

Radio interview with Tom Elliott, 3AW

TOM ELLIOTT:

Mr Turnbull, good afternoon.

PRIME MINISTER:

Good afternoon.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Gonski 2.0 – just six years ago in 2011 we had Gonski, I guess 1.0, from then Prime Minister Julia Gillard. Why do we need another report like this?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well what David Gonski was looking at in 2011 was the funding arrangements for schools. And David's big idea, which we are implementing and which Julia Gillard did not, is that school funding should be needs based and it should be consistent across Australia.

TOM ELLIOTT:

I agree, yeah-

PRIME MINISTER:

And that's what we are delivering.

The question that he did not answer, that he wasn't asked to answer but he flagged it in his report, in chapter six in fact, was that the next piece of work is that once you've got the funding right and you've got the resourcing right, how do you ensure that you improve your educational outcomes? In other words, how do you get the biggest educational bang, the biggest outcome, the best schools, the best teachers, the best results for your kids and your grandkids – how do you do that with the resources that you've brought to bear.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Okay, so you bring the resources to bear, however many billions it might cost. Is it a question of measuring how that money is spent or is it a question of actually what to do with the money?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it is both. I mean, basically, the review that David will do with his colleagues will focus on the effective use of funding to improve student outcomes and our national performance, because when you look at the way we have been travelling – by reference to the other countries – we have been going backwards in terms of our comparative performance and that is the big

challenge.

So what we need to do is to be getting – we've been spending more on schools, Tom, and you know, we have had significant declines over recent years since 2000 in reading and indeed in mathematical literacy and in numeracy, and so, this is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. We're spending more but we're not getting better outcomes.

So yes, we have to go to make sure that funding is consistent across the country. Yes, we have got to make sure that it's needs based. And we're putting another \$18 billion into schools over the next decade but what we've got to do is also make sure that our children and grandchildren get the great schools, the great teachers and the great results that that money warrants.

TOM ELLIOTT:

I've read some comments by the Education Minister Simon Birmingham which suggest that for some schools which are currently overfunded they might actually have their funding cut in order to get the funding right. Does that breach a promise not to cut any schools funding?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well Birmo has been making this point for some time. In fact, the number of schools likely to be affected is 24. So it's a very – out of more than 9,000 schools in Australia – it is a very small number.

But you see – what you had was in effect a mish mash of 27 different agreements. What the Labor Party did in government was they ran around and they did all sorts of special deals here there and everywhere. Very complex, very conflicted. You had a situation where a student in one location, in one state with the same needs would get very different levels of Commonwealth funding than the same student with the same needs in another state or another system.

So what we're aiming to do here is – and look I think Australians understand that if you're going to be having Commonwealth funding going into schools it should be consistent and it should be fair, and it should be needs based. And that's what we are delivering.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Okay. Do you fund the schools directly or do you hand the money over to the respective state governments and let them do it?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it is by reference to needs of the schools and the, and of course it goes to those state education departments but you can look up at My School and you'll be able to see, people will be able to see very transparently how much federal funding is going to their school.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Okay. Now can I just cast your mind to university funding?

PRIME MINISTER:

Sure.

TOM ELLIOTT:

There has been another big announcement about that in the last 24 hours. So we are going to firstly increase the cost of degrees by different amounts. Secondly we're going to lower the threshold at which the repayment of HECS kicks in from around \$55,000 to \$42,000. The National Union of Students has said that you are declaring war on them, what do you feel about that?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, that is a pretty – what do we say – a ebullient response. I mean the reality is this, that the National Union of Students know and we all know that if you have a university degree your earning capacity is vastly increased. I mean it is a hugely enriching experience in every respect. And so it's been accepted for a very long time that students should pay a proportion of their university fees.

Now what we are doing here and this is all about sustainability and equity, Tom. It's got to be a sustainable system, it's got to be fair and so basically on average Commonwealth supported students will pay, will go from paying 42 per cent of their degree cost on average to 46 per cent. So yes, that is more, there is no doubt about that.

