

Warsaw Declaration on the reunification of Europe

Our Union, our future

A historic milestone, 1 May 2004 has a great symbolic and practical value in the process of reunification of the continent after the demise of communism in Europe. It was a demanding process, yet replete with stories of political, economic and social success. The European Union has become what it is now- the most developed area of economic integration, freedom, security, and justice- a space of common values and goals. During the recent years, the European Union has faced a period of multifaceted challenges, which we, all the Member States together, handled with the determination of turning them into new opportunities. All of us worked together to make the European Union economically stronger and more secure. We have witnessed the fulfilment of hopes and dreams of many generations of Europeans- dreams of a reunited Europe.

Against the background of this moment of celebrations and joy, in eight days, the leaders of all Member States will meet in Sibiu to reconfirm their commitment to the European project. Elections to the European Parliament and nomination of the new European Commission will follow. We encourage European citizens to cast their votes and make their voices heard. Only with continuing support from our citizens will we be able to reach our common goal of a strong European Union, composed of strong Member States and supported by effective European institutions, acting in line with the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and equality. We have formulated our common vision for the future in Bratislava and Rome. On this basis, we need to engage in collective and inclusive undertakings on the future of the European Union. While preparing for the challenges ahead we need to preserve the achievements of the EU and apply equal approach to all the Member States. Among the variety of issues concerning the future of the EU currently under discussion some merit particular attention.

First, the Single Market needs to be completed in all its dimensions and in line with other policies, with a view to highlighting a holistic approach to the Single Market policies, including in line with the conclusions of the March European Council and bearing in mind the letter of 26 February, 2019 signed by 17 Member States. A sound and well-functioning Single Market means a strong and competitive European Union. Its development requires far-sighted and ambitious actions, as well as fair competition based on clear, balanced, harmonised and transparent rules and political commitment to their implementation. The EU needs to oppose the rise of protectionism both at home and abroad. The removal of barriers stifling further integration as well as the creation of the optimum conditions for economic cooperation is in the interest of all Member States. The improvement of social and economic conditions should go in parallel to ensure sustainable, inclusive growth and actions resulting in better living and working conditions in all Member States. The four freedoms of the Single Market constitute the pillars of the European Union which must be protected and strengthened. The Single Market should remain an integral, indivisible and inclusive area where all Member States are treated equally. We should, however, go further and tap into the enormous potential of the digital part of the Single Market and the development of Artificial Intelligence, so that Europe can successfully compete with other global powers. In order to implement this vision, we need to adopt an approach based on data economy and a high level of cybersecurity. We must also ensure a fair distribution of benefits from the digital development across the Union, including promotion of digital skills.

Second, doors to the EU will remain open. European integration of the Western Balkan countries should be seen as a process of consolidating Europe and must remain a strategic political objective for the EU. Enlargement, underpinned by a merit-based approach, is the most effective policy of supporting reforms, forging political stability, boosting economic growth, and ensuring security and good neighbourly relations between the countries aspiring to the EU membership, as well as between the EU members and aspirants. It is not merely a technical scheme; its transformative

power is vital for building prosperity and security across the continent. We are determined to continue to support countries from the region which implement necessary reforms, adhere to European values and make strategic choices and to share with them our experience from the run-up to EU accession, in line with the commitments from the Thessaloniki Agenda, the Sofia Declaration and the Sofia Priority Agenda.

Third, a decade since the establishment of the Eastern Partnership, the EU has an opportunity to reflect on the initiative, take stock of the progress made and prepare ambitious plans for its future. Bolstering relations with the East is an investment in a stable future of the entire united Europe. The EU should help the Eastern Partners to fulfil their contractual commitments to the EU, in particular under the AA/DCFTA, and deliver reforms. In this context, we will positively examine all proposals to that effect, including those on deepening sectorial integration between the Partners and the EU. Moreover, the EU, in conjunction with its partners, should intensify its efforts within the action-driven framework offered by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to help address the many challenges in the Euro-Mediterranean area. This approach should be based on a positive agenda designed to promote, through dialogue and cooperation, regional peace, security and prosperity, with the ultimate aim of improving people's lives.

