

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE ALDE PRIME MINISTERS CHARLES MICHEL, LARS LØKKE RASMUSSEN, JÜRI RATAS, MARK RUTTE, MARJAN ŠAREC AND JUHA SIPILÄ

ALDE Prime Ministers meeting, Helsinki, February 19, 2019

We, the Prime Ministers of ALDE, united in our mission to develop Europe and believing in our shared values, reaffirm our commitment to work together towards Europe that will again be a driving force of freedom, security, prosperity, new jobs, a strong advocate of the rule of law and a global leader in the fight against climate change.

In our view, the European Union must continue to focus on policies that are crucial for the competitiveness, new jobs and sustainable growth as well as economic and social cohesion. Deepening the single market, removing remaining obstacles of its development, including those affecting cross-border movement, and advancing common trade rules are critical drivers towards higher European competitiveness and prosperity. They are the key for maintaining the Union as a strong global player and resilient to external challenges.

Digitalization and services will continue to take a bigger share of the European economy. Currently **the Single Market** covers these areas of the economy only partly. We urge to pass the EU proposals concerning the Single Market that are currently still under negotiations.

Furthermore, we propose a more holistic approach where the Single Market, digitalization, industrial policy and external competitiveness are better interlinked. We aim at a forward-looking growth strategy. This includes among other things, data mobility and artificial intelligence.

One of the priorities for the EU's next strategic agenda must be an ambitious, **open and rules-based trade policy**.

Our priority is to promote the rules-based international order and effective multilateralism. We are committed maintaining the effectiveness of existing WTO disciplines. With its wide network of trade agreements the EU gives a strong signal that it is for open trade and against protectionism.

We should strive for a more comprehensive, strategic policy towards China and improve the transatlantic trade and investment relations. We must also develop our relations with Africa in a more balanced way.

We need to make sure that our future relationship with the UK provides as frictionless trade and investment relations as possible, while protecting our Single Market and four freedoms.

In the fight against climate change, the EU must be a global leader. We remain committed to mitigating climate change and promoting green growth. We strongly believe that the EU can benefit of being the forerunner in climate action.

Current emission reduction commitments in the context of the Paris Agreement are not enough to halt global warming to under 2 degrees, not to mention to 1,5degrees. Thus, we will catalyse global mitigation efforts to keep global warming below 1.5°C. With technology solutions, policies and financing, we are committed to demonstrate our leadership in mitigating climate change at a global scale.

We will intensify our climate action by committing to include ambitious climate policy into the Union's strategic planning for the next five years and urging to tighten the EU's emission reduction obligations. In addition to emission reductions, we are ready to increase negative emissions by maintaining and increasing carbon sinks.

In the upcoming European elections, we are a counterforce to populism and an alternative for the left wing and conservative groups. We want to carry out needed reforms, efficient decision-making and implementation, as well as stick to a tradition of tolerance and co-operation. We are committed to working towards unity and actively point at the values of the European civilization in the multi-polar world.

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