

STATEMENTS AND REMARKS

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Remarks by President Charles Michel before the informal meeting of heads of state or government in Versailles

This is a strategic summit. It is very important, today and tomorrow, to give a strong signal of the European Union's determination to act, in order to give us independence, and to avoid dependence in the future. To be very concrete, we propose to decide to phase out Russian gas.

We also propose to take certain decisions regarding European defence. We especially propose to strengthen the European capabilities on defence and, of course, we will have a debate about the current tragic situation in Ukraine. Russia took the decision to launch a war against Ukraine. It is very important to remain united. I think that we took Russia by surprise because we were firm, we were strong, we were united. But it is not enough. We need to identify together what could be the following steps to have a positive influence, to reach a ceasefire as soon as possible, and to have real negotiations for a possible peace agreement.

The goal is to identify what the concrete decisions are that we will take all together in the following weeks and months to make the EU more robust at the economic level, less dependent on Russian gas, and how we are able to strengthen our defence capabilities. And of course, this is a difficult moment because there is the war launched by Russia against Ukraine. We will discuss all the geopolitical consequences of this situation, and we will also discuss what our approach will be.

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