

Press statement by President Costa following the meeting with Chancellor of Austria, Christian Stocker

Guten Morgen Bundeskanzler, liebe Christian, thank you for welcoming me here in Vienna and for the productive exchange we had today.

These exchanges, in each leader's own office are essential: they let me see our common challenges from your national perspective; and to better understand where you are coming from. Because this is how twenty-seven will arrive together, united, at our shared priorities.

Our unity matters now more than ever, as we face a stark new geopolitical reality. It requires us to accelerate our work for a safe, prosperous and competitive Europe. And that needs to be reflected in one of the most important decisions we need to take this year: on our next long-term budget for the period 2028 - 2034. This cannot be business as usual.

We need a new approach, with a new structure and a new way of allocating our resources. We need a budget that reinforces trust in Europe's economy and security. A budget that addresses the concerns and expectations of our citizens. A modernised budget focused on:

- boosting our industry
- supporting our innovators
- protecting our citizens
- defending our borders

And a budget in which cohesion and agricultural policy remain as key pillars to ensure regional development and food security across our continent.

Like national budgets, we need to make choices and to meet our priorities within limited resources, in order to keep national contributions and the overall envelope at a reasonable level. That is why the new own resources, the new revenue streams for the EU have a place in the package. They will give us the flexibility we need to reach our shared objective. It is a decision we cannot afford to delay. We need an agreement by the end of this year.

As we face a challenging geopolitical outlook, climate change and technological transformation, now more than ever, our citizens, our companies, our farmers, our researchers demand – and deserve – predictability.

Thank you, dear Christian, for your engagement and commitment to reaching an agreement. Beyond our future budget, we need to make our economy stronger. A competitive Europe is a crucial element of our strategic autonomy. We need to create the conditions for European industries and businesses to innovate, thrive, grow, and generate quality jobs for our citizens.

The 'One Europe, One Market' agenda sets out an ambitious timeline to achieve decisive progress in 2026 and 2027 towards:

- simplifying our rules and cutting red tape
- completing the single market, especially the capital market
- ensuring affordable energy
- supporting innovation, and
- reducing our strategic dependencies

This work is under way; but we need to stay on track and even accelerate. To keep up the momentum, the European Council will return to competitiveness in October. And we discussed today our preparations for the October European Council, which will cover several important issues, including migration. Migration is a European challenge that requires a European response. Our work on all dimensions of this issue must continue.

I would also like to thank you, dear Christian, for Austria's strong support for Ukraine and your commitment to a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. We will continue to support Ukraine, alongside continuing to increase pressure on Russia.

Finally, we discussed enlargement. Supporting Ukraine, Moldova and the Western Balkans on their paths to membership is an

investment in the security and prosperity of the whole of Europe. That process remains merit-based: when candidates deliver, we deliver, and the process moves forward. It is a process firmly anchored in the rule of law. It is also a process that we want to see moving faster: gradual integration into the European Union market is key.

Finally, dear Christian, thank you as always for your engagement, and I look forward to continuing our work together in the European Council.

Thank you.

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