Once fully implemented it would result in an increase in the total student fees of between \$2,000 and \$3,600 for a four-year course.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Okay-

PRIME MINISTER:

So I'm not pretending that it isn't a significant amount of money, but equally compared to the benefits, compared to the very generous terms upon which the FEE Help Loan is available it is, you know it is a very good deal. It remains an extremely generous deal by world standards and of course it makes the system sustainable.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Very quickly, there is \$52 billion of outstanding HECS debt, a lot of which will never be collected. Does that not suggest that perhaps too many people, or some of the wrong sorts of people are going to university? Like they're going but they're not getting decent jobs afterwards?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, no I wouldn't say that. I think it's important, however, that's why it's important to bring the threshold for repayment down so that once someone is earning \$42,000 – then they've got a university loan, they've got an obligation then to contribute 1 per cent towards it. I think it's important for people to get into the practice and habit of repaying the loan. It is a loan it's not a grant and obviously the taxpayer is entitled to have it repaid.

But you've got to understand that the – and I think that this is a very important point – that the bulk of the cost of a university course is paid for by the taxpayer.

TOM ELLIOTT:

That's true, over 50 per cent-

PRIME MINISTER:

The loan only relates to the portion that the student is asked to pay, and that is less than half.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Very quickly, I know you're leaving for the United States tomorrow to visit President Trump for another time. Will you be discussing North Korea with him?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah – I have no, absolutely we will be discussing all of those regional security issues and North Korea is clearly one of the most pressing issues in our region.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Are you looking forward to the visit?

PRIME MINISTER:

Absolutely it is going to be a great event, a very historic event Tom because it is commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea. And, you know, that is the first time Australian and American Naval Forces went into action together and that was when we succeeded in turning back a Japanese invasion force headed for Port Moresby. Had it succeeded in taking in Port Moresby, as it undoubtedly would have, were it not for the action of those task groups, Australian and US Navy Task Groups then of course the whole of Eastern Australia would've been exposed, we would have been cut off from the United States, we would've been at the whim of the invaders.

So it was a really critical turning point in the War.

And that's why I was up in Townsville yesterday at a service there, actually with one of the veterans of the – 93 years of age, veterans of the USS

Lexington which is the big aircraft carrier, the American Aircraft Carrier that was sunk in that battle.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Prime Minister I do appreciate your time.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thanks.

[ENDS]

[Press Conference with the Minister for Education and Training, Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham and Mr David Gonski AC](#)

PRIME MINISTER:

Good afternoon. I'm joined today by the Education Minister Simon Birmingham and David Gonski.

In the interests of our children and our grandchildren the time has come to bring the school funding wars to an end and to focus with renewed energy on ensuring that all our children have great schools and great teachers so that they can realise their full potential.

Today we are announcing that every school will receive Commonwealth funding on a genuine needs basis consistently across Australia, as David Gonski recommended in his report six years ago.

The substantial increase in funding which we are committing to will ensure that by 2027 the Commonwealth will be providing 20 per cent, up from 17 per cent currently, of the school resourcing standard for all government schools and 80 per cent, up from 77 per cent of that standard for non-government schools.

This investment will set Australian children on the path to academic excellence and success in their future lives.

It will deliver real needs-based funding for children from all backgrounds in every town and every city, in every region and every state, in every classroom of our great nation.

Every parent wants the best for their child. Our children deserve schools that are properly and fairly funded, which encourage the highest academic standards, teachers who encourage and inspire and facilities in which children can excel, laying the foundation for a lifetime of achievement.

And that's why the Quality Schools initiative we're unveiling today will increase the Commonwealth Government's recurrent funding for schools by 75 per cent over the decade.

It will ensure that funding is needs-based, equitable and targeted to lift the results for all Australian school children.

It will ensure that students with greater needs receive higher levels of funding from the Commonwealth Government.

This reform will finally deliver on David Gonski's vision, six years ago, after his landmark review of Australian school education.

Now the Gonski Review of 2011, as David will describe, should have been followed by a school funding model that treated students consistently and fairly, one in which the needs of the students were paramount. But instead of that the previous government, Labor government, cut a series of special deals that resulted in 27 different funding arrangements.

It was a patchwork system where some schools are overfunded, others were short-changed and the transition to a new funding deal was spread out in some cases by more than a century.

Now that inequity ends now.

We will ensure that all schools and states transition to an equitable funding model within a decade. It will ensure that the same student with the same needs will be treated exactly the same in terms of Commonwealth funding no matter which state they reside in or the school system in which they're being educated.

We're going to make every dollar count for every student in every classroom.

Now there is no more important responsibility than teaching the next generation of Australians, giving them every opportunity to succeed.

And yet the truth is the performance of Australian students in reading, science and maths in particular has been falling.

