

Statement of the Conference of Presidents

Recalls that 2023 will be the last full year before the European Elections, and many European citizens will be paying particular attention to the Union's response to today's major challenges;

Expects, therefore, the CWP 2023 to focus on the reconstruction of Ukraine, building up stronger EU foreign, defence and security cooperation and capacity, supporting the EU's strategic autonomy in industrial and defence policy and achieving energy independence and food security, while preserving an open economy. In parallel, stresses that the Work Programme must centre on tackling the cumulative effect of the economic and social challenges for citizens, businesses and jobs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine, and climate change and environmental degradation. Such a response will require measures to review the Union's economic governance, support sustainability, competitiveness, foster just green and digital transitions and protect citizens, including the most vulnerable, from increased economic uncertainty, inflation, rising prices and persistent inequalities, and will require an adequate framework to allow the necessary investments and reforms. At the same time, greater commitment and action is needed to strengthen and vigorously defend the rule of law, democratic values and fundamental and human rights, and to lead the fight against disinformation;

Welcomes and endorses the CCC Summary Report 2022 and urges the Commission to fully take it into account in its forthcoming Letter of Intent and 2023 Commission Work Programme;

Calls, in particular, on the Commission to include the following priorities:

- a) the strategy to rebuild Ukraine after the war and continued work on the "[ReBuild Ukraine](#)" [facility](#), embedded in the EU budget, as well as bringing to justice those responsible for Russian war crimes especially in front of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and setting up an ad-hoc international tribunal for the punishment of the crime of aggression;
- b) continued assistance for Member States, local and regional authorities and civil society organisations welcoming refugees from Ukraine, including cooperation in education, association of Ukraine to Erasmus+, and strengthening of crisis preparedness and management;
- c) efforts to secure strategic autonomy including a framework to coordinate existing financial instruments and to envisage the establishment of a new dedicated European fund (Strategic Autonomy Fund for Europe) to provide the necessary investments in key areas such as energy infrastructure, cybersecurity, industrial competitiveness, food security and diversification and circularity of the supply of critical raw materials; to be accompanied by an assessment of the EU acquis to determine its fitness to deal with the impacts of the war;
- d) continuing the push to improve the EU's decision-making process in the field of CFSP by switching to QMV for decisions that do not have military or defence implications, as well as for other EU external policy tools and together with increased EU diplomatic capacities, ensuring a single voice and increased influence in multilateral fora;
- e) a clear path for the conclusion of balanced, modernised trade agreements with Mexico and Chile and to seek meaningful progress in the ongoing bilateral negotiations with Mercosur countries, New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia and others in line with the negotiating directives and ensuring the agreements are in line with the goals of the European Green Deal and the EU ambitions in Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapters, noting the forthcoming instrument to prohibit forced labour products;
- f) streamline and accelerate the ongoing Western Balkans enlargement process to start accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania and facilitate the implementation of the European Council decision of 23-24 June 2022 regarding the EU membership applications of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia; there should also be a review of the EU's neighbourhood policy and strengthening of enlargement policy in order to ensure their coherence and credibility;

