

PRESS RELEASE

223/22

08/03/2022

Invitation letter by President Charles Michel to the members of the European Council ahead of their informal meeting of 10 and 11 March 2022

Russia has brought war back to Europe. This unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine grossly violates international law and undermines European security. Russia is inflicting unspeakable suffering on the Ukrainian population. We commend the people of Ukraine for their courage in defending their country. Together with Ukraine, we stand firmly on the side of freedom and democracy. Ukraine is part of our European family.

In response to Russia's aggression, the European Union has shown unity and strength. We have imposed on Russia the strictest sanctions ever adopted. The European Union and its Member States are providing coordinated humanitarian, political, financial and material support to Ukraine. Member States are also showing immense solidarity in hosting countless people fleeing the war.

This conflict and its consequences will be at the heart of our informal meeting in Versailles on 10 and 11 March, which President Macron will kindly host.

Over the past years, faced with multiple crises and challenges, we engaged together on an ambitious strategic agenda. In the light of recent events, it is more urgent than ever that we take decisive steps towards building our sovereignty, reducing our dependencies and designing a new growth and investment model.

Consequently, at our informal meeting, I would like us to focus on three particular issues, namely:

- bolstering our defence capabilities;
- reducing our energy dependency, in particular on Russian gas, oil and coal, and
- building a more robust economic base.

Our meeting will start on 10 March at 5:30 pm with an exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament. Our objective on the first day is to focus on the situation in Ukraine, as well as on defence and energy. On 11 March, our morning session and our working lunch will be devoted to our new growth and investment model in the presence of the President of the European Central Bank and the President of the Eurogroup.

I look forward to seeing you in Versailles.

Press office - General Secretariat of the Council

Rue de la Loi 175 - B-1048 BRUSSELS - Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319

press@consilium.europa.eu - www.consilium.europa.eu/press