

Joint Statement by the U.S. and EU following the 11th U.S.-EU Energy Council

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1. Energy.gov
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The text of the following statement was released by the Government of the United States of America and European Union.

The eleventh United States-European Union (EU) Energy Council (“Council”) met today in Washington, chaired by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy David M. Turk, European Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson, and EEAS Acting Deputy Secretary General Bélen Martínez Carbonell. The Deputy Head of Mission of the Kingdom of Belgium to the United States of America, Sophie Karlshausen, represented the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The U.S.-EU Energy Council serves as the lead transatlantic forum for coordinating strategic energy issues at political and technical levels. Transatlantic energy cooperation is vital to advancing diverse and resilient energy systems, bolstering energy security, promoting stability and transparency in global energy markets, and accelerating just energy transitions consistent with our mutual commitment to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions at home and globally by 2050.

On this occasion, the Council also recognized the important work of the U.S.-EU Task Force on Energy Security, which helped ensure the EU’s energy security, achieve a 99% EU natural gas storage filling level ahead of the winter 2023-24, and phase out reliance on Russian fossil fuels. Moving forward, the U.S. and EU will continue working closely together and build on these efforts to ensure energy security in Europe and beyond and contribute to decarbonization globally.

The Council welcomed the outcome of the first global stocktake under the Paris Agreement, including the call on all Paris Agreement Parties to come forward in their next nationally determined contributions with ambitious, economy-wide emission reduction targets, covering all greenhouse gases, sectors and categories and aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Council also emphasized the need for the world to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly, and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science.

In this context, the Council reiterated the urgency of phasing out unabated coal in the energy sector globally, in particular ending the continued investment in new coal-fired power plants. The Council underlined its commitment to advance on the COP28 goals of tripling renewable energy capacity and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030, including through action at national, regional, and local levels. Energy systems with diverse and resilient supply chains that do not overly rely on a single supplier for fuels, critical raw materials and minerals, or other inputs are key to reducing dependencies and countering attempts to weaponize energy.

Reinforcing Support for Ukraine and Eliminating the Threat of Russia Weaponizing Energy

The Council reaffirmed its enduring commitment to Ukraine and its people. We strongly condemn Russia's illegal and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, including attacks on the nation's energy and civil infrastructure. We stress the need to continue military support, notably air defense, to protect such infrastructure, and are increasing our efforts to provide humanitarian aid and critical energy sector assistance. We reiterate our demand for Russia to immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. The Council stresses the importance of security and stability in the Black Sea.

The Council acknowledged the important contributions of the United States, the EU, and its Member States, including through the G7+ coordination group, to provide Ukraine with essential material, technical, and financial assistance to rapidly repair, restore, and defend its energy systems and to support Ukraine's efforts to build a more resilient, sustainable and decentralized energy system that is more integrated with Europe. The Council highlighted the will of the G7+ group to work with Ukraine on its Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan and to implement the Clean Energy Partnership including further necessary reforms, which are essential to attracting private sector investment for Ukraine's green recovery and reconstruction.

The Council welcomed Ukraine's formal membership in the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E) and commended the completion of required actions to enable its permanent synchronization with the power systems of continental Europe. This milestone enhances regional energy security and helps enable Ukraine and Europe to accelerate the broader energy transition. The United States and the EU also recalled the growing number of cyber and physical threats to energy infrastructure and plan to continue related cooperation to bolster resilient energy systems, including in the context of the ongoing synchronization of the Baltic States' electricity networks with the Continental European Network.

The Council reiterated its strong condemnation of Russia's continued control as well as irresponsible and dangerous actions at and around Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (ZNPP) that puts countless people at risk. The Council reaffirmed its support for the five concrete principles presented by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Director General to the UN Security Council and for the Agency's work to apply safeguards and assist Ukraine in managing the safety and security of its nuclear facilities. The Council welcomed Ukraine joining the IAEA Board of Governors. The United States and the EU strongly call on Russia to heed the resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors and General Conference, to unconditionally withdraw its personnel and military equipment from the ZNPP, to give full and unhindered access to IAEA experts to all areas of the ZNPP, and to return its full control to its rightful owner, Ukraine.

The Council reiterated its strongest commitment to confront, with adequate measures, Russia's efforts to destabilize the global energy markets and to circumvent sanctions. In this context, the Council intends to continue intensifying cooperation on the enforcement of the oil price cap, coordinating bilateral and multilateral responses to mitigate excessive market volatility, supporting the energy transition required to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, and continue cooperative measures on energy efficiency, electrification, and other initiatives to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in general, and Russian fossil fuels in particular in order to limit Russia's ability to finance its war of aggression against Ukraine. We reaffirmed our resolve to continue taking steps to limit Russia's future energy revenue, which directly supports the brutal war against Ukraine.

To promote energy diversification, security, resilience and sustainability, the Council recalled the strategic importance of energy relations with partner countries in regions such as the Caspian Sea, Black Sea, Eastern Mediterranean, and North Africa. The pivotal role of reliable energy partners in these regions calls for mutually beneficial cooperation on security of energy supplies as well as enhanced cooperation on critical infrastructure.