Now today's announcement is about turning those results around. By increasing the investment and ensuring fairness in the way Australian schools are funded, we will get Australian students back to the top of the class. That is my goal. That is my commitment.

The most valuable resource we have in our nation is not under the ground, it's walking around on top of it.

By investing in our children's education, by ensuring that we take

responsibility for them having the quality education, the great learning, the great skills that they deserve, we will be building the human capital, the most valuable capital of our nation.

Now that's why in addition to this substantial increase in funding I'm pleased to announce that David Gonski has agreed to lead a new review, 'Gonski 2.0', if you like, into achieving educational excellence in Australian schools.

David will provide the high-level advice to the Government on how the extra government funding announced today should be used by Australian schools to improve their performance and student outcomes. It will build the evidence base needed to ensure that funding is used in ways that make a real difference to a student's academic performance.

And the findings of the review will inform the development of a new national schooling agreement between the Federal Government and the states – an agreement which aims to turn around a decade of declining student results.

David will chair an independent panel that will draw on the expertise of teachers, education experts, academics in recommending how to get the best from Australian schools for our children, for Australian students, for our future – investing in our future to ensure that our children and our grandchildren get the great education in the great schools from the great teachers that they deserve.

He will provide his final report to me by December this year.

Now this is a landmark day for Australian schools.

With this major increase in funding and a fair system of allocation, we'll ensure that every Australian child, no matter where they are born, or where they go to school, is given every chance to succeed.

Simon and I are committed to providing today's students with the best opportunities for a lifetime of success.

We're proud to be here with David Gonski. His report from 2011 set out a vision for a national, consistent, needs-based system of funding. And that's what we're delivering. That's what we are delivering. Putting aside the patchwork of inconsistent special deals we inherited. That's what we're delivering going forward and the next step is going to be to ensure that those dollars deliver the great schools, the great teaching, the great outcomes for our children, our grandchildren and generations to come.

I'll ask the Minister now to explain this reform in more detail.

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Thanks very much, Prime Minister.

This is a momentous day for school leaders around Australia, for hard working principals and teachers. A momentous day for parents, families, Australian

schoolchildren and importantly for the way in which our education systems across the country respond to and deliver the skills and capabilities that Australian students today will need to be successful Australian employees, employers and leaders into the future.

The Turnbull Government is committing new record growing funding for Australian schools.

Funding that will grow from \$17.5 billion this year in 2017, to \$22.1 billion by 2021. Growing through to \$30.6 billion by 2027.

It is a 10-year reform agenda that ensures ongoing consistent, real growth in funding for Australian schools above inflation, above wages growth, providing additional resources so that schools can deliver what they need to support their children.

But importantly it does this on a consistent basis. It ends 27 different school funding agreements that our government inherited that were largely based on ancient sweetheart deals and instead replaces them with a true, single, national needs-based, sector-blind funding model that will deliver across government and non-government schools. Consistency in Australian school funding for the first time ever.

What we will see is that at the end of 10 years, the Commonwealth will transition to an even share across all states and territories of school funding in the government sector and a similarly even share of school funding in the non-government sector.

Of course the Commonwealth has historically been the dominant funder of public contributions to non-government schools. That will remain the case. We will transition to pay 80 per cent of the Gonski-based schooling resource standard for non-government schools. This is up from around 77 per cent at present, which will transition over that 10-year period.

For government schools we will lift from currently around 17 per cent of federal contributions, to around 20 per cent or to 20 per cent of the schooling resource standard by 2020. This is a steady growth rate for both sectors.

Over the next four years it will see growth in funding of some 4.2 per cent per student across Australia – importantly, most of it geared into the government sector where need is greater and the gap to close in terms of Commonwealth share, is larger. So we'll see a higher rate of indexation for government school students of around 5.2 per cent over the next four years.

We are applying, in a very consistent way, the types of recommendations that David Gonski and his panel brought down.

A single schooling resource standard, influenced then by loadings that reflect need.

Additional support for students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Additional support for students with disability.

Additional support for students who come from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Additional support for smaller rural and regional remote schools.

The types of assistance and transition that is critical to make sure that each school's funding model reflects the need of those schools.

I want to particularly thank David, his fellow panel member from the original Gonski review, Ken Boston and many others who have worked closely with me to help me appreciate the intent of those initial recommendations and to ensure that is reflected in the approach that the Turnbull Government is taking to fix the broken school models we inherited and to provide a common, new, national pathway that genuinely addresses need.

