EU Ukraine Summit - Extracts from President Juncker's remarks at the final press conference of EU-Ukraine Summit, 27 April 2015

Kiev, 27 April 2015

Dear President of the Ukrainian Republic, Dear Donald [Tusk],

It is not my first summit between Ukraine and the EU. It is the 17th summit, but it is my 2nd. The first Summit took place in Kyiv on 5 September 1997, under the then Luxembourgish Presidency of the European Council, when I was Prime Minister of Luxembourg, and I co-chaired with President Kuchma the first Summit between the Ukraine and EU. That is just to tell you how old I am. I was happy to be back again in this beautiful city of Kyiv, which I fell in love with when I was here for the very first time.

The other two Presidents have already covered many issues, I will add some elements.

Of course the Ukrainian Government is on a very ambitious avenue as far as reforms are concerned. These are reforms in various sectors: they are important for Ukraine, and important for the EU. I know that they are very demanding; very often I know they are putting painful efforts on Ukrainian citizens, and I have to applaud the courage of the Ukrainian people. Because daily living conditions are very difficult. But the President and the Government — and the EU — are working hard to improve the living standards of the Ukrainians.

We need determination. We are facing a long distance. When you are nourishing important ambitions, you need determination and you need patience. That is what is needed here.

I believe that — as Donald was saying — Ukrainian citizens want to live in a better Ukraine. I believe that, more and more, Ukrainians are becoming European in the sense I understand it, the non-lecturing sense of the word: and so the better the life of Ukrainians will be.

What is important is implementation of reforms. What is important is the fight against corruption. Because, if Ukrainian citizens want to live in a better Ukraine and in the middle of the European family, they also want to live in a corruption-free country. This is of huge importance, not only for Ukrainians, but also for Europeans.

I am happy to tell you we have disbursed the final tranche of €250 million of the outgoing macro-financial assistance.

And we have launched, under the proposal of the European Commission, a new macro-financial assistance operation, the third such, with a total amount of €1.8 billion. I instructed Commission services to frontload the second tranche of the three tranches of the new MFA in such a way that, during this year, 2015, the 2 first tranches would be disbursed. This is technical, but this is the general orientation I gave to Commission services.

I have to reconfirm that we as the European Commission want — and the same is true for the European Council and for Donald Tusk — to have the Free Trade Agreement with Ukraine enter into force on 1 January 2016. This is an important indication, because others want to postpone the entry into force of this Agreement. We don't think that this would be a good or wise idea: it has been postponed once, if we keep postponing and postponing and postponing we will never reach the end. We have insisted on the need, we have to have this Free Trade Agreement, and we have to have it enter into force on 1 January 2016.

I announced to the President of the Republic the intention of the European Commission to provide another €70 million in order to be helpful as far as the Chernobyl shelter is concerned. This will be done in the next coming days.

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L'Ukraine est une grande nation, un grand pays. On a noué des relations privilégiées. Pour l'Europe, continent et UE, ce n'est pas une nation neutre, c'est une nation amie et avec laquelle on veut faire de grandes choses ensemble et nous n'accepterons pas que d'autres nous empêchent de faire de grandes choses ensemble. Sur la question de l'adhésion de l'Ukraine, ce n'est pas une question d'actualité immédiate. Comme disent les Français, à chaque jour suffit sa peine.

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We do think that the Minsk Agreement has to be implemented entirely. The Minsk Agreement does not foresee stepping up Russian aggression in this part of Europe.

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According to me, Ukraine is part of the European family. Not the African family or sub-Saharan family — but the European family.

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