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# INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC ON TF1

Julien Arnaud

Good evening, Mr President, and thank you for your time despite some short nights and tough negotiations. We have seen it and we have said it. It is true that Europe has often cut itself off. We have seen a lot of negotiations. We have heard astronomical figures that are hard to fathom. This €40 billion, in real terms, how will it help the people of France?

Emmanuel Macron

Good evening. Well, as you rightly said about Europe, there are very practical things and what has been negotiated will affect the lives of our citizens. First, it will affect them through the budget which we have negotiated for the next seven years. I want to emphasize that because after the recovery plan, there is the budget. And for our farmers this is essential, it is the Common Agricultural Policy, it is what enables us to produce, to have this food sovereignty. Our negotiations have allowed us to protect our farmers' income for the next seven years. So the direct payments they receive, their guaranteed income will be the same. We were afraid that Brexit could have an impact and that the withdrawal of the United Kingdom could lead to lower income for our farmers. That will not happen. We fought hard, and we maintained the budget. And this budget will also allow our regions to be funded. France will receive financing, particularly for our overseas regions. There too, we fought hard to improve this budget and we achieved concrete results. And in addition to this European budget, on these historic policies, we also launched new policies in line with all of France's ambitions: on digital technology, climate, etc. And in addition to the budget, that was what made this Summit unique. That is what made it historic. For the first time in our history, we have created a recovery plan which we will finance together via shared debt on the markets. For the first time in its history, Europe, united European countries, will borrow money and then redistribute it among themselves based on needs and priorities. And your report explained it very well. For the people of France, it means we will receive €40 billion from this recovery plan.

Julien Arnaud

And on that point...

Emmanuel Macron

That will fund...

Julien Arnaud

Who will receive this [inaudible]...

Emmanuel Macron

We will build our recovery plan with the aim of financing youth employment; Europe will help us with this; with the aim of financing our small and medium-sized enterprises, our craftspeople, our shopkeepers, as well as certain sectors like tourism which we have started focusing on, but also the thermal renovation of buildings. Europe will allow us to do this, to finance industries like hydrogen, electric batteries, everything which will enable us to create jobs in industrial and ecological sectors in the recovery plan. Electric batteries, hydrogen, thermal renovation of buildings, creating jobs by training our young people and those who lose their jobs and need to retrain. Europe will fund a significant share of this project. And France, after four days and nights of negotiations, will receive €40 billion. We are the third-largest beneficiary in Europe of this recovery plan, which based on the work done so far by the Government, will cover 40% of our expenditure. That means that we will receive this money from Europe without needing to fund it, whether by debt or taxation.

Julien Arnaud

Will France be free to use this money as it sees fit, e.g. to give it to major companies like Air France, Airbus and Renault, or to the healthcare sector, e.g. to pay for hospital beds? Or can it say: "No way, we have a say in how you use it".

Emmanuel Macron

We will discuss our recovery plans with each other and some sectors have been defined under the criteria stipulated, but there are no veto rights, and that was part of the discussion. Certain Member States said: there must be veto rights in governance, we must be able to block such and such a plan if a Member State does not make sufficient reforms for the others, but this will not be the case. And so the sovereignty of each Member

State is respected. But there will be discussions with the European Commission and the other States to take relevant action among ourselves. Everything you mentioned will be entirely possible in the plan. Financing support for our companies, financing the recovery of the most strategic sectors, financing our health policy. So all these things, but also our culture, the financing of our educational policy, financing new job-creating sectors, all that will be possible in this recovery plan.

Julien Arnaud

Airbus too, even though it's not an extremely green company, if I may say.

Emmanuel Macron

I'm sorry, I didn't hear what you said.

Julien Arnaud

Airbus is a giant too, but not necessarily in a hugely environmentally-friendly sector. We know that a very large share must be allocated and prioritized for green investments.

