



Council of
the European
Union

Brussels, 23 April
2022

1/22

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: European Council meeting (23 April 2022) – Conclusions

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

Sponsors: The Republic of Austria, the Kingdom of Sweden and the Republic of Lithuania

Signatories: The Kingdom of Belgium, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Finland, the Republic of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Ireland, the Republic of Italy, the Republic of Latvia, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Republic of Malta, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Commonwealth of Poland, the Republic of Portugal, Romania, the Republic of Slovakia, the Republic of Slovenia and the Kingdom of Spain.

I. TRANSPORT SUBSIDIES:

1. The European Council calls upon Member States to follow the example of existing measures in European Union countries by establishing a commuter-friendly ticket allowance scheme, which will promote the use of carbon-neutral transportation. Commuters will be divided into several groups based on their travelling time to inner cities. Governments will provide monthly allowances and thus enable sustainable transportation to all citizens, regardless of income.

2. The European Council strongly supports Member States to further subsidise electric vehicle purchases by citizens. This would offer the part of the population not ready or not able to give up combustion engine transportation a way to afford a more sustainable substitute. Member States should Co-finance between 20 and 70% of the cost of an electrical vehicle taking into account their specifics. Considering the social and financial aspect of the European Union, such a transition towards electric vehicles should not negatively impact employment of European citizens. The European Union should mitigate adverse consequences of such a transition.

3. The European Council proposes that the European Commission and Member States conduct a feasibility study and consider income tax deduction or other ways to encourage commuters to choose the most sustainable and carbon-neutral means of transport. Such as but not limited to choosing the train instead of plane for internal travel.

4. Recognising the practice in some Member States, the European Council encourages all Member States to promote and systemically support the use of non-motorised transport means by subsidising their purchase.

5. Believing that financing is key to this matter, the European Council suggest redistributing already existing European financing programmes such as Horizon Europe to give more financing and resources to local projects, while taking into consideration the view from the local authorities.

II. ASSURING SUSTAINABLE AND STABLE SOURCES OF ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION

6. The European Council reaffirms the fact that the security of energy supply in the European Union guarantees the functioning of the Energy Market. In that context, we, the members of the European Council, stress that Member States may choose their energy mix freely, bearing in mind carbon neutrality.

7. The European Council considers, however, that the renewable and green sources of electricity production should be prioritised and that the Member States should abolish the sources that are not contributing to climate neutrality, as soon as possible. In that context, the specific circumstances of each Member State should be kept in mind, while the Green Transition should not impoverish the Member States and their citizens.

8. The Member States should, if they opt for sources of electricity production that may be, in case of

statistically unlikely malfunctions, potentially harmful for the environment and the citizens of the EU, in good faith, and considering the Principle of Loyal Cooperation, strictly abide by the highest standards of supervision, set by the International Organisations and European Union.

9. The European Council stresses the importance of energy independence from the third countries that do not share the European Union's fundamental values. While choosing the technology for the Member States' preferred option of electricity production, they should prioritise the technology available in the European Union, provided by its Member States.

10. The European Council stresses that the European Union should prioritise research and development of the newer, safer for the environment and more efficient technologies, enabling carbon-neutral production of electricity. In that context, the European Union recognises the benefits such new technologies could have for the functioning of the energy market, and should strive for their fast availability for usage.

III. HARMONISING THE EUROPEAN RAILWAY SYSTEM AND SUSTAINABLE RENEWABLE ENERGIES

11. The European Union encourages free, easy, and accessible movement within Member States. The European Council acknowledges the pollution caused by international, unsustainable transportation. The European Council encourages the mobility and transport commission of the EU to support the establishment of a common EU railway network to interconnect the most populated cities.

12. The mobility and transport commission of the EU should incentivise the Member States to move towards collaboration, harmonisation, and cooperation when it comes to building new railways and maintaining the existing ones.

13. The European Council suggests the EU railway network to make the process of free movement within EU States easier and more sustainable by:

- Creating a mobility application that would provide a single ticket per journey;
- The application should reward passengers choosing to use the more sustainable way of transportation on future trips.

14. The European Council wishes to highlight its respect for the sovereignty of the EU Member States, thus participation in this EU railway network project is absolutely optional although highly encouraged. Every EU Member State is free to join or leave this project after consultation with the Mobility and Transport Commission of the EU.

15. The European Council calls upon the European Parliament to allocate, from already existing funds, financing through the Mobility and Transport Commission of the EU in order to make this transition to a more

sustainable, climate-neutral future accessible to all Member States.

IV. CITIZENS' ROLE IN GREEN TRANSITION:

16. The European Council wishes to consider the implementation of topics related to climate change, sustainability and citizenship in the education programmes of public schools, in order for European younger generations to have the opportunity to learn the importance of taking part in global matters.

17. The European Council strongly recommends Member States to approach authorities that include but are not limited to the public health system to take part in the raising of awareness among the European population taking into account the benefits of active mobility and the repercussions that pollution and concentration of greenhouse gases may cause to health.

18. Emphasizing the current global situation, the European Council strongly encourages the incentivisation of the use of less polluting transport such as but not limited to buses, trams and bikes, aiming to reduce the greenhouse emissions following previous European Commissions' packages.

