



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 11 October 2021
(OR. en)

11570/21

LIMITE

CO EUR-PREP 27

NOTE

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

Subject: European Council meeting (21 and 22 October 2021)
– 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. COVID-19

1. Vaccination campaigns around Europe have brought about significant progress in the fight against COVID-19. Nevertheless it is necessary to remain vigilant regarding the emergence and spread of possible new variants. In order to further increase vaccination rates throughout the Union, efforts to overcome vaccine hesitancy should be stepped up, including by tackling disinformation.
2. In light of the development of the epidemiological situation, the EU calls for further coordination on free movement and travel to the European Union and for a revision of the two Council recommendations. It encourages the Commission to continue its work regarding mutual recognition of certificates with third countries.
3. 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).
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. 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 WHO in future global health governance and for the objective of agreeing an international treaty on pandemics.

II. DIGITAL

6. The European Council recalls the EU's goal to ensure Europe's digital transformation that will drive our economic growth, job creation and competitiveness and strengthen our digital sovereignty. This will reinforce our resilience and facilitate the green transition. To this end, the European Council underlines the need for inclusive and sustainable digital policies, and in particular to focus on digital skills and education.
7. The European Council calls for the swift examination of the Commission's proposal for a Decision establishing the 2030 Policy programme "Path to the Digital Decade", implementing the Digital Compass.
8. The European Council reviewed progress on the digital agenda and key legislative files. It encourages the co-legislators to reach agreement on the Roaming Regulation by the end of the year, and invites them to continue work on the Digital Services Act and Digital Market Act proposals with a view to reaching an ambitious agreement as soon as possible. Furthermore, the European Council stresses the importance of making rapid progress on other existing and future initiatives, in particular:
 - unlocking the value of data in Europe, notably through a comprehensive regulatory framework;
 - implementing the remaining measures necessary to establish specific sectoral data spaces, as set out in the European strategy for data of February 2020, and establishing a roadmap for this process;
 - establishing a regulatory framework for artificial intelligence in order to accelerate the uptake of this technology by both the private and public sector while ensuring safety and full respect of fundamental rights;

- setting common standards for and agreeing on a coordinated approach for a European Digital Identity framework; and
 - promoting the creation of a cutting-edge European microchip ecosystem, from design to production, and building further resilience, including regarding raw materials, since this is critical to avoid shortages which hamper our digital transformation. In this context the European Council looks forward to the upcoming proposal on the European Chips Act.
9. The European Council addressed the marked increase of malicious cyber activities aimed at undermining our democratic values and the security of the core functions of our societies. It reiterates its unwavering commitment to pursue democratic values, both online and offline. In this context, the European Council reaffirms the EU’s commitment to an open, free, stable and secure cyberspace and urges countries around the globe to adhere to and enforce these norms. It calls for advancing work on the proposal for a revised Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems, the proposed Directive on the resilience of Critical Entities and the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox. It stresses the need for effective coordination and preparedness in the face of cybersecurity threats. In this context, it underlines the importance of further developing the EU cybersecurity crisis management framework and an efficient EU level response to large-scale cybersecurity incidents and crises, including by exploring the potential of a Joint Cyber Unit. The European Council looks forward to the outcome of the ongoing revision of the EU Cyber Defence Policy Framework.
10. The European Council stresses the importance of digital connectivity - including through secured space based connectivity - and global partnerships as tools to advance our interests and values on the global stage. We should develop and promote a “European Trusted Connectivity” model based on EU values, trust, transparency and accountability.

III. ENERGY PRICES

11. The European Council addressed the recent increase in energy prices. *[to be further developed]*

IV. MIGRATION

12. Following the European Council conclusions of 24 and 25 June 2021, eight action plans for countries of origin and transit have been presented. The Commission and the EEAS, together with Member States as appropriate, should now make those plans operational and implement them without delay. The European Council expects the action plans to be underpinned by adequate financial support and reiterates its request to the Commission to report to the Council on its intentions in this respect.
13. In this regard, the best possible use should be made of at least 10% of the NDICI financial envelope, as well as funding under other relevant instruments, for actions related to migration.
14. In line with its March 2021 statement and its June 2021 conclusions, the European Council reiterates its expectation that the financing for Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and other parts of the region under relevant instruments will be mobilised in a timely manner.
15. The European Council condemns and rejects any attempt by third countries to instrumentalise migrants for political purposes.
16. The EU remains determined to fully control its external borders so as to prevent illegal migration and reduce secondary movements.

V. TRADE

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

VI. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

18. The European Council discussed the preparations for the upcoming ASEM Summit on 25-26 November 2021. The EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region was addressed in this context. Work on EU cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region should be taken forward by the Council.
19. The European Council also discussed preparations for the Eastern Partnership Summit, which will be held on 15 December 2021.
20. Ahead of COP26 in Glasgow, the European Council calls for an ambitious global response to climate change. It calls upon all Parties to come forward with ambitious national targets and policies, and urges in particular major economies that have not yet done so to communicate or update enhanced and ambitious nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in time for COP26, to present long-term strategies towards reaching net zero emissions by 2050 and to meet their commitments on climate finance.
21. The European Council also took note of preparations for the meeting of COP15 on biological diversity in Kunming, and called for an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework aiming to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

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The Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism on 13 October is a reminder that no effort must be spared in fighting all forms of antisemitism, racism and xenophobia.