



Press kit

**Results of
the French Presidency
of the Council
of the European Union**

Foreword



Emmanuel Macron
President of the
French Republic

The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union is coming to a close. Here we take stock and measure the new challenges we have had to respond to collectively in recent months, with all the determination and ambition that were needed.

The face of Europe has changed profoundly in six months. Faced with war's return to our continent, the EU has neither been divided nor shirked its responsibilities. It has provided unwavering civil and military assistance to Ukraine, and will continue to do so. In a few weeks, it imposed the toughest sanctions on the Russian regime and economy. It has sketched out Ukraine's European future by granting it and Moldova EU accession candidate status. With the European political community, it laid the foundations of a new forum to unite the European family.

The EU has also taken the decisions for itself that were needed in this new context. That is the ambition of the Versailles agenda: reducing strategic dependencies and becoming more sovereign and independent in terms of energy, food, industry and defence.

This united response in solidarity in the face of the Russian aggression against Ukraine has not distracted us from the priorities we had set. Climate and migration challenges and geopolitical and public health circumstances required an ambitious programme. We stuck to it. As announced by France, the success of our Presidency was to be judged on its priorities, which will shape its future in so many ways: the fight against climate change, the promotion of social rights and the regulation of digital giants. The results are there to be seen on these three priorities:

- > the Member States have approved all the rules to achieve our goal of reducing our emissions by 55% by 2030, and particularly the carbon tax at Europe's borders, as the ecological transition can only be effective and just if the European Union ensures its partners make the same efforts it does;
- > the guarantee of a minimum wage for all European workers, in order to put an end to the race to the bottom on pay;
- > the European Digital Markets Act and Digital Services Act, which will require the digital giants to respect competition rules and take down hate speech, racist, terrorist or insulting content, and harassment.

In six months, the European Union has also made significant progress, with the reform of the Schengen Area, the fight against imported deforestation, a Strategic Compass for our defence and security policy, the requirement of reciprocity in international trade, and the renewal of our relationship with Africa. Some of this progress was long-awaited, like the agreement on gender equality on corporate boards.

This ecological, social and digital progress is historic, opening a new era of European sovereignty where the EU acts as a power and in accordance with its values.

This European power cannot function without commitment to its democratic values. With the Conference on the Future of Europe that was launched in 2019, tens of thousands of citizens across the continent drew the face of Europe for the coming decades: an audacious, protective Europe that fulfils its environmental role and defends its values; a more efficient Europe, too, in which citizens can play their full role.

In these six months, a new chapter has begun, in which our Presidency furthered its priorities of recovery, strength and the sense of belonging while defending our independence, our values and our role in the world.

The French Presidency's central role in Europe's response to the war in Ukraine

At the initiative of the French Presidency, the European Union responded firmly in solidarity and unity to Russia's unjustified aggression against Ukraine.

Supporting the Ukrainian people

The European Union and its Member States have taken in more than 7.6 million Ukrainian refugees. The French Presidency quickly worked to enable people who remained in our territory to enjoy temporary protection, aimed at offering them immediate access to employment, education and social protection.

After granting massive humanitarian aid to support Ukraine, totalling €335 million in addition to bilateral humanitarian assistance from Member States of €1.28 billion, the EU also decided to deliver exceptional financial assistance of €2 billion. It is ready to grant further financial assistance of €9 billion in 2022 and has committed to playing a major role in rebuilding Ukraine.

The European Union has supported the Ukrainian armed forces, providing unprecedented military supplies totalling €2 billion.

Sanctioning those responsible

Under the French Presidency, the European Union has adopted unprecedented measures at an unprecedented pace, aimed at sanctioning those in Russia and Belarus who are responsible for the aggression against Ukraine.

Six sanctions packages have been adopted, targeting individuals and the financial, transport, defence and energy sectors. European decisions have banned the broadcasting of content from Kremlin-linked Russian media such as Sputnik and RT. They also ban imports of Russian coal and oil, particularly with an embargo on more than 90% of Russian oil. They ban Russian-flagged ships from European ports and are a barrier to road transport of goods by Russian and Belarusian companies in EU territory. They deprive the Russian government of access to its currency reserves abroad and exclude almost all Russian banks from the SWIFT financial transactions system.