Energy Security, Transition, and Reforms in Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and the Western Balkans

The Council reaffirmed that the future of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, the Western Balkans, as well as Georgia, and their citizens, lies with the EU and would continue supporting their integration with the EU, including through the enlargement process as a matter of priority for the years to come.

The Council welcomed the European Council's 14 December 2023 decision to also open EU accession negotiations with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova and reaffirmed continued support for their citizens. The Council intends to continue assisting the countries' long-term economic and energy transition towards climate neutrality and integration with the EU's energy system, including by accelerating the development of energy infrastructure and interconnections. The Council welcomed Ukraine's and the Republic of Moldova's reform efforts towards meeting the objectives underpinning their candidacy for EU membership and encouraged the countries to continue to make progress on these reforms.

The Council reaffirmed that both sides intend to deepen cooperation to support regional integration and energy sector investments to achieve climate neutrality in the Western Balkans, including by supporting decarbonization efforts and phasing out their dependency on coal and Russian natural gas and oil imports as soon as possible. The United States and the EU continue to promote transparent, integrated, and competitive energy markets in the Western Balkans, in line with EU enlargement policy, as well as with the climate and energy objectives and obligations under the Energy Community Treaty.

Energy Policy, Technology, and Innovation

The United States and the EU pledged to continue to cooperate closely, at multilateral and bilateral levels, to encourage investments and complementary policies, standards, and regulations in the transition towards climate neutrality. Including through our Clean Energy Incentives Dialogue, we intend to work in a transparent and mutually reinforcing manner, to avoid zero-sum competition and distortions in transatlantic trade and investment flows that could arise from our respective policies and incentives.

The Council welcomed the 2023 announcement of an international working group to establish an internationally aligned approach, which builds on existing frameworks on greenhouse gas supply chain emissions measurement, monitoring, reporting and verification (MMRV) framework for providing transparent, comparable and reliable information to natural gas market participants.

The Council intends to continue advancing the implementation of the Global Methane Pledge, including through promoting effective global schemes to limit leakage, venting, and flaring in the natural gas, oil, and coal sector, with particular attention to reducing methane emissions from internationally-traded fossil fuels. The Council recognized the UNEP's International Methane Emissions Observatory as a key independent methane emissions data collector and verifier, and intends to continue to support its initiatives, including the Oil and Gas Methane Partnership 2.0 and the Methane Alert and Response System with strong industry engagement.

Further, the Council noted the role that nuclear power can play in decarbonizing energy systems in countries that have decided or will decide to rely on nuclear energy. The United States and the EU intend to intensify cooperation to reduce dependency on Russia for nuclear materials and fuel cycle services, and support ongoing efforts by affected EU Member States to diversify nuclear supplies, as appropriate. The Council expressed support for multilateral efforts to identify alternative nuclear energy-related suppliers across the global nuclear supply chain for relevant countries.

The Council noted interest in enhancing cooperation to promote the development of rules-based and transparent global hydrogen markets based on reliable international standards and certification schemes primarily through mutually agreed-upon international platforms.

The Council noted the vital importance of diversifying and securing supply chains for critical minerals and raw materials as well as voluntary stockpiling necessary for the energy transition to climate-neutrality and reinforced the value of U.S.-EU collaboration in fora such as the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) and its newly established MSP Forum, the Conference on Critical Materials and Minerals, and the International Energy Agency Critical Minerals Working Party, as well as the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. The Council welcomed a jointly drafted discussion paper on lithium supply for the energy transition and signaled support for a set of U.S.-EU focused stakeholder roundtables over the coming year and an accompanying recommendations document to map pathways to foster supply chain linkages between the United States and the EU.

Furthering last year's Council endorsement to build on existing dialogues and frameworks, the Council noted research and innovation cooperation advancements in the fields of i) fusion research, development, and commercialization, in particular based on the new Model Project Agreement, and through the ITER Project, and ii) mutual modelling capabilities for transition pathways to climate-neutrality. In particular, the Council welcomed joint work on scenario development of transition pathways with applications of machine learning.

As the United States and the EU scale up policies and technologies that intend to drive decarbonization particularly in hard to abate sectors, carbon capture and storage has emerged as an area for joint cooperation. Following a series of policy exchanges, the Council identified two technology and innovation collaboration areas: CO₂ transport and carbon capture demonstrations for emerging applications.

The Council noted the U.S.-EU co-convened workshop in 2023 on just transition, energy poverty, and economic and workforce development assistance for communities in transition, disadvantaged communities, and communities experiencing environmental hazard exposure. Further, the Council supported the intent to hold a second workshop, focused on multi-level governance in energy poverty policies, to take place in 2024, followed by the publication of a joint summary document.

Strengthen Cooperation to Advance the Global Energy Transition

Looking ahead and building on the aforementioned joint activities, the United States and the EU intend to continue to ambitiously and resolutely strengthen their strategic relationship to ensure energy security, align policies, and deepen cooperation on technologies and innovation, all with the aim of accelerating the global transition to climate neutrality. The United States and the EU intend to also continue working closely together to this end in international fora.