Fourth, faced with global challenges and an unstable situation in the European neighbourhood, both in its Eastern and Southern dimensions, the EU's internal and external security needs to be strengthened. The precondition to ensure security of our citizens and effectively promote European political and economic interests is to maintain a strong common position of the Member States. Despite the challenges of the migration crisis, we must avoid unnecessary controls on internal borders and restore the proper functioning of the Schengen area as well as create enabling political climate for its enlargement upon fulfilment of predetermined technical conditions. A comprehensive approach to migration should combine more effective control at the EU's external borders, increased external action in cooperation with the countries of origin and transit and a reformed Common European Asylum System in line with relevant EC conclusions (June 2018 and December 2018). This is a challenge not only for the individual states but for the Union as a whole. In order to stem illegal migration and prevent people from being forced to leave their home countries the EU must engage in addressing the root causes of migration and in the development of their countries of origin. In parallel the EU must be able to provide international protection to those who genuinely need it, in accordance with the Geneva Convention, based on existing international and national legal instruments. Furthermore, we need to address threats of all kinds, including hybrid ones, disinformation, or malicious cyber activities. The EU needs to promote its common values in Europe and on the global scene and strengthen the international rules-based order. It is also important that Europe invests more in strengthening the transatlantic link.

Europe has to enhance its defence capabilities and deepen security cooperation within the EU in cooperation with its partners, such as NATO. The EU-NATO cooperation should be further developed and enhanced, in a mutually reinforcing way, without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of any of the Members, in the spirit of openness and transparency, and in full respect of the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy of both organizations.

Fifth, we acknowledge the severe consequences and direct threat that Climate Change poses to the world and to Europe. It is one of our citizens' main preoccupations to which we shall swiftly respond by shifting to a low GHG emissions economy, thus confirming our leading role in setting the international Climate Change agenda. We welcome the Katowice rulebook, the outcome of COP 24, taking into account the collective further efforts needed and actions undertaken by all Parties to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement. We anticipate the swift submission of an ambitious EU long-term strategy striving for climate neutrality in line with the Paris Agreement, while taking into account Member States' specificities and the competitiveness of European industry.

Sixth, the EU needs a well-balanced agreement on the new Multiannual Financial Framework, supplemented by efficient and user-friendly implementing rules. The Multiannual Financial Framework is the expression of the political priorities we project for our common future. These political priorities should reflect both the increase of EU's involvement in the new challenges, as well as continuation of the treaty-based policies, whose European added value and delivery mechanism, also with respect to the new challenges, have been clearly proven. Benefits of the Cohesion Policy and of the Common Agricultural Policy have positively influenced overall growth in all EU countries and consolidated economic integration of the EU. As stated in the Bratislava's Friends of Cohesion Declaration, the upward social and economic convergence among Member States is beneficial for the EU's long-term stability and unity. Catching up, which was interrupted during the financial and economic crisis, needs to resume and become one of our joint priorities. The EU budget should also help to close the innovation divide within the EU.

The key to the European Union's success is bringing it closer to citizens. They must feel a genuine sense of ownership and control of the general direction in which the Union is heading. For this, we need to step-up common efforts and ensure better communication about the benefits of the EU on citizens' everyday lives and explore ways of enhancing their involvement in the EU affairs. One other aspect worth exploring is increasing the role of national parliaments in the EU decision-making. The governments of all EU Member States must participate in the EU decision-making process on an equal footing and in the spirit of loyal cooperation and unity. Interests of all the Member State should be taken into account. In the context of the proposals to enlarge the scope of decisions taken by qualified majority voting we reiterate that the culture of consensus is at the heart of the Union. Furthermore, we take note of the fact that the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU will entail new political and institutional realities, including in the Council. The European Council should maintain its key role in appointing the new Commission and in defining, by consensus, the general political directions and priorities for the future of the EU.

We declare our readiness to further contribute to the success of the European project as a whole. The European Union is our common good.