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## **European Council: Michel (president) to 27 EU leaders, on Middle East crisis “united and coherent”. Possible call for a “humanitarian pause”**

“Our meeting comes at a time of great global instability and insecurity, exacerbated most recently by developments in the Middle East. These developments require our immediate attention, without distracting us from our continued support to Ukraine. Our responsibility is to remain united and coherent and to act in line with our values as enshrined in the Treaties”. The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, said this in his invitation letter to the EU’s 27 Heads of State and Government, ahead of the Summit scheduled for 3pm on Thursday, 26 October, and the Euro Summit the following day. “The situation in the Middle East is a tragedy. We expressed our common position in our statement of 15 October. At our meeting - he said - I expect us to condemn once again in the strongest possible terms Hamas’ brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks against Israel and recognise Israel’s right to defend itself, in line with international law and international humanitarian law. We will also reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages”. “The deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to be of grave concern. We need to discuss, firstly, how to urgently ensure the effective delivery of humanitarian aid, and access to the most basic needs. Secondly, we must engage, in a united and coherent front, with partners to avoid a dangerous regional escalation of the conflict. Furthermore, relaunching the peace process based on the two-state solution is the only way forward. Lastly, we should address the effects of this conflict in the European Union – this includes looking at its implications for the cohesion of our societies, our security, and migratory movements”. At the end of their Summit, the EU leaders – according to the draft EU Summit Conclusions – may call for a “humanitarian pause”, that is, a truce to allow the delivery of aid to the affected populations.

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