

Remarks by President Charles Michel after the European Council meetings on 13 December 2019

We had this morning again an important meeting with important topics on the agenda. Eurozone on the one hand and Brexit on the other hand. But first of all I would like to congratulate the Finnish Presidency, the Finnish rotating Presidency. The Prime Minister will have the occasion to give a message.

About the Eurozone summit, we had the occasion to discuss the strategic approach and how it is possible in the short term, and in the midterm, to try to make progress on this important topic. Point one: the ESM. As you know, we have reached a political agreement in the past based on this important project, on this important goal. It is a necessity for the Eurogroup to continue to work on the technical level in order to be able to implement this first important point. Another important point is the Banking Union. It is also important to continue all the efforts we need in order to make progress on this important topic. Third point, the budget for investment, competitiveness, convergence, and the BICC (budgetary instrument for convergence and competitiveness). This project is very important, in our opinion, and we would like to have a strong ambition on that. It means that it will be important in parallel with the institutions with regard to the next European budget to try to finalise this important tool for the future. We are conscious that it is very important to maintain a strong political dialogue on this important point.

The fourth point I would like to mention is the international role of the euro. In my opinion, this is a very important objective. A few days ago, we have started again this process of regular inter-institutional meetings with the Commission, the President of the European Central Bank, and the President of the Eurogroup. It is our goal to try to develop a mid-term, a long-term vision also with regards to the international role of the euro. We will have the occasion in the next months to speak again in the European Council and see how it is possible to try to take steps in the right direction with regard to this important point.

Second important topic today is Brexit and the elections in the UK. I had the occasion this morning to congratulate Prime Minister Boris Johnson. It is a clear victory and we expect that the British Parliament will vote as soon as possible on this Withdrawal Agreement. It is very important in our opinion, because we are ready to start the next phase. We are ready also to defend and promote our European interests. The level playing field is a very important goal for us. We will try also to continue a good way of working. We have experimented with it in recent years by ensuring transparency between member states, and we would like to guarantee again the unity between member states. It is a very crucial goal in our opinion. Of course, we hope that it will be possible to keep in the future a very strong strategic relationship with the UK.

Ceci est le résumé de nos discussions. Vous le voyez, tant sur la question de la zone euro que sur la question du Brexit, nous avons eu durant plusieurs heures ce matin l'occasion d'échanger de manière substantielle et de progresser au travers des conclusions qui traduisent les orientations politiques du Conseil européen sur ce sujet. Je remercie encore une fois la présidence rotative finlandaise, je remercie encore une fois la présidente de la Commission européenne pour l'ensemble des contributions actives à nos délibérations et à nos travaux.

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