- g) further initiatives to terminate the EU's dependence on all Russian energy imports and on fossil fuels, diversifying EU energy sources, promoting sustainable energy production and green imports as well as to mitigate the impact of energy prices on vulnerable households and SMEs and support them during the transition period;
- h) to help SMEs increase investment in new technologies, the digital transition and continuous innovation, ensuring future legislative proposals are compatible with the 2030 and 2050 climate objectives and the Union's biodiversity, circular economy and non-toxic environment goals, and to promote SME competitiveness and increasing aid for businesses by ensuring targeted application of state aid rules, and avoiding unnecessary regulatory burdens and disproportionate costs;
- i) implementation of the EU action plan to ensure food security and sustainable food production inside and outside the EU, supporting EU farmers and the wider supply chain, and in light of the combined crises, making the most of permitted flexibility in the implementation of relevant legislation, while fully respecting the European Green Deal and associated requirements;
- j) a strategy to address cross-border barriers for consumers and businesses within the Single Market, with the broader aim of completing and deepening the Single Market for services;
- k) proposals for reviewing economic governance and a revamped comprehensive economic policy response, so as to increase resilience to shocks and crises and strengthen the economic, social, energy and climate dimensions; addressing economic, social and regional inequalities against the backdrop of enormous investment needs and the consequences of the pandemic and Ukraine war, recalling the requests made in previous resolutions¹;
- l) full implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and [Porto Declaration](#) by strengthening the Social Rights Action Plan and ensuring achievement of its objectives through the already called for Social Resilience Package and Social Summit to be held later in 2022, including through a permanent Child Guarantee with better funding, a reinforced Youth Guarantee, the continuation and refinancing of SURE as long as the socio-economic consequences of the war continue to have a negative impact on the labour market, a Council recommendation for minimum income schemes and a proposal for a comprehensive European anti-poverty strategy with ambitious poverty reduction targets;
- m) proposals for directives on teleworking, the right to disconnect, and the impact of artificial intelligence in the workplace in light of new working methods stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and broader technological progress, in line with the social partners' role and the [European Social Partners Framework Agreement on Digitalisation](#);
- n) continued implementation of measures towards a strong and inclusive European Health Union and for prevention, preparedness and response to public health emergencies, as well as a strategy to ensure accessibility, availability, affordability, and security of supply of medicines, and new provisions to lower the EU's dependence on third countries for the provision of essential medicines and medical material;
- o) an in-depth review of the current MFF and a legislative proposal for its comprehensive revision, no later than the first quarter of 2023, to ensure sufficient means and flexibility for the Union to react to unexpected developments and to address the long-term impact of the war in Ukraine on existing EU policies, and allow investment in new shifting priorities and other long-term political priorities keeping in mind that new policy commitments and objectives are not to be financed at the expense of other Union programmes and priorities;
- p) to facilitate swift agreement on the first basket of proposed EU own resources and the introduction without delay of the second basket of new own resources, including a Financial Transaction Tax, and to prepare alternatives if the proposed new own resources are not adopted or do not generate the anticipated level of revenue for the EU budget, and to coordinate the design of temporary taxation schemes on windfall profits in order to mitigate the social and economic consequences of the war in Ukraine;

¹ [A9-0034/2022 - Parliament resolution on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: annual sustainable growth survey 2022](#)
[A9-0212/2021 - Report on the review of the macroeconomic legislative framework for a better impact on Europe's real economy and improved transparency of decision-making and democratic accountability](#)

- q) the development of a comprehensive, permanent and evidence-based EU-wide mechanism for the protection of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights, and to immediately enter into negotiations with Parliament on an interinstitutional agreement. In the meantime, the Commission must strictly apply the rule of law conditionality regulation, in full and without delay whenever a breach of the rule of law is detected and make full use of all relevant tools to address such breaches, including infringement procedures;
- r) to further assist the co-legislators in finalising a fair, effective and anticipatory migration and asylum package, based on solidarity, fair sharing of responsibility and cooperation between Member States, dignified reception of asylum seekers, combatting smuggling and trafficking in human beings, stepping up measures for relocation, new avenues for legal labour migration, as well as safe and legal pathways such as resettlement and humanitarian visas, and secure and effective management of external borders; the respect for fundamental rights must be fully observed in all areas;
- s) proper follow-up to the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe with concrete legislative proposals and through the proposed Convention to amend the Treaties, including a direct right of initiative for the Parliament, while in the meantime continuing to uphold the commitment to respond to legislative own-initiative reports with a proposal for a legislative act;
- t) the application of gender mainstreaming in all policy areas, gender budgeting in EU programmes and monitoring of the EU budget's contribution to gender equality;

Insists that all outstanding legislative proposals be tabled promptly, supported by the relevant ex-ante impact assessments, in order to allow sufficient time for the co-legislators to reach agreement ahead of the elections;

Invites the Commission President and Vice-President responsible for the Commission Work Programme to attend an upcoming meeting of the CoP in order to exchange views on the above-mentioned priorities.