Emmanuel Macron

Yes but with regard to Airbus, in terms of aeronautics, we started working on this issue by providing financing and guarantees. The State has already... As you know, the French State has already taken action. With this financing and these guarantees, among other things we have requested conditions to improve the carbon footprint by reducing short-haul flights which can be replaced by train journeys, in other words for routes within France which can be reached by high-speed train in less than two and half hours, we asked Air France to reduce flights. For Airbus, the other airline-sector company, we also proposed assistance. This assistance is supporting a sector which creates a lot of jobs but which, through innovation, will become greener. And that is an important point in relation to your question. We can't say: we have climate ambitions, but we're giving up everything that we are. Cars and aviation are major French industrial sectors. It is absolutely true that they are sectors which cause pollution. How can we reconcile our employment objectives with our environmental objectives? I don't think we can do so by shutting down our economy, i.e. by ceasing to produce planes and cars. Others will just produce them, and we will use them. So we simply must finance these sectors so that they can be more quickly converted to a "decarbonized" economy. That is exactly what we have done with Airbus.

Julien ARNAUD

To finance... Precisely, to finance...

Emmanuel MACRON

Through the recovery plan. And so in our aviation plan with Airbus, we said: "We'll help you with cash flow and with capital if necessary. But first, you must maintain as many jobs as possible via a negotiated agreement which we drew up. And second, we will finance innovation in the sector in order to reduce sector emissions, i.e. to produce less polluting aircraft faster and gradually change the policy."

Julien Arnaud

Mr President, this...

Emmanuel Macron

We have done the same with cars by producing more electric batteries, going further with electric vehicles, hybrid vehicles and new-generation, less polluting vehicles. That is the model we believe in.

Julien Arnaud

Now a very specific and important issue for our viewers. To use your expression, this money won't arrive by magic, it'll have to come from somewhere. You have said that Europe will pay. But Europe is us too. A few days ago, you said on TF1: "There will be no new taxes for France." Can you say tonight: "There will be no European tax either", which the people of France would clearly have to pay?

Emmanuel Macron

I can simply say that French tax payers will not have to pay. Why? Because in that agreement, we pledged to create new own resources, so that at European level, we can tax major companies and international actors which are not in line with our policies. Let me explain. The €750 billion in this recovery plan will enable us to finance both loans and subsidies. That was what the debate over the past few days involved. The €750 billion is a debt which Europeans are taking on collectively. It is very interesting because together, we are very solid. And so, for example, the €40 billion which France will receive will not be part of our debt to Europe. So how will it be repaid? First, Europe will start doing so via interests which it doesn't use, technical issues which we have added to this text, and in particular by smoothing out the debt over time, it will gradually create own resources enabling us to repay at European level what we will have borrowed on the markets. For example, the plastic tax is an initial own resource which encourages sectors to reduce their use of plastic and will be rolled out at European level. And then, at European level, we can create the taxes which we have been fighting for over several years. A digital tax for international tech giants who currently pay no tax. As I have already said several

several years. A digital tax for international tech giants who currently pay no tax. As I have already said several times, we are already doing this in France. We went ahead with it because Europe and the OECD were slow to respond. But it should be done at European level. We are in the process of convincing all our partners in the months and years to come. Our goal is to have a genuine digital tax for these tech giants which, by the way, made huge profits during the crisis and don't pay the same VAT or corporation tax as the French SMEs and major companies which in some cases they are competing against. Such a tax would help repay this European loan. The second idea is the Border Carbon Adjustment Mechanism. We are asking our companies to make huge efforts in order to be greener. We have set up carbon pricing to speed up this transition. But when we import steel from the other side of the world, produced under much less exacting conditions than ours, we must be able to impose a tax at our borders which reflects this in order to prevent unfair competition, so the carbon tax would apply to steel from India, China, or elsewhere when it enters France. This European tax which we will create together will help us to repay this shared debt. And so the strength of this project, what makes it different, is that the French taxpayers won't have to repay the debt. It is mostly the major international companies, some of which are European, which currently do not pay enough tax, that will gradually pay off this debt via the European taxation which we will create. And that is the crux of the matter. We are taking out a loan to finance the transformation of our economy and tackle our current health, economic and social crises, and we will pay for it by transforming European taxation, enabling us firstly to better tax digital stakeholders and secondly to meet our climate objectives.

Julien Arnaud

Now Mr President, with regard to Europe. As you said yourself, at the start of the crisis it made mistakes on various issues, particularly masks and borders. These are still important issues today, particularly as regards masks. We have just seen that they will be free for the most disadvantaged people. Would you like this initiative to be extended to the entire population in the days or weeks ahead?