I'm very pleased that David is going to take that first piece of work and build on it with a new piece of work that deals with the quality equation. Because the evidence is very clear that while spending more money on schools seems like a nice thing, unless you use it effectively and efficiently, you of course don't get the results that you need.

For a long time now, Australia has been increasing investment in our schools, but we've seen stagnation or indeed decline in terms of our international performance on a number of measures.

That's why this new report will focus on how we can best use our record growing levels of investment in Australian schools to ensure that our teachers have the support, the knowledge, the resources they need to do the best for their students in terms of equipping them for the modern economy.

We look forward to working constructively with states and territories to see implementation of these reforms. Our intention is to legislate the trajectory of transition over the 10 years, providing absolute certainty to all school sectors, both government and non-government, of the indexation arrangements, the growth they will have and the real extra dollars that they can plan for the future, as well as then ongoing certainty into the future.

Our approach is analogous to the arrangements the Commonwealth has already for hospitals, where we pay a common share of the efficient price for hospitals right around the country.

At present, in the schooling sector, we contribute wildly different shares of school funding to different states and territories because of the many different deals we inherited.

We're fixing that by getting all states to the same position under the same needs-based formula, to ensure that in the future everyone, every student, every school is treated fairly and equitably.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you. David?

DAVID GONSKI AC:

Thank you, Prime Minister.

Ladies and gentlemen, can I firstly say that I really do, and always have, care about school education.

I've seen both personally and as a businessperson, how important good schooling is, both to the individual and to the country as a whole.

Therefore, I'm very pleased to hear that the Turnbull Government has accepted the fundamental recommendations of our 2011 report, and particularly regarding a needs-based situation.

I am very honoured to be asked to chair another report, whether you call it Gonski 2.0 or whatever, and I look forward to it because I believe that we can do good things with the additional money, and I'm very pleased that there is substantial additional money, even over indexation and in the foreseeable future.

Ladies and gentlemen, you didn't come to hear me, but that's my position.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you, David.

JOURNALIST:

Education Minister, Mr Birmingham, you've made it very clear in the past 12 months that you think some private schools are over-resourced or overfunded. Under this model will some private schools in Australia have their funding cut?

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

All schools will transition, as I indicated, to a common share of the schooling resource standard. For non-government schools, that's an 80 per cent share by 2027.

In that transition period, there will be a small number of schools that will experience some negative growth. That's around 24 schools across Australia on our current estimates.

JOURNALIST:

Are they in Sydney or Melbourne or are they concentrated in any particular area?

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

They are largely within the eastern seaboard, in fact, they are entirely along the eastern seaboard. We will be contacting and discussing arrangements

with those schools.

Within that there are one or two schools of particular special need, that are not the schools you would usually expect to find on such a list. So we have budgeted some adjustment assistance to make sure we can deal with any circumstances where we have schools that may have higher levels of students with a disability who fall inside that category. So that there is zero disadvantage or impact in relation to them.

But ultimately we've made the difficult decisions that previous governments avoided.

We have made sure that the arrangements we put in place treat everybody fairly, consistently, equitably for the future.

And in that case, we've come up with a model that ensures virtually every Australian school experiences growth. For most of them, they experience very significant growth in their funding.

Last year, in last year's Budget, the Turnbull Government increased the Budget for schools by \$1.2 billion. At the time, that provided for costs that clearly met, indeed clearly exceeded, wages and inflation growth.

In this Budget, over the Forward Estimates period alone, we are adding to that \$1.2 billion with an additional \$2.2 billion in support for Australian schools, making a real, tangible difference and it will flow to those schools who are furthest away from the standard the Commonwealth is setting in terms of the share of funding that we want to pay them under the needs-based formula.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, or Minister, you are talking about this being a decade of funding until 2027. I noticed that the Treasurer previously, he has been critical of this sort of funding, saying that budgets work in four year cycles. So is the money there to fund it until 2027? Because it is essentially \$15 billion between 2017 and 2027 – that's going to be extra?

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

As I indicated, our intention is to legislate these reforms.

So think of them then, if you like, like the way in pensions are legislated, where for each additional aged pensioner funding flows.

For each additional student in an Australian school funding will flow under the common, consistent approach that we are outlining.

We want to give Australian schools the certainty to be able to plan, to be able to heed the advice that comes from David Gonski and the panel that will work with him, to plan on how it is they will implement that advice over a decade of increasing Commonwealth funding, we hope increasing state funding as well. We will be expecting states to at least maintain their real funding.