In order to fight impunity in Ukraine, the Eurojust Regulation was amended in record time of one month, enabling the agency to play a key role alongside the Ukrainian authorities and the International Criminal Court to preserve evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity and to enable exploitation of new types of evidence, such as videos.

Strengthening European sovereignty: the Versailles agenda

The European Union has also taken action, to the backdrop of war's return to the European continent, to bring about a new model to strengthen its own sovereignty and its strategic interests. The French Presidency showed leadership, particularly during the Versailles Summit on 10 and 11 March 2022, which adopted the Versailles agenda. The agenda is made up of unprecedented commitments by the European Heads of State and Government aimed at:

➤ strengthening European defence capabilities, in order to considerably increase defence spending, encourage the development of collaborative projects between Member States and strengthen joint acquisition of defence equipment;

➤ ending our energy dependence on Russia and speeding up the implementation of our climate ambitions by phasing out our use of fossil fuels more quickly, diversifying our supply sources and routes, and ensuring sufficient storage of gas, while complying with the CO2 emissions reduction goals the EU has set itself. The EU is also committing to a joint gas purchasing mechanism between Member States;

➤ enhancing our strategic independence when it comes to critical raw materials, semiconductors, health and food products.

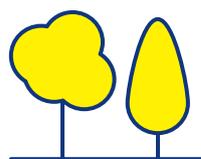
This new political course for the EU will help enhance its independence, its strength and its global role and will be central to the European work of the coming years.

The French Presidency in 5 figures



130

texts adopted



233 000

trees being planted
by the Office National des Forêts
to offset carbon



+400

events
throughout France



Conférence
sur l'avenir
de l'Europe

+700 000

participants in the Conference
on the Future of Europe



+2 000

meetings between
European leaders

The French Presidency in 24 tangible advances

Three emblematic texts

The French Presidency made progress on three emblematic texts, with lasting consequences, to build a sovereign, environmental and social Europe.

1. The carbon tax at Europe's borders

Agreement on this mechanism among Member States is a victory for European climate policy.

In adopting the world's most ambitious legislation pertaining to the ecological transition, the European Union has reiterated its determination to achieve its carbon neutrality goal by 2050. The carbon border tax (or carbon border adjustment mechanism) is the European response to the competition of countries with less demanding climate and environmental regulations. By setting an identical carbon price on imports with respect to European production, it will make it possible to continue to pursue decarbonization of our economies, and give third countries incentive to engage in the ecological transition.

2. Minimum wages

The directive on adequate minimum wages in Europe is one of the most significant advances for a social Europe in years.

This new European legislation reflects a Europe which protects: it will help improve working and living conditions of European citizens, especially by establishing shared principles and criteria for establishing an adequate minimum wage in every Member State, but also by promoting collective bargaining. A powerful tool for convergence, this legislation will fight wage competition between Member States.

3. Ambitious regulation of digital services and markets

The European Union adopted two new pieces of legislation which establish a new global standard for regulating digital giants that have a structural impact on the lives of European citizens and companies.

The Digital Markets Act (DMA) aims to end the economic domination of large platforms and improve consumers' freedom of choice, as well as innovation in the digital sector. With this Act, the large platforms will no longer be able, for example, to impose software or applications by default or by preventing removal, promote their services or their products, or reuse personal data for targeted advertising purposes, unless there is explicit consent. If violated, heavy penalties have been established, of up to 10% of the global turnover of the company concerned.

The Digital Services Act (DSA) aims to limit the dissemination of illegal content (incitement to hatred or violence, harassment, child pornography, glorification of terrorism, etc.) and the sale of illegal products online. The large platforms should permit Member States to access their algorithms and use a tool to enable users to report illegal content and products (terrorist messages, calls to hatred or violence, harassment, etc.) so that platforms remove them or block access quickly. The DSA prohibits targeting people with online advertising based on their religion, their sexual preferences, information on their health or their political beliefs. Targeted advertising is prohibited vis-à-vis minors.

Results

The French Presidency adopted agreements that will help change the lives of millions of Europeans.

Here are some examples:

1. A more sovereign Europe

Reform of the Schengen Area

In line with President Macron's speech in Tourcoing on 2 February, the French Presidency made reform of the Schengen Area a political priority, with an aim of preserving the freedom of movement within the European Union and better protecting our external borders.

