

# Press conference remarks by Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission at the Informal Leaders' Meeting/Western Balkans Summit in Sofia

Thank you, Donald.

Once again, I would like to join the large camp of those who are congratulating the Bulgarian Presidency for its numerous efforts and for the excellent organisation of the meeting we had yesterday and today.

As we are running out of time, I have to be very brief because we have to take our planes in order to continue our work in Brussels.

Sur l'Iran d'abord: tant que les Iraniens respecteront leurs engagements, l'Union européenne évidemment s'en tiendra à cet accord, dont elle, l'Union européenne, fut un des co-architectes. Mais nous devons savoir que les sanctions américaines annoncées ne resteront pas sans effet. Et donc nous avons pour devoir, Commission et Union européenne, de protéger nos entreprises européennes et notamment les petites et moyennes entreprises.

Hier soir, j'ai été encouragé par le débat qui fut le nôtre puisque les propositions que la Commission a soumises à la méditation des membres du Conseil européen furent intégralement suivies par les chefs d'Etat ou de gouvernement.

Nous devons maintenant agir. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous lançons le processus de recours à la loi de blocage, Blocking Statute, de 1996 qui vise à neutraliser les effets extraterritoriaux des sanctions américaines dans l'Union européenne. Nous devons le faire et le ferons demain.

Ensuite nous avons décidé de permettre à la Banque européenne d'investissement de faciliter l'investissement des entreprises européennes en Iran. La Commission maintiendra sa coopération avec l'Iran. Le Commissaire de l'énergie, Monsieur Cañete, se rendra dans les 48 heures à venir en Iran pour poursuivre nos échanges avec les autorités iraniennes.

On trade – that means on the trade situation between the U.S. and the European Union – I have to be very clear once again, and I am repeating myself by saying it: we want an unlimited exemption from the proposed tariff measures.

If Europe obtains an unlimited exemption from the proposed tariff measures, we are ready to engage in talks with our transatlantic partner, meaning that we want to deepen our cooperation, focusing on four specific points:

Firstly, deepening our energy cooperation, notably on liquified natural gas.

Secondly, focusing on voluntary cooperation between regulators on both sides on an ad hoc basis, outside the framework of trade negotiations.

Thirdly, working together with the US on the World Trade Organisation reform to ensure a level playing field for all and to lift the current blockage of the WTO's Appellate Body nominations.

And lastly, discussing with the US how to best improve reciprocal market access, notably for industrial products including, amongst others, cars as well as the liberalisation of government procurement.

These talks will be based on the principles of reciprocity and WTO compatibility and with the objective of avoiding a trade war. But let me repeat: we will not negotiate with the sword of Damocles hanging over our heads. It is a matter of dignity and it is a matter of efficiency.

Thanks.