclusions of 20 March 2025, the European Council calls for the further strengthening of EU competitiveness, including through innovation and the promotion of European technological leadership, especially in frontier technologies, to close the EU productivity gap, deepening of the Single Market and enhancing the Union's industrial base, ensuring a level playing field.

27. The European Council reaffirms the commitment to the objectives of the Single Market and reiterates its calls to remove remaining barriers, in particular in the areas of services and goods, including essential goods, to overcome fragmentation, to prevent new barriers and to improve the application and enforcement of Single Market rules. In this context, the European Council welcomes the Commission's 'Strategy for making the Single Market simple, seamless and strong' and its 'EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy' and calls for work on implementation to begin swiftly.

28. The European Council reaffirms that particular attention should be paid to the challenges faced by traditional industries, notably the automotive, shipping, aviation and energy-intensive industries, such as steel and metals and chemicals. It also underlines that SMEs will remain central to Europe's economic and social fabric. The European Council recalls the importance of advancing decisively on the Savings and Investment Union.

29. In this context, the European Council invites the Council, the Commission and the European Central Bank, as appropriate with the Eurogroup, to take work forward to reinforce the international role of the euro, including as a reserve currency and a transaction currency.

30. The European Council underlines the key role of an ambitious and horizontally driven simplification and better regulation agenda in ensuring Europe's competitiveness. The European Council stresses the importance of a 'simplicity by design' approach. In this regard, it recalls the need for continued efforts at all levels – EU, national and regional – to ensure a clear, simple, smart and innovation- and SME-friendly regulatory framework, without undermining predictability, policy goals and high standards. The European Council welcomes the progress achieved so far and urges the co-legislators to maintain the momentum, with a view to swiftly agreeing the simplification packages presented by the Commission. It

welcomes the intention of the Commission to follow up with further initiatives. The European Council calls on the Commission and the co-legislators to avoid over-regulation and the introduction of administrative burdens, throughout the legislative and implementation processes.

31. In the light of global instability and pressure on energy markets, and their impact on Europe's competitiveness, the European Council reiterates the importance of building a genuine Energy Union before 2030 with a fully integrated and interconnected EU energy market, ensuring energy security and resilience as well as the security of supply of affordable and clean energy for all Member States, including through robust, reliable and secure energy systems and increased energy production.

32. The European Council reiterates the importance, for Europe's competitiveness and strategic autonomy, of reducing energy dependencies, and welcomes the progress achieved since 2022. In this context, the European Council underlines the importance of security of supply, affordability and legal certainty and of addressing Member States' concerns, in a spirit of solidarity, including with a view to ensuring economically viable alternative energy transit routes, notably taking the specificities of landlocked countries into account. The European Council calls on the Commission to support Member States in addressing these concerns, and welcomes the process agreed between the Commission and Slovakia, inviting other Member States to support the agreed objectives, as relevant.

33. In the context of the European Semester, the European Council discussed the integrated country-specific recommendations on the basis of a horizontal note.

34. The European Council welcomes the fulfilment by Bulgaria of all the convergence criteria as set out in the Treaty. It endorses the Commission's proposal that Bulgaria adopt the euro on 1 January 2026 and invites the Council to swiftly adopt the relevant Commission proposals.

35. The European Council will revert to competitiveness and the green and digital transitions in October 2025 to assess progress and provide further guidance.

VI. MIGRATION

36. Recalling its previous conclusions, the European Council took stock of progress in their implementation, including in the light of the recent letter from the President of the Commission, and encourages an intensification of work in particular on: the external dimension, notably through comprehensive partnerships; 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; efforts to facilitate, increase and accelerate returns, using all relevant EU policies, instruments and

tools; the concepts of safe third countries and safe countries of origin; the fight against instrumentalisation, human trafficking and smuggling; visa policy alignment by neighbouring countries; as well as safe and legal pathways in line with national competences. The European Council recalls the EU's determination to strengthen security at its external borders and ensure their effective control, in line with EU and international law.

37. In particular, it invites the co-legislators to continue examining the Commission's recent legislative proposals. It takes note of ongoing discussions on returns, on the establishment of a list of safe countries of origin at Union level, and on the application of the safe third country concept.

VII. REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

38. The European Council looks forward to the first Moldova-EU Summit to be held on 4 July 2025 and reiterates the European Union's firm support for the Republic of Moldova's sovereignty, territorial integrity, resilience and economic development. The European Union will continue to work closely with the Republic of Moldova to enhance the country's resilience and stability in the face of persistent destabilising activities by Russia, including hybrid attacks, aimed at undermining the country's democratic institutions.

39. The European Council reiterates the European Union's steadfast support for the Republic of Moldova on its accession path. The European Council commends the Republic of Moldova for the pace of its accession-related reforms, welcomes the significant progress achieved, and encourages the Republic of Moldova and the Commission to intensify work in the accession process. The European Council invites the Council to take the next steps in the accession process in line with the merit-based approach, with clusters being opened when the conditions are met. It takes good note of the assessment of the Commission that the fundamentals cluster is ready to be opened.

