

Remarks by President Jean-Claude Juncker at the joint press conference on the occasion of the EU-Ukraine Summit with Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine and Donald Tusk, President of the European Council

Mr President Poroshenko,

President Tusk,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome my good friend Petro back to Brussels to attend this 20th Summit between Ukraine and the European Union. It is the fourth time that as a President of the Commission I am attending these meetings. But in fact the first Summit between Ukraine and the European Union took place on 5 September '97 when I was President of the European Council – that existed before you were appearing here, President of the European Council. At least I started this against the intention of the then Commission chaired by a Luxembourger, but that is a different thing. So I am happy that we are meeting again and I am really more than satisfied with the progress we have made over recent years. In the last four years, thanks to the leadership of the Ukrainian President, we have made by far more progress than those we have made in 20 years before. This is proving that the Ukrainian people, a courageous people, a great nation and a leader in charge of the destiny of the Ukrainian nation have delivered.

I am happy that we were able – thanks to the efforts of the President of Ukraine – to have the visa-free travel to the European Union. This was done back in 2017 and I am more than delighted that half a million people from Ukraine have already made the most of this new opportunity. This is bringing people together, this is bringing nations together and this visa-free regime for Ukraine is working without any kind of problems. Those who have visas, they are going back in the indicated time and so we do not have negative side effects and this is proving once again that the Ukrainians are people worth of trust.

We have good results since we signed back in September 2017 the Association Agreement and its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with Ukraine. The bilateral trade went up by almost 25% last year and the number of Ukrainian companies exporting to the European Union is also up by over 40%, going from 10,000 to 14,136, which is an encouraging result and which is helping Ukraine to grow in a steady pace. Of course, the more Ukraine is reforming, the more the support of the European Union will be developed in an adequate and

corresponding way.

I am welcoming – because I was insisting on that for years – the reform in the field of the fight against corruption which is a very important issue both for Ukraine – and I know the President is committed to that goal – and for the European Union. We have to perfect, to improve some details of this legislation but it will be done in the next coming days or week.

Since I took office, out of the EUR 12.8 billion pledged to Ukraine, the EU and the European financial institutions have mobilised so far over EUR 11 billion. We have made as a Commission a proposal for the 4th Macro-Financial Assistance programme. It was signed days ago by the Council of Ministers and by the European Parliament. This is a commitment I made under conditions to President Poroshenko personally and it will provide EUR 1 billion to support the continued reform efforts.

I am delighted that earlier today a EUR 75 million loan from the European Investment Bank was signed. This will go towards improving road infrastructure in Kiev and for other cities, amongst which Odessa has to be mentioned, to make life easier for commuters and to improve road safety across the country.

So, all in all I am very happy with the Luxembourgish part of my speech and the following, weaker part in a different language.