The European Union updated the applicable rules for providing States with the necessary tools to better protect citizens in the face of health crises, the use of migration for political ends and threats to our security, while preserving their free movement in our common area. Compliance with rules will be monitored more frequently and more transparently.

Political governance of the Schengen Area was strengthened with the introduction of the Schengen Council, which has already met twice and established a scoreboard for monitoring developments in the Schengen Area.

A more inclusive and secure response to the migration challenge

➤ **The Pact on Asylum and Migration:** the Member States agreed to better distribute refugees arriving to Europe, while reinforcing the necessary controls at the external borders upon arrival. Coordination has been established to appropriately and inclusively welcome and host people in need of protection in countries other than countries of first entry. This increased solidarity among Member States will be accompanied by better protection of our external borders thanks to a compulsory screening of asylum seekers who enter the European Union and expansion of the database with information recorded upon their arrival to integrate biometric identifiers and thus enable the monitoring of asylum seekers. These innovations will help fight illegal movement more effectively and facilitate the return of people in an irregular situation.

More consideration was taken of the external dimension of migration, with the creation of a new forum dedicated to this issue which has met regularly in recent months.

Steps forward on European defence policy

➤ **The Strategic Compass:** this white paper on European defence is an unprecedented exercise in the history of the European Union. It contributes to the emergence of a common strategic culture and a strengthening of the cohesion of Europeans, and is a genuine roadmap for the ten years ahead, with tangible actions to undertake regarding military operations, resilience, investment in defence, and partnerships.

➤ **Reinforcing the defence industry:** in Versailles, the European Heads of State and Government established a strong objective of building European defence capabilities. The Commission presented an analysis of investment needs and necessary action to this end. It will swiftly develop instruments to support the replenishment of stockpiles of Member States having provided equipment to Ukraine and encourage investment in the manufacturing of European defence equipment, thanks to the VAT exemption and financial support.

Prosperity and stability of the European Neighbourhood

➤ **Overhauling our relationship with Africa:** the French Presidency provided an opportunity to overhaul our relationship with the African Union by focusing on a mutually beneficial, renewed and stronger partnership. This initiative of the French Presidency led the European Union to announce at the Summit on 17 and 18 February, €150 billion in investments, focusing on 10 themes including health, the energy sector, construction of modern infrastructure and the acceleration of large-scale projects to fight climate change, such as the Great Green Wall.

➤ **The European political community:** the French Presidency provided an opportunity to promote a new proposal concerning the political organization of our continent. The European Political Community, put forward on 9 May by President Macron, was endorsed on 23 June by the European leaders. It will strengthen the political, economic, cultural and security ties across Europe, with European States who share our democratic values. It will be a forum for coordination, decision-making and cooperation to tangibly address the challenges Europe is facing: foreign policy and security issues, climate change and the supply of energy and other raw materials, food security, the development of infrastructures and their interconnection, mobility, migration, the fight against organized crime, and relations with other geopolitical actors.

2. Building a new European growth model

Making Europe a major continent for production, innovation and job creation

➤ **International Procurement**

Instrument: adopted after 10 years of negotiations, this regulation will restore fair competition rules for European companies on global markets. The Commission will be able to investigate restrictions on access or discriminatory practices of a third State, and in turn, restrict that State's access to European procurement contracts if it imposes restrictions on European States itself.

➤ **Instrument to fight foreign**

subsidies distorting the internal market: European rules on state aid apply only to Member States, and third States do not apply the same rules to their companies. Third States can therefore grant huge subsidies to their companies in order to win public tenders in Europe. This new European legislation puts an end to this practice.

➤ **Protecting European consumers:**

through legislation on the common charger, the European Union requires all manufacturers to make a single charger for telephones, tablets and cameras. This represents progress for the climate and purchasing power. An agreement was also reached between Member States to better regulate consumer credit, including by ensuring consumers are better informed and preventing over-indebtedness.

➤ **Advancing industrial**

cooperation: Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEIs) have grown substantially during the French Presidency, including in the micro-electronics, connectivity and health sectors.

➤ **A more ambitious European**

space policy: the Space Summit in Toulouse on 16 and 17 February enabled progress in creating sovereign European infrastructures. The European Union will establish an independent connectivity constellation and has agreed on a shared vision for space traffic management in order to protect our satellites from collisions and hostile acts.