VIII. WESTERN BALKANS

40. The European Council held an exchange of views on the situation in the Western Balkans and recalls its previous conclusions. The European Union will continue to work closely with the Western Balkans and support their reform efforts on their paths towards EU membership. The European Council remains committed to advancing the gradual integration between the European Union and the region during the enlargement process itself in a reversible and merit-based manner. The future of the Western Balkans is in the European Union.

IX. INTERNAL SECURITY

41. Serious and organised crime, and terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism, both online and offline, represent a major threat to European citizens and the security of Member States.

42. The European Council underlines that criminal infiltration of legal business structures has a detrimental impact on public finances and the Single Market as a whole.

43. The European Council calls on the EU institutions and the Member States to mobilise all relevant policy areas at national and EU level and to fully use all existing instruments to combat these phenomena.

44. Following the presentation by the Commission of its communication on the development of a European Internal Security Strategy and the guidance provided in the Council, the European Council invites the EU institutions and the Member States to take further action where necessary, notably by strengthening law enforcement and judicial cooperation, including on effective access to data for law enforcement purposes, and by ensuring information exchange and through cooperation with third countries.

X. PREPAREDNESS

45. The European Council takes note of the Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative on the European Preparedness Union Strategy. It reaffirms the importance and urgency of this issue and encourages the Member States to enhance their resilience, preparedness and crisis prevention and response capacity in a coherent manner, in an all-hazards and whole-of-society approach, taking into account the evolving risk and threat landscape. The European Council invites the Council and the Commission to continue work on the contribution of EU policies to resilience and preparedness in the relevant fields, including the resilience of critical infrastructure, respecting Member States' responsibilities and competences. It recalls the specificities of different types of crises and the core responsibility of Member States in the management of such crises. In this regard, the European Council invites the Council to provide guidance for the Commission to consider improvements to the support provided by the European Union to Member States in civil protection, as well as in other relevant policy areas where EU support provides clear added value. It invites the Council, the Commission and the High Representative to report back regularly on progress.

XI. HYBRID ACTIVITIES

46. The European Council strongly condemns all types of hybrid activities against the European Union and its Member States as well as against its partners. It condemns in particular Russia's continued hybrid campaign, including sabotage, disruption of critical infrastructure, cyber-attacks, information manipulation and interference, and attempts to undermine democracy, including in the electoral process. In this context, the European Council welcomes the adoption of additional listings under the framework for restrictive measures in view of Russia's destabilising activities, and the broadened scope of this regime. The European Union and the Member States will continue to strengthen their resilience and make full use of all means available, including the EU hybrid toolbox, to specifically prevent, deter and respond to Russia's hybrid threats.

XII. OTHER ITEMS

Black Sea

47. The European Council reaffirms the importance of security and stability in the Black Sea and welcomes the presentation by the Commission and the High Representative of the Joint Communication on the European Union's strategic approach to the Black Sea region. The European Council, in line with its relevant conclusions, invites the Council, the Commission and the High Representative to take work forward swiftly.

Rules-based international order

48. Marking the 80th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter, the European Council reaffirms the European Union's steadfast commitment to effective multilateralism and to the rules-based international order with the United Nations at its core, as well as its support to the institutions upholding international law, including by effectively protecting international courts and their officials.

Global agenda

49. The European Council welcomes the outcome of the UN Ocean Conference, held in Nice from 9 to 13 June 2025. Following the presentation by the Commission of a European Ocean Pact, it invites the Council to take work forward.

50. The European Council looks forward to the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Seville from 30 June to 3 July 2025, which will be an important step towards putting in place a renewed global financing

framework for sustainable development.

51. The European Council welcomes the outcomes of the Gavi High-Level Pledging Summit held on 25 June 2025 and reaffirms the EU's commitment to advancing global health security, in order to enhance our collective preparedness, response capability and resilience to future health threats. The European Union will continue to work towards a more effective, coordinated, and resilient global health system.

External relations

52. The European Council addressed the worrying situation in Libya, and its possible consequences also in terms of European security, as well as concerning migratory flows. It reaffirms the European Union's steadfast support for Libya and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya in advancing national reconciliation, institutional unity, and a transparent, inclusive dialogue anchored in Libyan ownership and consensus. The European Council recalls that the Türkiye-Libya Memorandum of Understanding on the delimitation of maritime jurisdictions in the Mediterranean Sea infringes upon the sovereign rights of third States, does not comply with the Law of the Sea and cannot produce any legal consequences for third States.

53. The European Council held an exchange of views on the Sahel. The deteriorating security situation remains a source of concern. The European Council underlines that the stability of the Sahel and the wider region, including neighbouring coastal states, is crucial for the security and prosperity of the people living in the Sahel as well as for the European Union. The European Council welcomes ongoing work, including by the EU Special Representative, on a renewed approach to the EU's contribution in this regard.