

Remarks by President Charles Michel at the Munich Security Conference video conference

First, I want to thank you, Ambassador Ischinger. It's a great initiative to bring together again, transatlantic partners to discuss the great challenges ahead.

In the last seventy-five years, the relationship between Europe and the United States has been the backbone of the rules-based international order. This partnership is underpinned by multiple pillars: our security and defense alliance through NATO; our strong economic cooperation; and, of course, the rich relationship between our peoples.

This is a critical time for Europe, for the United States, and for the world. And we are confronted by massive challenges. This makes our alliance with the US both vibrant and vital. And again, it's more necessary than ever. This is why the European Council — all 27 EU leaders together — have reaffirmed its strategic importance. I believe both sides now want to rejuvenate and solidify our bond. I call it — a "New Founding Pact".

It's worth reflecting on what the fundamentals of this pact should be. I sum it up in three words: values, prosperity and influence.

First, our values. Together, our values are those of the free world: human dignity, democracy, freedom and the rule of law. These values represent the cornerstone of our relationship.

If our relationship went through four bumpy years, it was not because of differences of views or interests. These are normal. Rather, it was because respecting rules, and respecting agreements, were no longer a "given". That's why we appreciate the commitment expressed by President Biden: *"We will lead not merely by the example of our power, but by the power of our example."*

It's precisely when we respect our common values, when we respect each other as equal partners, that we can resolve our differences.

It's precisely when those values are challenged by others, that we must lead by example, to defend them and promote them, at home and abroad.

Today, recovering from COVID-19 is our first priority. More than ever, we must show our peoples that our system of free societies, and open economies, works. And that it works for all.

We — the EU and US — need to join forces to make trade, digital development, green transition and fair taxation contribute to greater prosperity and well-being for our citizens. We want to build back a better, fairer and greener world. For all. This is our European ambition. And we think international cooperation is the only way to succeed.

Now that America, under the Biden-Harris administration, re-joins this common endeavour, our alliance — along with our like-minded partners — constitutes a formidable and influential power.

When we are on the same page, we have greater influence to promote democracy and drive forward our economies. Together, we are stronger to defend the rules-based international order from the attacks of autocratic regimes, whether from Russia, China or Iran. And we are stronger to ensure peace and security.

When we share the same view of prosperity and well-being, we have greater capacity to deal with major economic actors, to bring them to more fairness and reciprocity while avoiding detrimental competition between ourselves.

A strong partnership needs strong partners. That's why we, in Europe, are growing stronger, to increase our strategic ability to act. For our common values, for more prosperity and for more security. We want to be a strong and reliable partner. Let's make our partnership a powerhouse for a better world. Welcome back America.

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