➤ **Better financing of our**

economies: the French Presidency allowed progress to be made on several texts regulating European financial services, including to set standards for green bonds, for ensuring the IT security of financial institutions like banks, insurance companies and investment firms and to better regulate crypto assets.

Implementing our climate ambitions

➤ **Enabling a 55% reduction in emissions by 2030:** to make Europe the first carbon-neutral continent and reduce our emissions by 55% by 2030, Member States have reached agreements on a series of major texts. As a result, we are strengthening the European carbon market and extending it to sectors which were not involved, such as the maritime sector; we are ending the sale of vehicles with petrol or diesel combustion engines by 2035; and we are providing a €59 billion support fund for supporting Europeans to support this transition.

➤ **Standards reciprocity:** The French Presidency enabled considerable progress on the issue of mirror measures, allowing the same environmental and health production standards to be applied to European products and those imported from third countries. For example, this principle was used in the agreement on batteries, which sets out the sustainable development and security requirements applicable to batteries on sale across the European Union, regardless of their origin. Access to the EU market will be denied for those failing to comply.

➤ **Combatting imported deforestation:** the French Presidency enabled an agreement between Member States on European legislation to prevent products contributing to deforestation or forest degradation from entering the European market. This will ensure that the products we consume on a daily basis, such as coffee, chocolate and meat, do not destroy the world's great tropical forests.

➤ **The publication of information on sustainability by companies:** As a result of the agreement between the Council and the European Parliament, companies with more than 250 employees or which are listed on the stock market must now report their environmental, social and management policies on standardized, substantiated and certified documents. This provides greater transparency for citizens, consumers and investors so that companies can play a full role in society. A driver for environmental transparency, our increased ambitions in terms of climate reporting will enable us to report on companies' performances and strengthen European standards amid stiff international standard-setting competition.

Action for gender equality

➤ **The role of women on corporate boards:** under an agreement between the European Council and European Parliament reached following ten years of deadlocked negotiations, listed European companies must have an balanced representation of men and women on their boards. Member States must now seek to ensure that, by 2026, in listed companies, at least 40% of non-executive director posts or 33% of all executive and non-executive director posts are occupied by each sex.

Outermost regions

At the initiative of our Presidency, proposals drawn up in liaison with the EU's nine outermost regions fed into the new European Commission strategy focused on the consequences of the pandemic, economic recovery, social issues and the digital transition.

3. A human Europe

➤ **Conference on the Future of Europe:** under the French Presidency, the Conference on the Future of Europe, proposed by the French President, put forward recommendations drawn up by European citizens. This unprecedented democratic exercise involved more than 700,000 European citizens across the continent, including more than 50,000 young people in France. It is now up to the Member States and institutions to implement the citizens' proposals.

Action to support the rule of law and protect fundamental rights

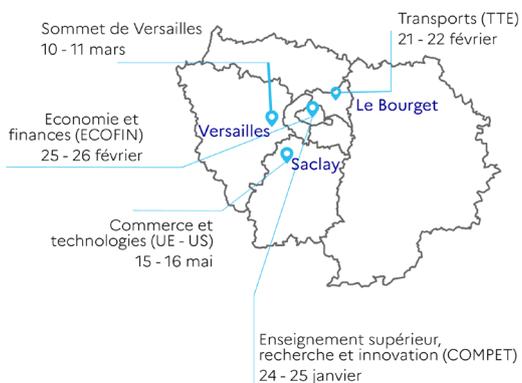
➤ **Rule of law:** the French Presidency used all available tools to continue advancing the rule of law in Europe. It opened a debate on strengthening the regulation on rule of law conditionality for the protection of the Union budget, which is now in force, which enables measures to respond to any violation in the field that has an impact on the European budget.

➤ **Fundamental rights:** at the instigation of the French Presidency, the Council adopted conclusions on the fight against racism and antisemitism. A strong majority of Member States supported the proposal to add hate speech and hate crimes to the list of offences under European legislation. Once adopted unanimously and approved by Parliament, it will enable the EU to legislate in criminal matters on hate speech and hate crimes, including those based on gender and sexual orientation.

The French Presidency in 29 French towns and cities



Île-de-France



Outre-mer



 Informal Meetings

 Ministerial Conferences



europe2022.fr