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## **European Council: step towards the EU for Ukraine and Moldova. Weapons, money and aid from the 27 to Kyiv. Russia responsible for food crisis**

(Brussels) Ukraine and Moldova were given the green light from the European Council for their future EU membership. The Council – which granted the “status of candidate country” to the two states - also recognised the “European perspective” of Georgia “once the priorities have been addressed”. This is the outcome of the first day of European Council meetings that Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky also joined by video link. “This is a historic moment that allows us to define the contours of the EU. And a strong message of determination in geopolitical terms. We have also reached an agreement on how to maintain and increase our support to Ukraine, both financially and militarily, and we have reaffirmed our commitment to tackling the consequences of the war unleashed by Russia for food security and energy issues”, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, said at a press conference. The Council also stressed in its conclusions that “Russia, by weaponising food in its war against Ukraine, is solely responsible for the global food security crisis it has provoked”. The Council urges “Russia to immediately stop targeting agricultural facilities and removing cereals, and to unblock the Black Sea, in particular the port of Odesa, so as to allow the export of grain and commercial shipping operations”. The Council “supports the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General to this end”. European leaders also argue that the sanctions against Russia “allow the free flow of agricultural and food products and the delivery of humanitarian assistance”. With regard to prisoners of war, “Ukrainians, notably children, who have been forcibly removed to Russia must be immediately allowed to return safely”, the Council stated.

Valentina Bombelli