Emmanuel Macron

I think that the priority is indeed to give every man and woman in France access to masks. We have responded through our ability to produce, import and secure stocks. I would like to thank all public and private actors as they have worked hard to ensure we have access to masks after the confinement. It was important for all our citizens to have access to them and to help those who could not afford "general public" masks, as we call them. But of course the French government and taxpayers cannot pay for free masks for everyone all the time, so I think that this should remain a social policy. In the period ahead, our role as the French people, alongside other Europeans, is to secure stocks and production, whether they be "general public" masks or masks for healthcare workers, but also the ventilators and pharmaceutical products we need and our ability to produce a vaccine. These are the issues we have been discussing, working on and adapting in the past weeks and months.

Julien Arnaud

A few moments ago, we also saw a report on difficulties relating to tests, difficulties which are linked to border policy because people are scrambling to be tested so they can travel. We have also seen a lack of reciprocity among countries. In some cases, French nationals are not allowed to travel to certain countries, while nationals from those countries can enter France. What can be done to ensure more tests are carried out and facilitate this reciprocity?

Emmanuel Macron

We have worked to be able to carry out more and more tests in France, and there is also strong cooperation among European countries. We will continue in that vein, and of course we will secure all the necessary ingredients, organizations and mechanisms to be able to carry out large-scale testing. And as I was saying a few days ago, we will also simplify access to these tests for our citizens by enabling them to get the tests themselves when they are in doubt, instead of going to the doctor, even when they are asymptomatic. Next, the issue of movement. In Europe, we are now well organized, we have reopened the Schengen Area and are cooperating well. This is extremely important because, we must remember, 350,000 workers go back and forth across the borders each day. The problem is then with non-Schengen countries, which sometimes have other policies. This is what led us to close certain borders on a case-by-case basis, so we will always examine reciprocity. Naturally, we want our citizens abroad to be able to return to France when they wish, we want dual nationals to be able to travel between both countries as soon as possible, but this must never threaten public health in France. There must be reciprocity, an obligation to be tested when possible in the country of origin, a test upon arrival in France or a monitoring and quarantine process. We will be very strict about this because, as we are seeing throughout Europe and the rest of the world, cases are increasing once more and we must be extremely careful.

Julien Arnaud

Mr President, there is another issue which is also indirectly linked to COVID-19, and that is security. We have not heard a lot from you on it. And yet there have been serious incidents: the bus driver in Bayonne, a fireman shot and injured, anti-social behaviour and fireworks, joyriding... How do you plan to tackle this?

Emmanuel Macron

Well, on that issue, as I have always said and will reiterate here today, it is zero tolerance. Anybody who holds public authority, who belongs to our internal security forces or works to serve others, like firefighters and, as we have seen recently, healthcare workers, deserves respect and we will not tolerate anything less. The Prime Minister and relevant Ministers have always travelled to the scene of such incidents and have underlined our plan: increasing equipment, strengthening support policies, but we are also taking the necessary steps to ensure that the legal system swiftly deals with such behaviour. Not only must there be an immediate response, but also a complete change in our mindset. We cannot allow, and I will not allow anti-social behaviour to become a habit in our country. Security in our everyday lives is what ensures public order, Republican order, in other words true freedom within our society, so we will not compromise on that issue.

Julien Arnaud

Thank you for joining us for this live interview, Mr President.

Emmanuel Macron

Thank you. But what I simply want to say, on that point and on everything we have discussed, is that I want our citizens to realize the importance of the events over the past four days and nights. We have achieved a historic, concrete agreement for our Europe with everything we have just described. It is the result of three years' work between France and Germany, it is the project with which the people of France entrusted me, and which I promised them. I presented it at the Sorbonne in September 2017, I have been working on it with Federal Chancellor Merkel since spring 2018, it led to a French-German agreement on 18 May, and two months later it became a European reality. We had to fight for it, but we did it. This is the most important moment for our Europe since the creation of the euro. Tonight, I truly want everyone watching to be aware that this is a historic moment, it is the fruit of all our work and we can be proud of it.

Julien Arnaud

Thank you for joining us for this live interview, Mr President.