

**Reply of the European Commission
to the Contribution of the LXIX Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union
Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) plenary meeting in Stockholm,
14-16 May 2023**

1. Ukraine

The Commission appreciates that COSAC welcomes the EU's strong unity as part of the unwavering solidarity shown for Ukraine in face of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, which remains a critical challenge for the EU. We will continue providing Ukraine with comprehensive political, military, financial and humanitarian support for as long as it takes and welcome COSAC's unyielding support.

The EU and its Member States have made available over €70 billion assistance to ensure Ukraine's economic and military resilience. This amount includes:

- €53 billion from the EU, the Member States and the European Financial Institutions in financial, humanitarian, emergency budget and military support. This includes among other elements €25.2 billion macro-financial assistance (€18 billion in 2023 of which so far €9 billion have been disbursed) and €15 billion in military assistance, including under the European Peace Facility;
- €17 billion made available to Member States for hosting people fleeing the war, with close to 4 million Ukrainian refugees registered for temporary protection in the EU.

Moreover, the EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine has already fulfilled its initial target of training 15,000 Ukrainian soldiers and is on track to fulfil its new objective to train 30,000 soldiers before the end of 2023. In addition, humanitarian support, budget support and other grants and loans supported by EU guarantees, and other support and in-kind assistance were provided via the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

The EU has adopted eleven packages of sanctions against Russia and Belarus, targeting the Russian financial, energy and transport sectors and state-owned enterprises. The sanctions target almost 1800 individuals and entities altogether.

Regarding Ukraine's European path, the Commission will report on the implementation of the seven specified conditions as part of its regular enlargement package in October 2023.

Furthermore, the EU supports Ukraine in international fora, in particular the UN and in the framework of International Court of Justice proceedings to qualify the Russian aggression as a grave breach of a peremptory norm of international law. The EU remains firmly committed to ensuring that Russia is held fully accountable for its war of aggression against Ukraine, welcomes the fact that the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine (ICPA) is ready to start its support operations, and has provided funding to the International Criminal Court for its work in Ukraine and elsewhere and to Ukraine's Office of the Prosecutor General to ensure that war crimes do not go unpunished. This includes the deportation and transfer to Russia and to Belarus of Ukrainian children by the Russian

Federation, which President von der Leyen and President Zelensky clearly branded as war crimes in their joint statement on the International Children's Day on 1 June 2023.

In November 2022, President Zelenskyy presented his Peace Formula. The EU stands ready to support Ukraine's initiative for a comprehensive, just, and sustainable peace. Any solution to Russia's aggression against Ukraine must respect Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognised borders, as protected by international law and the UN Charter.

The Commission further welcomes COSAC's support to the work contributing to the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine.

2. Organised crime and corruption

The Commission welcomes COSAC's engagement and priorities in the fight against cross-border organised crime and corruption.

To address this evolving phenomenon, the Commission has adopted several initiatives under its current term-of-office¹. Most recently, the Commission took decisive action by proposing on 3 May 2023 a comprehensive anti-corruption package to fight corruption in the EU and worldwide. This includes new and strengthened rules criminalising corruption offences and harmonising penalties across the EU as well as a proposal to establish a dedicated Common Foreign and Security Policy sanctions regime to target serious acts of corruption worldwide.

The Commission also welcomes the COSAC support for action against migrant smugglers and trafficking of human beings.

Providing a strong European response to migrant smuggling inside and outside the EU is an essential part of the comprehensive approach to migration, as set out in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum² and reflected in the objectives of the EU action plan against migrant smuggling (2021-2025)³. To effectively counter the transnational nature of migrant smuggling beyond EU borders, the Commission has launched tailor-made Anti-Smuggling Operational Partnerships with Morocco, Niger, the Western Balkans and Tunisia. As part of the implementation of the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025), the Commission has presented a proposal to strengthen and broaden the scope of the Anti-trafficking Directive to address trends that have evolved since its adoption in 2011.

3. The single market

The Commission welcomes COSAC's recognition of the substantial benefits and achievements of the Single Market as well as the need for its constant adaptation to the new realities, such as

¹ This includes the EU Strategy to tackle organised crime 2021-2025 and the proposal for a Directive on asset recovery.

² COM(2020) 609 final.

³ COM(2021) 591 final.

a changing geopolitical environment, technological developments, and the green and digital transitions.

The important role of the functioning of the Single Market as the central driver for EU competitiveness was highlighted in the recent Commission Communications on the Single Market at 30 and long-term competitiveness.

The Commission concurs with COSAC when stressing the importance of removing remaining barriers, implementing and adapting existing legislation efficiently and effectively and the need for a good supply of skills for the benefit of our businesses, especially SMEs. The 2020 European Skills Agenda laid down the EU's roadmap to ensure the EU has the skilled workforce it needs to thrive in the context of the digital and green transitions and boost economic competitiveness and employment.

The Single Market is crucial for the EU's green and digital transitions and the circular economy. A successful twin transition requires robust and competitive decarbonised businesses and industries, secure supply chains, access to critical inputs and technologies, and resilient ecosystems and value chains. With its Green Deal Industrial Plan Communication, the Net-Zero Industry Act and Critical Raw Materials Act proposals and the new plans to stimulate and support investment in sustainable hydrogen production through a European Hydrogen Bank, the Commission aims to give a strong push to promote the net-zero industry and make Europe home of the clean-tech economy and industrial innovation for the net-zero transformation.

4. Green transition

The Commission welcomes COSAC's support for the Fit-for-55 package and concurs that the green transition involves both challenges and opportunities at all levels of society.

The European Green Deal puts social fairness at its heart and the EU has several measures in place to provide the appropriate social and economic support in the transition, such as the Social Climate Fund⁴ and the Just Transition Mechanism.

Moreover, EU Member States adopted last year the Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality⁵, which encourages Member States to review and, where applicable, adapt social protection systems, including social inclusion policies, in view of the employment, social and health challenges posed by the green transition.

The Commission also agrees with COSAC that the green transition must be accelerated and cooperation with third countries intensified to reduce dependencies and to remain at the forefront of tackling climate change.

⁴ OJ L 130, 16.5.2023, p. 1–51

⁵ OJ C 243, 27.6.2022, p. 35–51