

EUROPEAN COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON COVID-19 AND CLIMATE CHANGE

15 OCTOBER 2020

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USPA NEWS - The European Council defines the general political orientations and priorities of the EU. Not being one of the legislative institutions of the EU, it does not take part in negotiations on or adoption of EU legislation. Instead, it sets the EU's agenda for action, usually by adopting conclusions at European Council meetings highlighting areas of concern and actions to be taken.

I. COVID-19-----

1. The European Council assessed the current epidemiological situation, which is unprecedented and gives rise to very serious concern.

2. It welcomed the progress achieved so far on overall coordination at EU level against COVID-19, including the recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement. It calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to continue the overall coordination effort based on the best available science, notably regarding quarantine regulations, cross-border contact tracing, testing strategies, the joint assessment of testing methods, the mutual recognition of tests, and the temporary restriction on non-essential travel into the EU. The European Council will regularly revert to this matter.-----

3. Welcoming the work at EU level on the development and distribution of vaccines, the European Council reiterates the need for a robust authorisation and monitoring process, the building of vaccination capacity in the EU, and fair and affordable access to vaccines. The European Council also encourages further cooperation at global level.

II. EU-UK RELATIONS-----

European Council conclusions on EU-UK relations, 15 October 2020

III. CLIMATE CHANGE-----

10. To meet the objective of a climate-neutral EU by 2050 in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, the EU needs to increase its ambition for the coming decade and update its climate and energy policy framework. In that context, the European Council discussed the Commission's Communication on "Stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition", including the proposed emissions reduction target of at least 55% by 2030, and the actions required to achieve that ambition.

11. Recalling its previous conclusions, the European Council considers that the updated target should be delivered collectively by the EU in the most cost-effective manner possible. All Member States will participate in this effort, taking into account national circumstances and considerations of fairness and solidarity. All relevant EU legislation and policies need to contribute to the new 2030 target and to the fulfilment of the climate neutrality objective, while respecting a level playing field and preventing carbon leakage.

12. The European Council invites the Council to take work on this agenda forward. It invites the Commission to conduct in-depth consultations with Member States to assess the specific situations and to provide more information about the impact at Member States' level. The European Council will return to the issue at its December meeting with a view to agreeing a new emissions reduction target for 2030 and the submission of the EU's updated nationally determined contribution (NDC) to the UNFCCC before the end of the year.-----

13. The European Council calls upon all other Parties to also submit an updated NDC. It underlines the importance of strong coordinated action through active European climate diplomacy, with a view to joining forces on the global stage to further advance the cause of fighting climate change. Source: European Council

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