European Council conclusions on EU-UK relations, 15 October 2020

II. EU-UK relations

3. The European Council recalls that the transition period will end on 31 December 2020 and notes with concern that progress on the key issues of interest to the Union is still not sufficient for an agreement to be reached.

4. The European Council reaffirms the Union’s determination to have as close as possible a partnership with the United Kingdom on the basis of the negotiating directives of 25 February 2020, while respecting the previously agreed European Council guidelines, as well as statements and declarations, notably those of 25 November 2018, in particular as regards the level playing field, governance and fisheries.

5. Against this background, the European Council invites the Union’s chief negotiator to continue negotiations in the coming weeks, and calls on the UK to make the necessary moves to make an agreement possible.

6. As regards the Internal Market Bill tabled by the UK government, the European Council recalls that the Withdrawal Agreement and its Protocols must be fully and timely implemented.

7. The European Council calls upon Member States, Union institutions and all stakeholders to step up their work on preparedness and readiness at all levels and for all outcomes, including that of no agreement, and invites the Commission, in particular, to give timely consideration to unilateral and time-limited contingency measures that are in the EU’s interest.

8. The European Council will remain seized of the matter.
I. COVID-19

1. The European Council assessed the current epidemiological situation, which is unprecedented and gives rise to very serious concern.

2. It welcomed the progress achieved so far on overall coordination at EU level against COVID-19, including the recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement. It calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to continue the overall coordination effort based on the best available science, notably regarding quarantine regulations, cross-border contact tracing, testing strategies, the joint assessment of testing methods, the mutual recognition of tests, and the temporary restriction on non-essential travel into the EU. The European Council will regularly revert to this matter.

3. Welcoming the work at EU level on the development and distribution of vaccines, the European Council reiterates the need for a robust authorisation and monitoring process, the building of vaccination capacity in the EU, and fair and affordable access to vaccines. The European Council also encourages further cooperation at global level.

II. EU-UK relations

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III. Climate change

10. To meet the objective of a climate-neutral EU by 2050 in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, the EU needs to increase its ambition for the coming decade and update its climate and energy policy framework. In that context, the European Council discussed the Commission’s Communication on ‘Stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition’, including the proposed emissions reduction target of at least 55% by 2030, and the actions required to achieve that ambition.

11. Recalling its previous conclusions, the European Council considers that the updated target should be delivered collectively by the EU in the most cost-effective manner possible. All Member States will participate in this effort, taking into account national circumstances and considerations of fairness and solidarity. All relevant EU legislation and policies need to contribute to the new 2030 target and to the fulfilment of the climate neutrality objective, while respecting a level playing field and preventing carbon leakage.
12. The European Council invites the Council to take work on this agenda forward. It invites the Commission to conduct in-depth consultations with Member States to assess the specific situations and to provide more information about the impact at Member States' level. The European Council will return to the issue at its December meeting with a view to agreeing a new emissions reduction target for 2030 and the submission of the EU’s updated nationally determined contribution (NDC) to the UNFCCC before the end of the year.

13. The European Council calls upon all other Parties to also submit an updated NDC. It underlines the importance of strong coordinated action through active European climate diplomacy, with a view to joining forces on the global stage to further advance the cause of fighting climate change.

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