That will be a legislated condition of our arrangements, to make sure that no more – as we've seen in some jurisdictions over recent years – can we see a cost shift where the Commonwealth invests more and the state withdraws.

This is about real extra money to help Australian schools and students.

JOURNALIST:

So just to clarify, after 2021, so after the next four-year cycle of the Forward Estimates, there will be funding through 'til 2027?

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

As I said, just as we budget for pensions or others, this is not about a new four or six-year agreement with states and territories, it is about legislating what the Commonwealth share entitlement is.

We do it already in an arrangement in relationship to hospitals of having a common approach.

It has been sorely lacking in absence in relation to schools.

When I've tried to ask officials and others as to why is it that we pay different levels of school funding in different states and territories, they largely shrug their shoulders and say that's just the way it's always been. It has purely been a circumstance of history.

We are fixing that. We've taken, as I say, some difficult decisions to do so, but I believe that the model provides fair levels of indexation across all of the different schooling sectors, but, of course, it will get us to a point where need is genuinely being addressed.

JOURNALIST:

Minister, your emphasis since taking the portfolio has been that more money isn't going to fix declining results, what changed your mind?

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

We obviously needed to address the problems we had in relation to the school funding formula as well, and I've been very clear, particularly in my discussions with states and territories around the time of education councils that previous funding models were broken and that it was impossible for us to move forward under all of the different hotchpotch of special deals and ancient sweetheart arrangements.

So to fix that model and to ensure that there can be without question investment in schools to address some of the real issues they face, we have put the extra money into the Budget.

But importantly we are not doing it in isolation. We are doing it by commissioning the work of David Gonski who I think we can say with absolute confidence is respected by all of the nation's education ministers and all of

the nation's education commentators and who I trust can bring a strong, common-sense approach that will also build a level of acceptance around the types of reforms that might be necessary in Australian schools, coming from additional funding to lift our school performance in the future.

So it is about making a wise investment and we are putting faith in the fact that with an expert panel of educators working alongside David, that we will ultimately have a strong package of reforms to ensure additional money and hopefully existing money in the system as well, is put to a use that lifts student outcomes in the future.

JOURNALIST:

So will it be tied funding to school reforms?

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

We will negotiate agreements with the states and territories after we receive David's report from which we will work through exactly the content of those reforms.

I want this to be a collaborative process with the states and territories. I trust that they will see that this is being done in good faith to get a better, fairer funding model, as well as to get evidence that backs the types of reforms that lifts student outcomes.

JOURNALIST:

Mr Gonski, it might be too early to comment on this but funding on a needs-basis, can you give us an example for those people who might be curious to know how that would work? An example of how that would pan out?

DAVID GONSKI AC:

Well, when we did the 2011 review, our whole concept was that there would be a school's resource standard which would be nominated and we nominated one, and I'm very pleased that the Turnbull Government has taken that – which was a dream at the time – and we worked out what that would cost and then we added to that five different areas where we could put a loading. And that loading, one of them was basically low SES score, where people who were not well endowed with wealth and other things, that that loading could allow them, even though they were born to disadvantage, to rise above it.

Because I was absolutely convinced, and I remain that way, that just because you are disadvantaged educationally doesn't mean you are dumb, doesn't mean you're not capable of being prime minister or whatever of Australia. What you need is assistance often to get there, and that's the sort of thing that we had in mind.

JOURNALIST:

Sounds like it will be a very complicated thing to work out?

DAVID GONSKI AC:

Well, it's interesting. I get – because obviously people are interested in what we did – I get regularly, from all over Australia, examples of what is happening with additional funding that came through. And obviously this is going to give it a much bigger boost, and I would advise you, have a look at it. All sorts of – even the union has published documents on what this sort of funding is doing, and it's fantastic. Taking people, classes as a whole, or individuals to new heights. And if we can do it, it's well worth doing. Great resources, I think the Prime Minister mentioned earlier.

JOURNALIST:

How will you pay for it?

PRIME MINISTER:

We will announce all of the whole Budget in the Budget, as you've heard me say, this is Budget speculation time, but – so that will all be set out next week.

But this is all fully funded. This is real money.

And the critical thing is – and, David, you spoke with such warmth and such passion, which we respect because you know, you know that we can together change lives for the better.

