

Speech by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker at the Ceremony marking the beginning of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU

Madam President,

Dear Prime Minister,

Dear President Tusk,

Dear Estonian Vice-President of the European Commission, well-known in this country, dear Andrus,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tere õhtust! For those who are less fluent in Estonian than me that means “good evening”.

It is indeed a great pleasure to be with you here in Tallinn for the launch of the first ever Estonian Presidency. It has been a long time in the making but I already know that it will be worth the wait.

Estonia’s European love story started long before you enriched our Union on May Day 2004. The architects of Estonian independence had witnessed the atrocities of war and had a vision of a peaceful Europe built on both economic and political integration.

And even before that, the Young Estonia movement called on their compatriots with their now famous slogan: “Let’s be Estonians, but become Europeans”.

Today, that European spirit is alive. Estonians are consistently amongst the most positive about the European Union.

I am convinced that this Estonian Presidency will build on this positive momentum and contribute to a more prosperous and more secure future for all Europeans. The programme, the priorities you have set out clearly shows that.

From security to sustainability, from protection to prosperity, the work you will do over the next six months will help us build a Europe that delivers.

In many ways, this wonderful, historic city is a symbol of where Europe needs to go. Tallinn is one of the great hanseatic cities. It has been built on trade with the rest of the world since the 13th century. Today, it is one of the most forward looking cities in Europe. Its cutting edge technology and digital infrastructure are admired all over Europe.

That mix of history and future is inspiring us as Europe looks forward. We have much to learn and much to benefit from Estonia, notably in becoming as digital as you already are. But also when it comes to embracing new challenges whether they be on defence, migration or technological development.

This is the forward-looking vision that the European Union, that Europe needs. And I am absolutely certain that Estonia can provide it.

Elagu Eesti! Elagu Euroopa! Aitäh!

For the non-Estonians I was just saying: Long live Estonia! Long live Europe! Thank you.

Press release by Commission President Juncker at the joint press conference with the Heads of State or Government attending the preparatory meeting for the G-20

Thank you Angela.

This morning we had a good discussion even though some of us arrived late because we were caught in the Berlin rain.

We talked very intensively about trade issues; that is important for G20. I reported on the progress we have made in the negotiations with Japan and with Canada. There are still a few sticking points. I have therefore sent the European Agriculture Commissioner and the Trade Commissioner to Japan so that these discussions can be concluded before the summit between the European Union and Japan on 6 July. The trade agreement with Japan, if it materialises, is important. And I am assuming that it will materialise. It will fully comply with all European rules, requirements and standards.

We are in the process of getting the free trade agreement with Canada into a shape in which it can come into force on a provisional basis. Again, there are still a few problems that we will be solving over the next few days.

We listened closely to the Italian Prime Minister's report on the refugee situation. I would like to say here that as far as the Commission is concerned we have for a long time taken the view that neither Italy nor Greece can be left on their own. And the Commission will be there to support what I would call the heroic efforts made by Italy to meet this challenge.

Italy will not be on its own.

Owen Smith statement on the extension of time for Northern Ireland power-sharing talks

Commenting on the news that talks to restore power-sharing at Stormont have been extended to Monday, **Owen Smith MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, said:**

"I am concerned that a deal has not been reached for today's deadline but I welcome the news that the parties are continuing their intensive discussions over the next few days. It is the right decision by the Secretary of State to hold open the door for further negotiations if there is a chance that a deal can still be reached.

"If there is no further progress over the weekend, however, the Secretary of State must come to Parliament on Monday to explain what additional steps he intends to take to ensure a stable government can be re-established at Stormont."

Jeremy Corbyn statement following House of Commons' approval of the Queen's Speech

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party said:

"The Conservatives survived by the skin of their teeth today, supported by the DUP, but this is a government in chaos.

"The Conservatives are all over the place on Brexit, with ministers contradicting each other. On public sector pay, they say one thing and then do another, voting yesterday to continue the cutting the pay of our nurses, firefighters, police and other public sector workers. And today, they were forced to

finally

promise that women from Northern Ireland will no longer have to pay for abortions on the NHS under opposition and public pressure.

“This

Government is out of control, with no mandate for continued cuts to our schools, hospitals, police and other vital public services or for a race-to-the-bottom Brexit. Labour will oppose these policies every step of the way.

“Labour

offers a clear alternative, laid out in our manifesto, which would put wealth, power and opportunity back in the hands of the many not the few.”

[Green Party councillor vows to keep protecting trees despite threat of legal action](#)



Green Party

29 June 2017

A Green Party councillor has vowed to continue protesting against Sheffield Council’s tree-felling programme, despite the council threatening her with legal action.

Alison Teal received a notice on June 27 [1], where the council warned it would seek a High Court injunction to stop her and others protesting. Teal has been ordered not to enter or park her car in certain areas of the city, otherwise the council will begin legal proceedings on July 12.

Teal and six others were arrested in February while taking part in a peaceful protest against the tree-felling but charges were later dropped [2].

Teal said:

“I will not be intimidated by a council intent on trying to steamroller its opposition into silence. I’ll keep protesting because this act of environmental vandalism is completely unconscionable and I know how valuable these trees are to the surrounding communities.

“Thousands of Sheffield residents have now spoken out in defence of the perfectly healthy trees under threat and their concerns have been completely ignored. Support for our work is growing rather than shrinking and not just from people who care about trees but people who care about democracy as well.

“If anything, the council’s heavy-handed approach has fuelled our anger – it’s completely unacceptable to be threatening residents with legal action, suspending opposition councillors and allowing dawn raids on pensioners all to continue destroying our green spaces. This is not what a healthy democracy looks like.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-40417519>
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/feb/06/green-party-councillor-a-lison-teal-arrested-at-sheffield-tree-protest>

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