

**Joint Declaration by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany,
the President of the French Republic and the President of the Council of
Ministers of the Italian Republic**

On 23 June 2016, the majority of the British people have expressed their wish to leave the European Union. Germany, France and Italy respect this decision. We regret that the United Kingdom will no longer be our partner within the European Union.

We are fully confident that the European Union is strong enough to give the right answers today. There is no time to waste.

Today we convey our strong commitment to European unity. It is our firm conviction that the European Union is essential to make our countries stronger by acting together, with our common Institutions, in order to ensure economic and social progress for our people and to assert Europe's role in the world.

For almost 60 years, the EU constitutes a unique community of rights, freedoms, law and common values. The EU enables us to safeguard our European social model which combines economic success with social protection. The EU enables us to preserve our cultural diversity. The single Market, our common policies and the Euro are unique in the world. These achievements are the foundation of our prosperity. Jointly, we campaign to promote our interests within an agenda for free and fair trade in the world. Jointly, we progress in our energy policy and jointly we contribute to global climate protection. Jointly, we contribute to stability and development in the world and promote freedom.

It is our equally firm conviction that the European Union can be brought forward again only if it continues to be built upon the support of its citizens.

Therefore, the European Union must address the concerns expressed by its people by clarifying its objectives and its functioning. It should be stronger on essential priorities, where the Europeans must join forces and be less present when the Member States are better placed to act. It remains under the democratic control of its citizens and should be better intelligible. It must act faster, in particular in delivering programs and projects which provide direct benefits to the citizens.

In a changing world, the European Union should preserve its essential acquis and focus on the challenges the Europeans face today like worldwide migration and new threats, in particular international terrorism that no single Member State can effectively overcome alone. It must also reinforce the capacity of the Europeans to respond to growing international competition while strengthening the European social market economy.

Therefore, we propose three key priorities for joint and deepened action based on concrete objectives:

- Internal and External Security: Europe is confronted with huge challenges which require strengthening its common means to protect its external borders and to contribute to peace and stability in its neighbourhood, in particular in the Mediterranean, Africa and the Middle East. We will succeed in the fight against terrorism in Europe only if we act united. Terrorism will be defeated only if we prove to be able to rebuild a sense of community; to invest in our cities against social marginalisation.

We will live up to our responsibilities if we develop our European defence and make the necessary commitments for our joint operations as well as for our military capacities and industry. The potential of a true Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy has not yet been fully used.

- A Strong Economy and Strong Social Cohesion: Europe must keep its word on the promise of prosperity to its citizens. We need more growth to fight against unemployment and create jobs, especially for young people, as well as more investment to secure the strength of our economies in the global competition. The success of our European social and economic model, which combines economic strength and social protection requires setting the right regulatory framework ; better policies for entrepreneurship and participation of all in working life ; strengthening research, innovation and training, which play a key role since Europe's wealth is based primarily on the knowledge and the skills of its citizens ; developing the digital economy in Europe for better services, modernized industry and jobs ; exploiting the full potential of energy and climate policies protecting the environment.

For the countries sharing the euro, further steps will be necessary to strengthen growth, competitiveness, employment and convergence including in the social and tax field.

- Ambitious programmes for youth: Europe will succeed only if it gives hope to its young people. We need to strengthen European initiatives for training, entrepreneurship and access to jobs across Europe, as the Youth Employment initiative or Erasmus for students, apprentices and young professionals.

The European Union represents our common values: We strive for peace and freedom, for democracy and the rule of law, for mutual respect and responsibility, for tolerance and participation, for justice and solidarity. Today is the day to reaffirm these values.

We will propose tomorrow to the Heads of State and government and the European Institutions to launch a process according to a strict timetable and a precise set of commitments to respond to the challenges presented by the result of the UK referendum and develop concrete solutions for a good future of the EU and its citizens.

On this basis, Leaders in September should discuss the common challenges the 27 Member States are facing and the essential priorities they need to decide upon. They should also agree on concrete projects to be delivered in Europe in the next six months for growth and security. Work should begin immediately to implement the necessary initiatives. Contributions from international personalities could nourish leaders' discussions on the perspectives of Europe in a global context.

The European Council meetings in October 2016 and December 2016 will give us the opportunity to assess the progress made in that regard and give the necessary guidelines.

The 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome on 25 March 2017 will be an important moment to reaffirm the unity of Europe and our common commitment to the European project.