

28 May 2019 - Seul le prononcé fait foi

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Statement by President Emmanuel Macron upon his arrival at the European Council for the informal dinner for the Heads of State and Government of the European Union.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are meeting for an important summit following the European elections that took place last weekend and which, I think, sent several clear messages. The first is that, when many believed that Europe was tired, and less and less democratic, our people simply told us that they wanted Europe, and to talk about Europe. Across Europe, we secured a turnout that hadn't been reached in 25 years, and in France, since 1984. So this turnout places an obligation on us all. And now we are faced with a complete shift and a new step forward in the European adventure. For the first time since the European Parliament came into existence, there is no majority with two parties. There is a need to build something new, a new project that reflects what the European people have chosen. In this respect, the new central force for progress that we are currently building will play a role, and be significant. In this context, today I would like us to focus on the essential, and the central aspects of the project that we want to carry out in Europe over the next five years. The first aspect is our response to the climate emergency. It is a very strong message sent by the elections in France, and everywhere in Europe. Alongside those who have this vision and for the good of our citizens, we must find a clear solution at the European level to the climate challenge. The second thing we must do is rebuild the model for growth and progress. That means investing in innovation, artificial intelligence and new technologies. We must continue working on job creation in our economic space, but also on standards, minimum social thresholds, because no economy will succeed if its people are not faring better. Especially in countries where today there is no minimum wage or social rights have deteriorated, and if there is no return to a form of European convergence. Thirdly, we need a Europe that protects better. I also want us to promote ambitious projects in the next five years, in the fields of migration, border protection and defence. I have spoken of my ambitions, but a thorough overhaul of Schengen, rebuilding a common border protection and solidarity area, with the real prospect of common defence, are key elements. And we must also make progress in deepening the euro area. France has long been committed to this project. We reached agreements a few months ago. In these five coming years, we need to go much further in this respect. We need to get behind and build up a European ambition for the next five years and we will have to choose people based on this ambition. We need women and men who embody this renewal, who have the experience and credibility that enables them to take on these responsibilities and who reflect these ambitions and fully embrace them. This is what our discussion today should focus on, in my view.