

Press statement by President Jean-Claude Juncker with Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia, in front of the EU stand on the day of celebration of the 100th anniversary of Georgia's First Democratic Republic

Dear Giorgi,

I am delighted to see the European Union playing such a full and visible role on this very special day for Georgia.

I am very proud that the Prime Minister was and is visiting our stand – this is the stand of the European Union and it is good to have him with us. We have come a long way together in a relatively short period of time. I thank him for his European spirit and for always having the courage of his convictions, which does not happen so often in Europe.

Georgia is a country close to my heart, close to the heart of Europeans, because we are friends and partners, linked by our history and by our geography.

Many other European countries are celebrating their 100 years of independence these days and I am particularly proud and happy to be here today because this is a very special day for Georgia.

I promised the Prime Minister years ago that Europe will always be on the side of Georgia. The more you reform, the more support we will give to you, our friends.

I am delighted that today I can announce an extra EUR 40 million worth of funds for this year's bilateral allocation. This brings to EUR 597 million the total of our financial support for Georgia from 2014 to 2018.

And on top of that, we have the possibility to announce a fresh macro-financial assistance worth EUR 45 million.

According to a promise I made to the Prime Minister, we have liberalised the visa regime. Since March 2017 more than 253,000 Georgians have travelled to Europe, and I would like to invite all of those who are here and who never dare to go there, because it is worth being visited.

We are launching in a few months from now a European School here in the city.

And we have agreed, the Prime Minister and myself, to have an annual meeting between the Georgian Government and the Commission. We are not doing this with each and every country but I would like this to happen year after year.

Thank you.