

Remarks by President Charles Michel during his meeting with President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping

Thank you, Mr President. We would like to thank you for your hospitality and your welcome at this summit and we are pleased to meet you in person.

As you mentioned, in recent months the EU and China have relaunched a number of high-level dialogues on important topics such as economic development, climate and human rights issues. Today we have the opportunity to take stock of the state of our relations and we hope to give new impetus to this cooperation between China and the European Union.

Last June, the 27 EU Heads of State or Government held a strategic debate on the EU-China relationship, and we are united in our commitment to pursue a stable and mutually beneficial relationship with China, a commitment and a relationship that we wish to be based on the principles of transparency, predictability and reciprocity. It goes without saying that we will promote our European values today, including human rights and democracy. Naturally, we will also defend our legitimate interests, and we would like to cooperate with you on global issues, such as climate, health and, of course, security and stability.

The EU and China are major trading partners. We want to build sustainable, balanced, and fair trade relations to generate more prosperity for our respective populations. Every day, more than €2 billion in goods are traded between China and the European Union. However, the EU's trade deficit amounts to almost €400 billion. We hope that concrete measures can be discussed and implemented to rebalance this relationship.

In the current context, we agree with you that the European Union and China have a responsibility to work towards peace and stability on the basis of the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. As we speak, Russia continues to attack Ukraine and to seriously violate the UN Charter and Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. We would like to be able to discuss with you how best to resolve this situation and to support the principles of international law.

A tragic war is currently taking place in the Middle East. Hamas brutally attacked the people of Israel. We condemn this attack and support Israel's right to defend itself. This must be done in accordance with international law and the principle of proportionality. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire. We want to commit to providing humanitarian aid and supporting a peaceful two-state political solution. Peace and stability are important everywhere, and we hope to be able to work together to encourage Iran and the Houthis not to cause regional escalation.

We are also following the situation in Asia. We are concerned about the growing tensions in the Taiwan Strait and in the South China Sea and, as you know, we are opposed to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion. We also maintain our position of recognising the One China policy.

Finally, very quickly, let me just say that we want to continue working with you on climate change, global health and food security. The relationship between the EU and China is a wide-ranging and mature relationship. We would like to demonstrate openness, transparency and respect. We hope that this summit will be an opportunity to give new impetus to our bilateral relationship, but also to our commitment at international level. Thank you.

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