



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

STATEMENT

Brussels, 31 August 2014

Statement by President Barroso following the European Council

Good evening,

As this is the first time I speak with you after those appointments, let me extend my congratulations to my good friend Donald Tusk and to Federica Mogherini on their appointments. I know they are both deeply committed Europeans and I am sure that, together with Jean-Claude Juncker, they will make a great team and they will work actively on European priorities.

And job creation, based on growth, is obviously at the centre of our priorities. It's important that Heads of State & Government will discuss employment, especially youth employment, in October in Italy, building on previous meetings in Berlin and Paris.

The European Commission will ensure a smooth transition between this and the next College of Commissioners. The next Commission will present its orientations on economic matters this autumn. I'm sure that the October European Council will feed the discussion so that the European Council can take important decisions in December.

Obviously, the discussions tonight have been focused on the deteriorating situation in Ukraine and I will limit my comments to that, of course, supporting everything the President of the European Council just said on other important topics as well.

There was, around the table, unity that if Russia continues to escalate the crisis it will come with a high cost.

Like last time, when we discussed this issue at the European Council I can assure you the Commission will be quick to deliver further proposals for restrictive measures, as the European Council has unanimously requested us to present.

But sanctions or restrictive measures are not an end in themselves. They are instruments to show to the Russian leadership that in the 21st century, the current behaviour is not acceptable, and that we urge them to come to reason, and to work constructively with the European Union and of course also with Ukraine. Frankly it makes no sense to have this kind of conflict or kind of new Cold War. I made this point extremely clearly once again to President Putin just yesterday.

The contrast is too strong between the repeated commitments to political dialogue and the dramatic reality on the ground. There can be no military solution to this crisis. It's time for everyone to get down to the business of peace-making. It is not too late, but time is quickly running out.

Only with this path to peace can we credibly address the issues of concern. The Commission has worked tirelessly to de-escalate the situation and achieve negotiated solutions by mediating talks between Russia and Ukraine on energy and trade. On energy, there needs to be a solution that guarantees the security of supply for both Ukraine and

Europe. On trade, we are ready to address pragmatically possible issues arising from the implementation of the DCFTA that is part, as you know, of the Association Agreement.

But in this European Council also after listening to President Poroshenko I can tell you that the leaders were sending a clear message that they stand behind the Ukrainian people and their right to decide their own future.

Our support is already making a tangible difference. The unilateral trade measures the Commission proposed in April have increased Ukrainian exports to the European Union by 14% since then. We have disbursed 600 million euros in macro-financial assistance and 250 million euros in budgetary support. And we stand ready to support Ukraine further.

Within the European Union, we are giving the necessary support to European food producers to mitigate the consequences of Russian retaliatory measures.

Let me finish with a word on the humanitarian situation. The most vulnerable need to be protected. Aid needs to be delivered in coordination with the authorities and under the auspices of the international humanitarian organisations. The Commission has pledged 2.5 million euros and continues to support the activities of the Ukrainian authorities.

Thank you for your attention.

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