

Remarks by President Charles Michel at the joint press conference with Micheál Martin, Taoiseach of Ireland



It's a great pleasure to be here, in your country today. And I would like to warmly thank you for your welcome and for your hospitality. It's an honour to be received here in Farmleigh house.

We had very constructive discussions on many important topics and, of course, we also tackled Brexit. My message is simple. The EU stands in full solidarity with Ireland and this is especially true when it comes to the full implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement and the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland. This text has been negotiated for three years. Each word, each comma has been debated for hours and hours. It has been ratified by both parties. There is simply no question on its full implementation. This is a matter of law, a matter of trust.

What's at stake is what we cherish most. The Good Friday Agreement, the peace and stability of the island of Ireland and the integrity of the single market. This is not only an Irish issue. This is a European one.

I have been very clear yesterday with Prime Minister Johnson. It's now for the UK to restore trust and to put all its cards on the table. The EU is doing its utmost to find an agreement with the UK, but not at any cost. We are following these negotiations very closely on a daily basis and are fully united behind our negotiator Michel Barnier and to get to an agreement, we need significant steps to be made by our British friends in the coming days, not only on fisheries but also on the level playing field and governance.

On other issues such as water transport, energy or trade in goods, progress has been made but is not enough. As in any such negotiation, nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. The coming days are crucial. This is the moment of truth and there is only one week to go before the European Council on 15 and 16 October with also the occasion to discuss many other very important topics: the single market, the digital agenda. How it's possible for the European Union to deliver more concrete results for our European citizens. We will also have the opportunity to discuss important international topics – our relationship with China, our relationship with Africa, for example. And climate change is a very important priority for us.

We followed what has been decided in this country and it demonstrates a very strong political ambition. We want to support this positive effort.

We will have the occasion next week during the European Council to have an orientation debate about climate change, especially on our European goals by 2030. And I hope this is our intention that we will be able to take formal decisions on climate change by the end of the year. I would like to thank you

because it was important for me personally to listen actively and carefully to your political priorities at the European level. And I am optimistic because I am certain that we will continue to work together closely with all our colleagues to deliver very concrete and positive results for all European citizens. Thank you again.