19. Fully aware of the importance of local authorities, the European Council encourages the local and regional public authorities in addition to organizations to promote public forums to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas in order to acknowledge the main concerns of the population.

V. SUSTAINABILITY IN THE AVIATION SECTOR:

20. The European Council will heavily advocate for airline companies to initiate the limitation of the availability of potentially unnecessary flights whose journey could alternatively be taken by other methods of transport, in face of substantial taxation for domestic flights and future taxation on international flights.

21. The European Council will advocate for Member States to support the increase in financial investment by both the public and private sector on the research and development on more sustainable design of aeroplanes.

22. The European Council encourages Member States to consider the following plan which is progressive and acknowledges the following two phases:

- Implementing a taxation on internal domestic flights on the amount of carbon fuel. However, the level of taxation will be regressive depending on the distance, time covered during the journey and the kind of fuel used by the company. This taxation will be placed on the airlines providing the service and the tax revenue should be re-invested in the research and development of sustainable mobility initiatives;

- After the adaptation of this proposals at national scope, the European Council encourages Member States to consider the implementation of a similar taxation system for flights within the European

Union, and across Member States.

VI. MOVING TO SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

23. The European Council recommends additional technological research and development to improve the efficiency of our green energies. In order to enhance this measure, the EU welcomes all Member States to share and join their experience, knowledge, and technologies to construct a forum where all Member States can benefit from.

24. The EU and its Member States must commit to the usage of the optimal fuel in the different EU industries of transport while taking into account each country's situation to ensure a decrease in the dependency towards fossil fuels. The European Council encourages using greener fuels such as hydrogen and sustainable aviation fuels in order to replace fossil fuels.

25. The European Council supports and commits to the shift of the Member States towards a low carbon economy in all economic activities.

VII. INNER CITY TRANSPORT:

26. The European Council encourages all Member States to expand their urban planning to create more sustainable cities that encourage their citizens to walk or bike. The European Council proposes measures such as but not limited to creating more bike lanes to make bikes a safer and more accessible option, additionally to establishing more car-free city centres. To make this become a feasible option, the European Council suggests urban planning to be more diverse and mixed between residential, business and recreational areas interspersed with parks.

27. The European Council promotes integrated transport systems in order to ease the use of public transport to the commuters. Instead of commuters having to own a card for buses, a card for trams and a card for ferries, they use a single card to get around everywhere. Furthermore, the European Council stimulates the Member States to collaborate on a shared app to simplify the use of public transportation in the 'Mobility as a Service' idea.

28. To accommodate travellers that still decide to travel to the city by car, the European Council encourages the Member States to ameliorate their cities by establishing "Park and Ride" systems as well as limiting parking spaces to limit car use within the city to make them safer and to ease traffic jams and parking shortages. This system involves creating parking lots in the outskirts of cities that are well connected to the local public transport system to the city for drivers to park their car inexpensively during the day.

29. The European Council encourages the use of renewable fuels to power public transport, as well as the development and expansion of sustainable urban transportation.

VIII. ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY:

30. The European Council encourages the European Commission to consider extending the Single European Sky framework to non-EU States willing to join (preferably those States with major air traffic and considerable pollution caused by aviation).

31. The European Council further invites the European Commission, committed to the enlargement of the European Union's borders, on the condition that the Single European Railway Area will be adopted, to explore the possibilities of inviting countries that are not member states of the European Union, particularly the Western Balkan countries, the members of the European Economic Zone and European Free Trade Agreement state parties to join the Single European Railway Area if they wish so, with the agreement of all Member States.

IX. MARITIME MOBILITY:

32. The European Council advises the enhancement of sustainable travel through the establishment of new railway and maritime connection nodes between the Trans-European Transport Network and European ports to decrease the time of travel of European citizens, travel of foreign tourists, transportation of goods, boarding and alighting and security checks.

33. The European Council calls upon Member States for the elimination of the usage of polluting transport vehicles in between the connection nodes.

34. The European Council encourages the inclusion in the node connection plan, by the Member States, the ports that are most popularly used or the least connected to the rest of the European Union, namely, the ports of Rotterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg, Algeciras, Piraeus, Valencia, Limassol, Dublin and Valletta.

35. The European Council advises the standardisation of the European ferries and ports through the establishment of a scientific commission with the task of conducting research on the development of more sustainable bunker fuel options for maritime vessels which shall decide on the fuel allowance of ferries across the European Union. The Commission shall consist of experts on their fields from Member States. It shall be referred to as the "European Maritime Fuel Research Commission" and shall be situated in Turku in Finland.

36. The European Council invites the European Parliament to adopt of legislation which shall standardise contracts between Member States and private entities on the matter of ferry transportation and the running of the ports by the encouragement of the assurance of full container load (FCL) to be sent with full capacity and by improvement of waste facility infrastructure in order to prevent the contamination of the sea water in proximity of ports.

37. The European Council further invites Member States for the introduction of a transformative change in the cruise ship industry with the aim of reducing the damage caused by cruise ships to the environment with

the aid of the promotion of public awareness on more sustainable methods of tourism.
