



European Council

**Brussels, 25 May 2021
(OR. en)**

EUCO 5/21

**CO EUR 3
CONCL 3**

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Special meeting of the European Council (24 and 25 May 2021)
– Conclusions

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

I. COVID-19

1. The pace of vaccinations has accelerated across the EU and should be sustained. This, along with an improvement in the general epidemiological situation, will allow for a gradual reopening of our societies. However, we need to stay vigilant regarding the emergence and spread of variants and to take action as necessary. Ongoing work to step up vaccine production and secure adequate supply throughout the EU will be key.
2. Efforts to ensure a coordinated approach should continue ahead of the summer. In that context, the European Council welcomes the agreement reached on the EU Digital COVID Certificate and calls for its rapid implementation. As a next step, with a view to facilitating free movement in the EU, it calls for the revision by mid-June of the Council Recommendation on travel within the EU. It welcomes the revision of the Council Recommendation on non-essential travel into the EU.
3. The impact of the pandemic will only be contained through a comprehensive global response. The EU is the largest exporter of COVID-19 vaccines to the world and will continue its efforts to increase global vaccine production capacities in order to meet global needs. The European Council calls for work to be stepped up to ensure global equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and supports COVAX's leading role in that respect. The EU and its Member States are committed to accelerating vaccine sharing to support countries in need, with the aim of donating at least 100 million doses by the end of the year, and to helping to develop local manufacturing capacity in line with the Rome Declaration of the Global Health Summit.

II. CLIMATE CHANGE

4. The European Council reaffirms its conclusions of 10-11 December 2020. It welcomes the agreement reached by the co-legislators on the Climate Law.
5. The European Council invites the Commission to swiftly put forward its legislative package together with an in-depth examination of the environmental, economic and social impact at Member State level.
6. The EU welcomes the United States' renewed commitment to the Paris Agreement. The EU underlines its readiness to seize the global momentum and calls on its international partners, in particular G20 members, to increase their ambition ahead of the COP26 meeting in Glasgow.
7. The European Council will revert to the matter at an appropriate time after the Commission's proposals have been submitted.

III. BELARUS

8. The European Council strongly condemns the forced landing of a Ryanair flight in Minsk, Belarus, on 23 May 2021 endangering aviation safety, and the detention by Belarusian authorities of journalist Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega.
9. The European Council:
 - demands the immediate release of Raman Pratasevich and Sofia Sapega and that their freedom of movement be guaranteed;
 - calls on the International Civil Aviation Organization to urgently investigate this unprecedented and unacceptable incident;
 - invites the Council to adopt additional listings of persons and entities as soon as possible on the basis of the relevant sanctions framework;

- calls on the Council to adopt further targeted economic sanctions and invites the High Representative and the Commission to submit proposals without delay to this end;
- calls on all EU-based carriers to avoid overflight of Belarus;
- calls on the Council to adopt the necessary measures to ban overflight of EU airspace by Belarusian airlines and prevent access to EU airports of flights operated by such airlines;
- stands in solidarity with Latvia following the unjustified expulsion of Latvian diplomats.

10. The European Council will remain seized of the matter.

IV. RUSSIA

11. The European Council held a strategic debate on Russia.
12. It condemns the illegal, provocative and disruptive Russian activities against the EU, its Member States and beyond. It reaffirms the EU's unity and solidarity in the face of such acts as well as its support to Eastern partners.
13. The European Council expresses its solidarity with the Czech Republic and supports its response.
14. The European Council reaffirms its commitment to the five principles governing EU policy vis-à-vis Russia. It invites the High Representative and the Commission to present a report with policy options on EU-Russia relations, in line with these principles, with a view to its meeting in June 2021.
15. The EU will continue coordination with like-minded partners.

V. UK

16. The European Council welcomes the entry into force of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement on 1 May 2021. This Agreement, together with the Withdrawal Agreement and its Protocols, provides the framework for our relations with the UK. Both Agreements should be fully and effectively implemented and their governance structures made operational.
17. The two Agreements allow for the EU to have as close as possible a partnership with the UK, while recognising that a non-member of the EU cannot enjoy the same benefits as a member and that the relationship must be based on a balance of rights and obligations at all times. Relations with the UK should remain mutually beneficial and can under no circumstances undermine the integrity of the Single Market, the Customs Union or the EU's decision-making autonomy. The European Council calls on the UK to respect the principle of non-discrimination among Member States.
18. The European Council invites the Commission to continue its efforts to ensure full implementation of the Agreements, including in the areas of EU citizens' rights, fisheries and level playing field, making full use of the instruments under the Agreements, in continuous coordination and permanent dialogue with the Council and its preparatory bodies in accordance with established practice.
19. The European Council will remain seized of the matter and the EU will continue to be united in its engagement with the UK.

VI. MIDDLE EAST

20. We welcome the ceasefire that should bring an end to the violence. The EU will continue to work with international partners to restart a political process. The EU reiterates its firm commitment to the two-state solution.

VII. MALI

21. The European Council associates itself with the declaration of the ECOWAS and the African Union and strongly condemns the kidnapping of the President of the Transition of Mali and the Prime Minister and calls for their immediate release.
 22. The European Union is ready to consider targeted measures against political and military leaders who obstruct the Malian transition.
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