

Participation du Président de la République à la première session plénière du sommet de la Communauté politique européenne.

Thank you, Keir. Thank you very much, Mette, for once again organizing this summit. And let me just tell you, before we jump to the situation in Ukraine, as you mentioned and framed it here, that it's clear that this format as well is the right place to deal with so many conflicts or hard situations. We are focused on the Ukrainian situation, given the war of aggression launched by Russia. But Antonio was right as well to highlight the peace treaty signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan. I think this is a great achievement, and I want to congratulate the two leaders. We are also very focused on what's happening in the Caucasus and the Western Balkans. This is the solidarity of this continent. And once again, given this, I would say, holistic approach, we have to do this for the common place we all share : Europe.

The elections in Moldova were a great achievement, and may I once again offer my congratulations, because this is a test case for our resilience. We will revert to these topics later today. But the capacity to resist the interferences and misinformation coming from Russia was clearly at the core of your campaign, and you resisted. I think it is very interesting for all of us to have your clear feedback and the lessons learned from this victory, because this is something useful to be implemented by the rest of the club. Now we have interferences in all elections. I can tell you, because I had interferences in my two elections, in 2017 and 2022 — and they were quite efficient, I have to say, but not successful, and less aggressive than the one in Moldova.

As for Ukraine, Volodymyr made it very clear in his statement, and I think the conclusion of your initial speech, Mette, was very important. We are at a moment where Russia is not clearly achieving its main objectives. It is not a three-week special operation. They didn't take Kyiv, they didn't change the regime. I would add to that : two great friends joined NATO, which is a big strategic defeat for Russia on top of it. Now the question is how, not just to sustain the war effort, but to clearly change the dynamic and help Ukraine in this context. I have to say, all together we worked very hard during the past few months, and I think the situation is much better today than it was at the beginning of the year. At the beginning of the year, our fear was of a very rapid peace, and we had some doubts about the level of support from the United States.

Now, first, we built the Coalition of the Willing. A large part of you are members of it, and I think this is a great achievement of the past few months, as you mentioned, Keir. But we had a clear plan and commitments the day after a truce, a peace treaty, or a ceasefire, to have a robust and long-standing peace. This is very important in terms of sustainable support to the Ukrainian army and the level of commitment we are ready to provide. Second, we managed collectively to re-engage with the United States, and the statements of the President of the United States last week are a huge change if you compare them with what was said in the Oval Office two months ago. This is very important because, for me, it's a concrete case of countering the misinformation spread by Russia. No, Russia is not winning. No, Ukraine is not losing this war. The situation is very different, and I think there is the same approach now regarding the conflict.

It is also part of the frustration of the US President vis-à-vis the absence of commitment from Russia. President Trump took several initiatives to re-engage with President Poutine and to go to the table of negotiations, and it is now clear that all those words, when President Poutine was saying he was ready to negotiate peace, were not a sincere commitment. So now the key points for all of us are : number one, to follow up, step up, and scale up in terms of support for Ukraine. Air defense systems, drones — and I must say the level of innovation and efficiency of drone systems is very impressive — and Volodymyr was very clear on the level of support and financing they need in order to be efficient on the ground. This is one of the best ways to change the situation and to recover some territories. Third, long-range missiles.

Let's focus on these three categories, as you mentioned as well, in terms of financing, capacity to deliver, and working hard to accelerate both key deliveries and common projects. In parallel, in order to put pressure on Russia and create more incentives to come back to the table of negotiations, we have our sanctions. The 19th sanctions package proposed by the Commission was a very important one. We coordinate, we step up, and we are more and more efficient. I want to insist on the shadow fleet, as you mentioned, because, according to our key figures today, 30 to 40 percent of the war effort is financed through the revenues of the shadow fleet. It represents more than 30 billion euros. It is extremely important to increase the pressure on this shadow fleet, because it will clearly reduce Russia's capacity to finance its war effort.

We have put a series of sanctions on them — on the boats, on insurance companies, on harbors, and so on — but now we clearly have a way to increase the pressure by coordinating with a holistic approach on this shadow fleet. What we did in the past few days with our navy, just to make controls and to ensure compliance with international rules, delivered very concrete results. First, because you can identify the presence of the shadow fleet on your coast. Second, because you can check whether or not they comply with international rules. Third, and very importantly, you kill the business model by detaining these vessels for four days or weeks, forcing them to reorganize themselves differently and destroying the efficiency of their business model. This model was organized even before 2022, but it is now totally industrialized.

I suggest that in the framework of the Coalition of the Willing, in close coordination with NATO, we work to optimize this common action. For example, the vessels we identified and checked, which are now the subject of legal action, were declared under a fake flag. They were the very same vessels controlled by Estonia last March for the same reasons. By stopping them for one or two weeks, we completely break the efficiency of their organization. So, the shadow fleet is a very good target if we want to improve our efficiency and reduce their capacities. I think this is a very important step forward in order to increase our pressure on Russia. Obviously, the objective is to allow Ukraine to recover territories, but also to increase pressure on Russia to return to the negotiating table.

My last point concerns all the provocations we have in Poland and in Estonia, and I want to reiterate our sincere solidarity. I think we had further action under Article 4 of NATO, more coordination, and additional capacities. We sent some additional Rafales, among other things. It is also very important to go to the end of the inquiries regarding what happened in Denmark and elsewhere, because it is essential to establish full clarity. I think the main answer should be more unpredictability and more strategic ambiguity. It is very important to have a clear message : drones that violate our territories are taking a big risk — they can be destroyed, full stop. We are not here to provide notice. We will do what we have to do to preserve our integrity and our territorial sovereignty. For aircraft, we have a process and coordination within NATO, and I think this process will also create more unpredictability. Deterrence should be key to preserving our consistency.

The very important message to convey from this meeting is that we are ready, and we are in a position to preserve our airspace, our territory, and our integrity. We are ready on the eastern flank of NATO, and we are ready at the same time, without reducing this commitment, to provide security guarantees for Ukraine. This is the same approach, and all these approaches are clearly compatible. It was fairly assessed by the Secretary General of NATO. Thank you, Keir.