

European Council conclusions on COVID-19 and migration, 24 June 2021



I. COVID-19

1. The European Council welcomes the good progress on vaccination and the overall improvement in the epidemiological situation, while stressing the need to continue vaccination efforts and to be vigilant and coordinated with regard to developments, particularly the emergence and spread of variants.

2. The agreements reached on the EU Digital COVID Certificate and on the revision of the two Council Recommendations on travel within the EU and on non-essential travel into the EU will facilitate safe cross-border travel. Member States will apply them in a manner that ensures the full return to free movement as soon as the public health situation allows.

3. The European Council reaffirms the EU's commitment to international solidarity in response to the pandemic. Ongoing work to help boost global production of vaccines and universal access to them, in particular through COVAX, should be swiftly taken forward. All producing countries and manufacturers should actively contribute to efforts to increase worldwide supply of COVID-19 vaccines, raw materials, treatments and therapeutics, and coordinate action in case of bottlenecks in supply and distribution.

4. The European Council welcomes the decision adopted by the 74th World Health Assembly to set up a special session of the World Health Assembly in November 2021 on a Framework Convention on Pandemic Preparedness and Response. The EU will continue working towards an international treaty on pandemics.

5. The European Council discussed the initial lessons that can be learned from the pandemic on the basis of the report by the Commission. It invites the incoming Presidency to take work forward in the Council to enhance our collective preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises and to protect the functioning of the internal market.

[...]

III. MIGRATION

11. The European Council discussed the migration situation on the various routes. While the measures taken by the EU and Member States have brought down the overall irregular flows in recent years, developments on some routes give rise to serious concern and require continued vigilance and urgent action.

12. In order to prevent loss of life and to reduce pressure on European borders, mutually beneficial partnerships and cooperation with countries of

origin and transit will be intensified, as an integral part of the European Union's external action. The approach will be pragmatic, flexible and tailor-made, make coordinated use, as Team Europe, of all available EU and Member States' instruments and incentives, and take place in close cooperation with the UNHCR and IOM. It should address all routes and be based on a whole-of-route approach, tackling root causes, supporting refugees and displaced persons in the region, building capacity for migration management, eradicating smuggling and trafficking, reinforcing border control, cooperating on search and rescue, addressing legal migration while respecting national competences, as well as ensuring return and readmission. To this end, the European Council:

- calls on the Commission and the High Representative, in close cooperation with Member States, to immediately reinforce concrete actions with, and tangible support for, priority countries of origin and transit;

- calls on the Commission and the High Representative, in close cooperation with Member States, to put forward action plans for priority countries of origin and transit in autumn 2021, indicating clear objectives, further support measures and concrete timelines;

- invites the Commission to make the best possible use of at least 10% of the NDICI financial envelope, as well as funding under other relevant instruments, for actions related to migration, and to report to the Council on its intentions in this respect by November.

13. The European Council condemns and rejects any attempt by third countries to instrumentalise migrants for political purposes.

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