

EUROPEAN COUNCIL CONCLUSION ON COVID-19 ENERGY TRADE & EXTERNAL RELATIONS

27 LEADERS ON 21-22 OCTOBER IN BRUSSELS

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USPA NEWS - At today's European Council, of 21-22 October 2021, the twenty seven leaders are addressing in priority, energy prices, as oil and gas are rising up, recently, « It is important for member states to cooperate to see what measures can be taken at national & EU level. We are firm on the principles of Rule of Law,. We have the tools but we must remain committed to dialogue. Charles Michel President of European Council, stated. He added that he spoke to President Xi of China today. « On EU-China relations, despite differences, dialogue remains crucial. Agreed to hold EU-China summit and reinforce our dialogue ». EU leaders have also taken stock of the COVID-19 epidemiological situation and review progress on the EU's digital agenda. Here are the conclusions on COVID-19, Energy, Trade and External Relations, to be tackled amid the agenda, of this summit. The Press conference, shall be held tomorrow, on 22 October morning. Source: European Council

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I. COVID-19

1. Vaccination campaigns around Europe have brought about significant progress in the fight against COVID-19. Nevertheless the situation in some Member States remains very serious. In order to further increase vaccination rates throughout the Union, efforts to overcome vaccine hesitancy should be stepped up, including by tackling disinformation, notably on social media platforms. It is necessary to remain vigilant regarding the emergence and spread of possible new variants.
2. In light of the development of the epidemiological situation, the European Council calls for further coordination to facilitate free movement within, and travel into, the EU, and for a revision of the two Council recommendations. It encourages the Commission to accelerate its work regarding mutual recognition of certificates with third countries.
3. Based on the experiences of the COVID-19 crisis, the EU's resilience to and horizontal preparedness for crises must be strengthened. To ensure better prevention of, preparedness for and response to future health emergencies in the EU, the European Council calls for the conclusion of the negotiations on the Health Union legislative package and for ensuring that Member States are adequately involved in the governance of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA). It recalls the need to swiftly take work forward on access to medicines across Member States.
4. The European Council reiterates the EU's continued commitment to contributing to the international response to the pandemic and to ensuring access to vaccines for all. It calls for the rapid removal of obstacles hampering the global roll-out of vaccines, and invites the Commission to further engage directly with manufacturers in this respect. This will allow Member States to speed up the delivery of vaccines to countries most in need. The EU will continue to support the production and uptake of vaccines in partner countries.
5. In the context of the upcoming G20 meeting and in view of the special session of the World Health Assembly in November, the European Council underlines its support for a strong, central role of the World Health Organization in future global health governance and for the objective of agreeing an international treaty on pandemics.

III. ENERGY PRICES-----

11. The European Council addressed the recent spike in energy prices and considered the impact of the price rises on citizens and businesses, especially our vulnerable citizens and SMEs, striving to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
12. The toolbox presented in the Commission Communication on tackling rising energy prices contains useful measures for both the

short and the longer term.

13. The European Council invites:

- the Commission to study the functioning of the gas and electricity markets, as well as the EU ETS market, with the help of the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA). Subsequently, the Commission will assess whether certain trading behaviours require further regulatory action;
- the Member States and the Commission to urgently make the best use of the toolbox to provide short-term relief to the most vulnerable consumers and to support European companies, taking into account the diversity and specificity of situations of Member States;
- the Commission and the Council to swiftly consider medium and long-term measures that would contribute to energy at a price that is affordable for households and companies, increase the resilience of the EU's energy system and the internal energy market, provide security of supply and support the transition to climate neutrality, taking into account the diversity and specificity of situations of Member States; and
- the European Investment Bank to look into how to speed up investment in the energy transition, within its current capital headroom, with a view to reducing future disruption risks and meeting Europe's global connectivity ambitions.

14. The extraordinary meeting of the TTE Council (Energy) on 26 October 2021 will take this work forward immediately. The European Council will keep the situation under review and revert to it in December.

V. TRADE

22. The European Council held a strategic discussion on EU trade policy.

VI. EXTERNAL RELATIONS-----

23. The European Council discussed the preparations for the upcoming ASEM Summit on 25-26 November 2021. In this context, it supports the EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and invites the Council to ensure its swift implementation.

24. The European Council also discussed preparations for the Eastern Partnership Summit, which will be held on 15 December 2021. The EU's relations with this region remain of key strategic importance. The European Council reiterates its call on the Belarusian authorities to release all political prisoners.

25. Ahead of COP26 in Glasgow, the European Council calls for an ambitious global response to climate change. It is essential to keep the 1.5°C global warming limit within reach. The European Council therefore calls upon all Parties to come forward with, and implement, ambitious national targets and policies. It urges in particular major economies that have not yet done so to communicate or update enhanced and ambitious nationally determined contributions in time for COP26 and to present long-term strategies towards reaching net zero emissions by 2050. The European Council recalls the commitment by the EU and its Member States to continue scaling up their climate financing. It calls on other developed countries to urgently increase their contribution to the collective climate finance goal of USD 100 billion per year through to 2025.

26. The European Council also took note of preparations for the meeting of COP15 on biological diversity in Kunming. It calls for an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework in order to halt and reverse biodiversity loss." Source: European Council

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