And we do that by making sure that the funding is fair, that it's allocated in a consistent, equitable way across Australia, across different school systems and Simon has explained how that's going to happen, but also we have to make sure that we are backing those great teachers, and we are making good schools great and good teachers great because that is the critical difference.

We have got plenty of money allocated now. This is a record commitment. There will be people who say it's too much, no doubt, but we are making a record commitment here, and now the challenge is – David, we look to you and your panel for guidance here, and I know this will become then the next debate, the next discussion – it shouldn't be acrimonious, it should be constructive, because what we've all got a common interest in is making sure that these billions of dollars are translated into extraordinary outcomes, extraordinary life-changing outcomes for our children, our grandchildren and generations to come, and that comes from having great teachers and great schools.

That's what our whole Quality Schools agenda is about, and that is the next stage.

David canvasses this in his first report back in 2011, in chapter six – David flagged that this was the next step, having identified the need for a school resourcing standard, so you worked out what it was that how you allocated funding according to need, and we are doing that, but then you've got to make sure that you are getting the maximum outcome, the greatest outcome, you are getting the greatest value for those kids, the greatest value for those

children of ours and our grandchildren, getting the great outcome for them from the schools.

Now I just wanted to have one more.

JOURNALIST:

Western Sydney Airport, the Government has decided to bankroll Badgerys Creek?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, we've decided to build it, yes.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister regarding Cassandra Sainsbury in Colombia what is the government doing-

PRIME MINISTER:

I'm sorry?

JOURNALIST:

Cassandra Sainsbury in Colombia on cocaine charges – has the government, has there been a member from DFAT, has there been any connection or spoken to her yet?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, we offer consular assistance to Australians who are in trouble all over the world and at any given time there are a – I can't comment on that particular case, but I can assure you that from the Foreign Minister down through the whole Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, it is one of the big responsibilities of our embassies and consulates and our consular services right around the world.

So on that note, thank you very much.

[ENDS]

[Labour to halt the Tories hospital closure plan](#)

Labour

will today announce that a future Labour Government will immediately halt

the proposed closure of A&Es in England and carry out a full scale review of all proposals.

Having listened to campaigners and concerned patients up and down the country, Jonathan Ashworth, as Labour health secretary will immediately halt the Tories chaotic 'sustainability and transformation plan' (STP) programme.

Shadow Health Secretary Jonathan Ashworth, will say:

"Labour will put the best interests of patients at the heart of our NHS so today I'm announcing we will halt planned closures to hospitals and other services. We will have a moratorium on the STPs.

"We have listened to the hundreds of patients and campaigners up and down the country that have been pleading with the Government to hear their concerns about their local services. Threats of hospitals being closed, A&E services moved miles up the road, and children's wards being shut, have caused widespread concern and confusion. What is more, these decisions have been decided behind closed doors, with no genuine involvement of local people. It's a disgrace.

"The public deserves better. My first job as Secretary of State will be to review every single STP proposal looking at what's in the interest of quality of patient care.

"We'll ask a new body – NHS Excellence – to lead that review. And patients and local communities will be involved at every stage. Local people should be at the heart of decisions about how care is provided."

[Theresa May is less Margaret Thatcher and more Veruca Salt – Emily Thornberry](#)

Emily Thornberry, Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary of State, speaking on Channel 4 News, said:

"The truth is that

Theresa May paints herself as a bloody difficult woman or a Margaret Thatcher figure, but I think this is less Margaret Thatcher and more Veruca Salt. You can't just stand there and simply say: 'I want, I want, I want' when you are negotiating.

"What you have to do is to persuade the other side that you have some ideas that would be good for both sides. You need to be able to calm down and you need to be able to make friends and be prepared to compromise.

"Otherwise we are heading for a hard Brexit; we are heading for no deal and she must back off.

A strong Brexit is about a deal that works for the British economy. We are talking about people's jobs – that's the important thing."

Remarques de la Haute Représentante/Vice-Présidente de la Commission européenne Federica Mogherini lors du débat 'Présent et

Bruxelles, le 2 mai 2017

Seul la version écrite fait foi!

