Remarks by President Charles Michel to the press after his visit of the Westerwelle Startup Haus in Kigali, Rwanda

I’m very pleased with the opportunity to visit this centre: it’s a great project. And it’s very important for the European Union to cooperate with Africa in general, and with Rwanda in particular, to develop this difficult ambition.

We think in Europe that climate change and digital ambition are the two top priorities. We would also like to develop our alliance between Africa and the European Union.

This is a very concrete project, a very interesting and useful space to make networks possible. We have decided to invest to develop the same kinds of projects in other cities, not only in Kigali, but in other cities in Rwanda.

We will cooperate closely with the Rwandan authorities to ensure that we can develop and strengthen this very strong digital ambition.

COVID-19 is a big challenge for the world. We won’t be safe until everyone is safe. That’s why it’s a top priority for the European Union to work with our partners in Africa, and in Rwanda. And I was very pleased that, on behalf of the European Union, we support these Covax facilities and this Covax programme. Through this programme, which is now effective, we are able to deliver the doses, and we are working to make sure that we can administer the vaccines. And also effective support yesterday with the visit to a health centre in Rwanda, which was very impressive, because we could observe there is a strong commitment to make sure that we are able to implement the vaccination campaign, which is a key for the future.

The next weeks and the next months will be very important, and we intend at European level to continue all our efforts with all our partners, to make sure that with the vaccines we are able to defeat COVID-19. And it is important at economic level because this crisis also has economic and social consequences. That’s why it is very important to make sure that we are able to return to a normal life as soon as possible, and a more normal economic activity, to provide goals, economic development, innovation, and to improve the social situation everywhere.

Weekly schedule of President Charles Michel

Sunday 7 March 2021
Rwanda
Visit to the Mayange Health Center, in the Bugesera District
Meeting with President Paul Kagame and with Secretary General of Organisation internationale de la francophonie (OIF) Louise Mushikiwabo

Monday 8 March 2021
Kigali, Rwanda
Wreath laying ceremony at the Kigali Genocide Memorial
Visit of the Westerwelle Startup Haus

Tuesday 9 March 2021
Nairobi, Kenya
Meeting with President Uhuru Kenyatta
Visit of the Kenya Climate Innovation Centre (KCIC)

Wednesday 10 March 2021
12.30 Meeting with High Representative Josep Borrell

Thursday 11 March 2021
14.00 Meeting with Commissioner for Economy Paolo Gentiloni
16.00 Video conference with inter-institutional actors
19.30 Meeting with Prime Minister of Croatia Andrej Plenković

Friday 12 March 2021
12.30 Meeting with President of the European Investment Bank Werner Hoyer

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Article – Carbon leakage: prevent firms from avoiding emissions rules

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Existing carbon pricing measures in the EU

Under the current emissions trading system (ETS), which provides financial incentives to cut emissions, power plants and industries need to hold a permit for each tonne of CO2 they produce. The price of those permits is driven by demand and supply. Due to the last economic crisis, demand for permits has dropped and so has their price, which is so low that it discourages companies from investing in green technologies. In order to solve this issue, the EU will reform ETS.

What the Parliament is asking for

The new mechanism should align with World Trade Organisation rules and encourage the decarbonisation of EU and non-EU industries. It will also become part of the EU’s future industrial strategy.

By 2023, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism should cover power and energy-intensive industrial sectors, which represent 94% of the EU’s industrial emissions and still receive substantial free allocations, according to MEPs.

They said that it should be designed with the sole aim of pursuing climate objectives and a global level playing field, and not be used as a tool to increase protectionism.

MEPs also support the European Commission proposal to use the revenues generated by the mechanism as new own resources for the EU’s budget, and ask the Commission to ensure full transparency about the use of those revenues.

The Commission is expected to present its proposal on the new mechanism in the second quarter of 2021.

Learn more about [the EU’s responses to climate change]

[Position Limits]

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