



## Statement by President von der Leyen with President Costa at the G7 Summit

Évian, 15 June 2026

Thank you very much. I am looking forward to this G7 in Évian under the French Presidency. We meet against the backdrop of geopolitical fragmentation, economic reconfiguration and a rapid technological change. Our main goal here is, on the one hand, to address the structural challenges of the global economy, specifically global imbalances and overcapacities. And on the other hand, we want to focus on crises that are affecting all of us – the war in Ukraine, the conflict in the Middle East, and indeed Ebola. So we will have a packed agenda, and I am very much looking forward to the discussion with the G7 leaders and the guest countries that you all named.

Let me start with the structural topic. A key topic for this year's G7 is global economic imbalances. This means that some countries produce too much and do not consume enough, and vice versa. And these dynamics are increasingly dangerous for the stability of the global economy. That is why I very much welcome President Macron's focus on this topic – not at least because it is increasingly becoming relevant for the European Union. If you look at the year 2025, this will be remembered as the year where, for the first time ever, all Member States had a trade deficit with China. The European Union recorded its largest ever trade deficit of EUR 360 billion. This is of course not sustainable. As you know: in Europe, our strategy is very clear – de-risk, not decouple. And concretely, this means we really have to step up and accelerate building domestic capacity on the one hand. And on the other hand, we have to weave our worldwide net of free trade agreements because this is the means to diversify our supply chains. At the same time, we also need to protect our market from unfair practices. Over the last years, we have developed and deployed our toolbox from safeguards to anti-subsidy measures to address unfair competition and even cases of coercion. In the G7, there is a general understanding that unity and coordination among G7 is paramount in this topic. We all experience the same patterns in our economies. Take for example the topic of critical raw materials. We need to come together to achieve the adequate scale for these critical raw materials. And this is why we are working with the G7 and other partner countries on a critical raw material agreement. Unity is the precondition for G7 to achieve a level playing field globally.

Now, moving from structural challenges to the ongoing crises, we will discuss the situation in the Middle East. And let me also start by welcoming the agreement reached between the United States and Iran. The priority now is implementation. The Strait of Hormuz must reopen, and freedom of navigation must be restored – toll-free. This is essential for the regional stability and of course also for the global economy. The agreement should open the door to wider talks and lead to the end of Iran's nuclear and ballistic programmes. And let me also underline that there can be no lasting peace while Lebanon remains in flames. We call for a genuine ceasefire and the full respect for Lebanon's sovereignty. This crisis also carries a clear lesson. Once again, we have seen our energy dependency being weaponised. So in this framework, we will discuss how to reduce our dependence on transit through the Strait. For example, alternative export routes have been created that are more resilient and offer choices. And other routes will be built – for example, a typical one is IMEC.

Turning now to Ukraine. We look forward to welcoming President Zelenskyy tomorrow. Russia's brutal war of aggression has now lasted indeed longer than World War I. And in the face of escalating attacks, Europe keeps up its unwavering support to Ukraine. Our EUR 90 billion loan package covers two-thirds of Ukraine's financing needs for this year and for the next year. The first disbursements will come still this month. And for the remaining third, we need Ukraine's partners to step up. This will be a topic at this Summit. We are also preparing for the next winter together with Ukraine. Together with Canada, we are leading the preparedness work. We are also joining the pledging efforts of President Macron. And I can announce a contribution of EUR 75 million in grant funding for the New Safe Confinement.

Now you will all recall, at our last G7 in Kananaskis, the situation for Ukraine was much more challenging. Today, Ukraine is in a different position. Let me recall: Ukraine is holding the frontline and even partially regaining territory. Ukraine has developed the capability to strike strategic targets deep inside Russia. And Ukraine has become a world-leading producer of cutting-edge military equipment. On the other hand, Russia is feeling the strain and pressure. Our sanctions are biting and cutting deep. Putin's war economy has never been as weak. And at the same time, we are anchoring Ukraine in Europe. Today, we opened the first cluster of the EU accession negotiations. This is a huge step forward. Ukraine has made remarkable reform progress. They have delivered, so now we have to deliver too.

Finally, turning to AI. We have seen impressive advances in frontier models that will drive progress in science and technology. At the same time, these models also multiply the risks. The key question of today is how to introduce new models safely. Now, testing before entry into service – that is not new. It is very much what we are used to, for example, for airplanes and medical devices. Here, cooperation of G7 countries is paramount. We should exchange information and ensure cooperation of independent entities that are evaluating models before their market release. The other important dimension is how to reap the benefits of the AI revolution. And here, adoption is key. Europe and the United States are at par in terms of AI adoption, but we all know that much more needs to be done in terms of industrial AI and transforming our manufacturing. Here, AI adoption is key. The G7 countries have to win the battle of adoption. And it is all about application. We – as you know – as European Union have recently presented the Tech Sovereignty package to drive AI innovation in Europe. We want our own AI future, not in isolation – that is very important – but together with our trusted partners.

My final point, we are protecting children online. I want to thank President Macron for tabling this crucial topic. Because the opportunities of the digital world are clear, but so are the risks. The debate is not whether young people should have access to social media, the debate is whether social media should have access to our children and teenagers, and when. And here the case for social media delays, because of the risks, is getting stronger. We all know that childhood and early adolescence are formative years, for the brain functioning but, most importantly, also for the development of a personality. Children need to develop their skills to act with autonomy offline but, of course, also online. And we need to give them the protection, the time to mature and, of course, the means to do so. There is also a vast responsibility of the tech companies. In Europe, platforms must prove that they are safe by design, and this principle is especially important for our children and teenagers.

So you see we have a lot to work about ahead of us. And the results of this Summit will feed into our discussion that we will then have at the end of the week at the European Council back in Brussels.

Thank you very much.

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