Messieurs les Présidents, Mesdames et Messieurs les Députés, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, Chers amis,

C'est vraiment pour moi un plaisir de me retrouver avec vous, je salue chaleureusement l'initiative du Parlement européen d'organiser cette Semaine Tunisienne – la toute première pour un pays méditerranéen– et je suis très heureuse de comprendre que votre première visite à l'étranger est ici à Bruxelles, auprès des institutions européennes, en particulier auprès du Parlement européen où tous les groupes politiques ont toujours soutenu fortement l'approfondissement de notre partenariat, comme également au sein du Conseil européen où tous les Etats Membres peuvent se définir des amis de la Tunisie. Alors, s'il y a un sujet qui n'est pas matière à divisions dans l'Union européenne c'est bien le soutien et l'amitié et le partenariat entre l'Union européenne et la Tunisie.

Depuis 2011, la Tunisie représente l'espoir de notre région commune. Elle a été le phare du changement, et en même temps le baromètre des tensions et des aspirations des peuples de la Méditerranée avec toutes les contradictions de ces dernières années.

Aujourd'hui, la Tunisie a besoin de consolider les acquis de ces dernières années. Ces acquis nous démontrent que le changement est possible, au-delà de toutes difficultés. Ils nous démontrent que la négociation et la coopération sont plus efficaces que l'affrontement. Ils nous démontrent que l'Islam peut s'épanouir en démocratie et la démocratie en terre d'Islam. Ils nous démontrent que la société civile est un partenaire essentiel pour la paix et la réconciliation nationale.

Mais ces acquis, bien qu'importants, ne sont pas un point d'arrivée : comme vous l'avez dit, ils ne sont qu'un début. La démocratie est toujours un chemin, un processus d'apprentissage continu – cela est vrai par contre ici aussi, en Europe. Le changement qui a commencé en Tunisie doit continuer – et nous, les Européens, nous sommes prêts à vous accompagner, étape par étape, sur ce chemin, avec toutes les institutions européennes, fortement convaincues de cette nécessité, parce que c'est aussi notre intérêt à nous, les Européens.

Le Président Essebsi l'a très bien dit devant ce Parlement, avec un discours qui a combiné le respect pour la tradition et un désir de modernité, l'Islam et la démocratie, la consolidation et le changement.

Parmi les forces de la Tunisie, il y a tout d'abord le désir de changement du peuple tunisien, comme démontré par la révolution de 2011. Il y a aussi la Constitution de 2014, Monsieur le Président [Antonio Tajani] vous l'avez rappelé, dont la mise en œuvre effective reste, je le sais très bien, l'un de vos engagements majeurs et là aussi, comptez sur nous pour vous accompagner dans ces défis.

L'Assemblée des Représentants du Peuple a un rôle central dans cette consolidation démocratique. Vous avez devant vous une tâche importante de bonne coordination – tant interne qu'avec les instances gouvernementales –, de transparence, et de suivi en faveur des citoyens. Ceci

sera crucial pour garder pleinement leur confiance et traduire leurs aspirations.

Les élections municipales prévues à la fin de cette année seront sans doute une autre étape importante dans le processus de transition démocratique.

Dès le lendemain de la Révolution de 2011, l'Union européenne s'est engagée à soutenir pleinement la transition entamée par le peuple tunisien, que vous représentez ici aujourd'hui. Une transition pour plus de démocratie, plus de justice sociale, plus de liberté. Mais une transition aussi, le Président Tajani l'a bien rappelé, pour plus de croissance et d'opportunités, afin de réduire les inégalités sociales, générationnelles et régionales.

Nous avons depuis lors décidé, ensemble, de la mise en place d'un partenariat privilégié. Un partenariat continuellement nourri par nos échanges à tous niveaux.

Je souhaite ainsi aujourd'hui réaffirmer notre volonté de continuer à appuyer vos efforts sur les réformes – notamment de l'administration publique, la justice, la décentralisation et la lutte contre la corruption, pour ne citer que les plus importants.

L'Union européenne a adopté à la fin de 2016 une Communication détaillant une série de mesures ambitieuses en appui à la Tunisie, tant sur le plan financier que pratique, et démontrant ainsi la profondeur de notre relation avec la Tunisie.

Au travers de ces actions, l'Union européenne répond "présente" pour la Tunisie, toujours. Ainsi, nous nous réjouissons de vos succès, et nous voulons vous soutenir pleinement face aux défis actuels – on le sait très bien, il y en a plusieurs, économiques, sécuritaires, sociaux et régionaux, à partir de la crise en Libye qui nous concerne directement comme Tunisiens, comme Européens, exactement de la même manière.

