



European Council

The President

051595/EU XXV. GP
Eingelangt am 19/12/14

PRESS

EN

REMARKS

EUCO 269/14

PRESSE 672

PR PCE 237

Brussels, 18 December 2014

Donald Tusk
President of the European Council
Press conference after the European Council

I am pleased to report to you on this European Council, the last one this year, the first one I chaired. We had a very good discussion. It was concrete and candid. We focused on Europe's two most important challenges: boosting investment, and the situation at our eastern borders.

First, on investment. Presently, injecting public and private money in strategic projects is the best thing to speed up Europe's economic recovery. Today the European Council called for a European Fund for Strategic Investment to be set up urgently. We want to foster a better investment climate in Europe.

The leaders also agreed: to continue ensuring sound public finances, to push for structural reforms and to deliver on our plans for an energy union, trade, better regulation and for the digital economy, but the focus was on investment.

The aim of Jean-Claude Juncker – the author of this plan – is to mobilise 315 billion euro between 2015 and 2017. To achieve this, leaders want the Fund to be in place by next June. Also the European Investment Bank got the green light to start doing its own part from January on.

In the weeks ahead specific legislation will be discussed; but today leaders gave the direction and set the timeline. We did not discuss any geographical or sectorial distribution. It is for private investors to back the most promising projects. The European Council will monitor all this in the months ahead.

As to the situation at our eastern borders, we had a first discussion on the strategic challenge posed by Russia. For over a year now – from Maidan to the Minsk ceasefire and beyond... – the European Council's response has been event-driven.

The situation in Ukraine remains dramatic and dynamic, and requires an immediate response. That's why we have just discussed giving financial support to Ukraine. We are sending a strong signal on our readiness to do so.

We also talked about Russia's policy towards its neighbours and our strategic response. Leaders shared their analysis of the situation, which is the basis for a common understanding of the challenge ahead. We will come back to this next March.

It is obvious that we will not find a long-perspective solution for Ukraine without an adequate, consistent and a united European strategy towards Russia. Equally, a modern, safe and independent Ukraine is the most important element of this strategy. Our approach must be in line with our ambitions and potential. We must go beyond being reactive and defensive. As Europeans, we must regain our self-confidence and realise our own strengths.

We had a focused and substantive summit today. The meeting is concluded; it will not resume tomorrow.

Let me close by saying a special thank you to Prime Minister Renzi for Italy's energetic and result-oriented presidency of the Council. Grazie mille, Matteo! Thank you.
