EMERGENCY SESSION: SATURDAY, 8:00 A.M. CET
Situation Brief for the European Council, ECOFIN, the Environment Council, and AGRIFISH
Classified: Delegations Only

You are the people who decide for Europe. A few hours ago the Union was attacked, not once but four times, in four different domains, in four different member states, and the intelligence services now tell us the attacks were coordinated. When markets open on Monday, the world will judge whether twenty-seven governments could act as one. Your four bodies are meeting in emergency session this morning. Read this brief in full before you walk in, then turn to the assignments for your own body.

What happened overnight

The Baltic. Just after 1:00 a.m. Central European Time, two undersea power and data cables linking the Baltic states to the Nordic grid were severed about 40 nautical miles off the Lithuanian coast. A commercial tanker of the kind associated with Russia's "shadow fleet" was in the immediate vicinity. It left without answering hails. A segment of an adjacent undersea fuel pipeline has ruptured, and fuel is now leaking into the Baltic.

The banks. Ninety minutes later, a sophisticated intrusion hit the clearing infrastructure behind the Digital Euro pilot and the payment systems of three national central banks. Interbank settlement was frozen for almost twelve hours before backup systems came back. Forensic teams link the malware's command infrastructure to a group with a documented history of Iranian state ties.

The Black Sea and the food supply. A cargo vessel carrying grain bound for EU ports was struck by a naval drone inside the Black Sea's protected shipping corridor. Within hours, social media accounts previously tied to Iranian influence operations began pushing false claims of E. coli contamination in EU dairy and meat. Shoppers are panic-buying, consumers are boycotting, and several member states have halted cross-border livestock transport on their own.

The terminal. An explosion tore through a fuel-storage tank at a Mediterranean LNG import terminal. The fire has sent a toxic plume across a national border and threatens a secondary spill into coastal waters. Early forensic indicators point to a small explosive device, not an accident. A group with prior Iranian-proxy links has hinted online that it was responsible, but has not claimed the attack.

Who did this, and the problem you inherit

Nobody has claimed the operation as a whole. A joint assessment circulated to your governments overnight attributes the cable sabotage and the drone strike to Russian military intelligence, and the cyber intrusion, the disinformation campaign, and the terminal explosion to Iranian-linked actors. Intercepted communications suggest the two sides coordinated.

Then there is China. Investigators traced components in the intrusion's jamming hardware, and in the Black Sea drone, to a Chinese state-linked electronics manufacturer. Beijing denies any government role. It says the parts were sold commercially, were diverted by a third party without its knowledge, and it has offered to "cooperate on an export-control investigation." Your own intelligence services cannot agree whether this is negligence, a deliberate blind eye, or genuine diversion. Your governments cannot agree either, and whatever you decide about China will shape every other decision you make today.

Where things stand at 8:00 a.m.

Baltic banking systems are stabilizing but nervous. A Mediterranean member state is asking for EU civil-protection support to fight the fire and contain the spill. Grain and livestock markets are moving on rumor as much as fact. Some capitals are demanding a fast, visible response. Others are urging caution until the picture on China is clearer. Moscow, Tehran, and Beijing are watching to see whether you are divided, and so are your own voters.

Your instructions

Each body must produce conclusions or a decision on every item below by the end of the session. The order of the items is not a ranking. Several items are written so that your governments will not obviously agree, and that is deliberate. Represent your country's real interests: its exposure, its budget, its relationship with Russia, Iran, and China, and its voters. Do not look for the easy consensus. Items marked "if time allows" come last. Remember that your four bodies are acting on the same emergency, so what one body commits to will constrain the others, and the European Council will look to the Councils for the money and the detail behind any political commitment.

If you sit on the European Council

1. *Attribution and sanctions.* How far will you go in naming and sanctioning those responsible? Will you name China in your conclusions, and if so, how?
2. *Solidarity and mutual assistance.* Will you invoke the solidarity clause (Art. 222 TFEU), the mutual defense clause (Art. 42.7 TEU), or both? What will you actually require member states to do for one another?
3. *Public and diplomatic response.* What does the Union say to its citizens and to the world, and when, while the disinformation campaign is still running? Balance deterrence and reassurance against the risk of escalation, coordinate with the UN Security Council and the G7, and decide what you will do if a member state wants to act on its own.
4. *(If time allows) Support for the hardest-hit states.* Who gets help first, and what role does the Commission play in coordinating the funds the other Councils commit?

If you sit on ECOFIN

1. *Stabilizing the financial system.* What emergency liquidity will the EU provide, through which mechanism, and on what terms?
2. *The Digital Euro pilot.* Will you pause it pending a security review, accelerate a hardened redesign, or continue on schedule with patches? Your answer collides with existing disputes over sovereignty and resilience on one side and surveillance, bank disintermediation, and cost on the other.
3. *Financial sanctions.* Which Russia- and Iran-linked networks, assets, and institutions will you target? How will 27 national systems enforce the measures consistently? Will you extend restrictions to the Chinese manufacturer or its financial partners?
4. *(If time allows) A compensation fund.* Will you create a fund for banks and businesses in the most affected states, and who pays for it?

If you sit on the Environment Council

1. *Emergency environmental response.* How will you coordinate the response to the Baltic leak and to the Mediterranean fire and spill risk? Will you activate the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, and how will cleanup costs be funded and divided, given that the plume crosses a border?
2. *Carbon market flexibility.* Will you grant temporary allowances or exemptions under the ETS? If so, how do you keep an emergency measure from becoming a permanent loophole?
3. *Protecting shared infrastructure.* Will you propose EU-wide minimum standards for monitoring and protecting undersea infrastructure? Then the harder question: whose forces patrol shared or contested waters, and who pays?
4. *(If time allows) The green transition.* Should this attack prompt a broader effort to protect grids, pipelines, and offshore wind from deliberate sabotage?

If you sit on AGRIFISH

1. *Food security and the Black Sea corridor.* Will you release strategic food reserves and offer price support to farmers? How, or whether, do you coordinate with Ukraine, a non-member whose exports use the same corridor?

2. *The disinformation-driven food scare.* How will you rebuild public confidence quickly, including through the EU food-safety rapid-alert system? Will producers be compensated for losses caused by disinformation rather than a real safety failure, and who funds and shares that cost?

3. *Animal welfare during transport disruption.* Choose an emergency protocol: continued transport under enhanced monitoring, temporary rerouting, or a coordinated pause. A pause costs the major live-export states the most.

4. *(If time allows) The Baltic fishing fleet.* Do fleets near the sabotage site need a temporary safety closure, and how are fishers compensated?