A cet égard, le rôle des instances tunisiennes, du Gouvernement, de l'Assemblée, des institutions visant au renforcement de l'Etat de droit est déterminant pour aller de l'avant. Il est important que l'Assemblée continue à travailler avec le gouvernement pour soutenir et [faire] avancer les réformes et permettez-moi d'ajouter que le Premier Ministre Youssef Chahed et moi faisons partie de la même génération. Sa nomination – je crois – a envoyé un signal important de renouvellement de la classe dirigeante tunisienne. Pour la première fois en soixante ans – je pense ne pas me tromper –, le chef de gouvernement tunisien a moins de 50 ans.

Cela reflète la réalité du pays. En effet, rappelons que la moitié de la population tunisienne a moins de trente ans. Chaque fois que je visite votre pays – et je le fais souvent, je suis contente – je rencontre un grand nombre de jeunes hommes et jeunes femmes – je voudrais souligner le rôle des jeunes femmes et des femmes dans la société tunisienne, y compris dans la Révolution de 2011-, qui ont beaucoup de talent, d'énergie et un désir profond de contribuer à la vie de leur pays. C'est une ressource fondamentale sur laquelle il faut s'appuyer.

Je souhaite donc terminer en parlant des jeunes tunisiens. Suite à ma rencontre avec le Président [Béji Caïd Essebsi], lors de ma visite à Tunis le 1 novembre 2016, nous avons lancé le Partenariat Union européenne-Tunisie pour la jeunesse. Et nous sommes prêts à soutenir pleinement la Tunisie dans la préparation et la mise en œuvre d'une stratégie nationale pour la jeunesse.

Notre but est de permettre à cette grande richesse -la jeunesse- de fleurir. Il est urgent de trouver la façon de leur donner une perspective plus forte pour leur développement personnel et professionnel, par la création d'emplois, mais aussi par la formation professionnelle, ou l'éducation, et la participation politique. L'Assemblée a aussi un rôle important à jouer à cet égard.

Nous travaillons maintenant sur un appui renforcé dans les domaines tels que l'emploi, l'éducation, la recherche et la mobilité des étudiants et des jeunes. Nous espérons établir un dialogue structuré et inclusif sur la jeunesse tunisienne, mais surtout avec la jeunesse tunisienne, et surtout travailler pour ouvrir des canaux de participation active de la jeunesse à la vie sociale et politique du pays.

Nos jeunes doivent toujours être au centre de notre attention et surtout de nos actions. Ce n'est pas une faveur que nous leur accordons, ce n'est pas que pour investir dans le futur, parce que quand la moitié de la population a moins de 30 ans, il n'y a pas de développement, il n'y a pas de démocratie, il n'y a pas de présent si les jeunes ne sont pas directement engagés et parties prenantes du processus de décision du pays. Ils demandent à obtenir l'éducation à laquelle ils aspirent ou le travail qu'ils méritent. Et nous avons le devoir et l'intérêt, ensemble, de répondre à leurs attentes et de créer les bons canaux pour leur engagement. Nous devons réussir à transformer leur désenchantement en citoyenneté; croire qu'ils peuvent vraiment contribuer à changer leur pays, avec des résultats concrets.

C'est un défi formidable, mais c'est un défi que nous pouvons gagner grâce à notre collaboration, entre la Tunisie et l'Union européenne. Donc comptez sur nous, toujours, à travers les différentes institutions – je peux le dire ici vous le voyez, le Parlement, la Commission, le Conseil, les Etats Membres tous ensemble, l'Union européenne est là, toujours, pour la Tunisie, pas seulement parce que nous sommes des pays voisins, nous sommes dans la même région, nous partageons la même mer mais surtout parce que nous savons très bien que si la Tunisie va bien, l'Europe va mieux et alors c'est dans notre propre intérêt que nous allons continuer à travailler pour approfondir notre collaboration et être sûrs que cela va amener des bons résultats.

Alors merci encore pour votre présence ici aujourd'hui, pour cette rencontre aujourd'hui mais aussi et surtout je vous souhaite une bonne continuation de votre travail pendant cette semaine et dans le futur parce que comme le Président Tajani l'a dit, ce n'est que le début et nous comptons très fortement sur la collaboration et le partenariat entre parlements en Tunisie et au sein de l'Union européenne pour soutenir et accompagner au niveau parlementaire le travail que nous faisons aux autres niveaux des institutions européennes et tunisiennes.

Merci beaucoup.

Lien vers la vidéo: <https://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I137653>