



Statement by President von der Leyen following her meeting with President of the United States Joe Biden

Washington, DC, , 10 November 2021

Good morning,

I had a very productive meeting today with President Biden in the White House. We have met several times in the last couple of weeks. And we have been meeting at the G20 Summit in Rome and at the COP26 in Glasgow. There, we have launched together several initiatives on the topics of climate change, for example, or trade or other geopolitical issues.

Therefore, today, we were focusing mainly on questions of pressing international topics. First of all, of course, we have been discussing the pandemic and that, despite the progress in vaccination in the United States and the European Union, we have to be very vigilant that this does not turn into a pandemic of the unvaccinated. And we have to do our utmost that the vaccination rates are increasing. We are also aware and determined to make sure that we keep our goal in mind that we want to vaccinate 70% of the global population by next year. So there is still a lot of effort to do.

We were then focusing on the situation on the EU-Belarus border. This is not a bilateral issue of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus. This is a challenge to the whole of the European Union. And this is not a migration crisis. This is the attempt of an authoritarian regime to try to destabilise its democratic neighbours. This will not succeed. We know the patterns. We are used to that, by seeing how there was the attempt to influence our democratic elections. We see the cyberattacks. We see the misinformation. Now, we have this hybrid attack by instrumentalising migrants at the EU-Belarus border. And we have to protect our democracies from this kind of cynical geopolitical power play. This is what I discussed with President Biden at the White House meeting.

This then led to the question of Ukraine. We agree that we fully support the territorial integrity of Ukraine and we also fully support Ukraine in its attempt to modernise and transform the economy and to build up resilience, also on the chosen path.

We have then discussed the situation on the island of Ireland. It is very important that the agreement found in the Protocol and the Withdrawal Agreement are in place, because they are the possibility to keep peace and stability on the island of Ireland. So we are willing, as a European Union, to show the utmost flexibility, and we have shown utmost flexibility within the Protocol, but it is important to stick to what we have agreed and signed together, to work with that.

And finally, we have been discussing infrastructure. It is the initiative 'Build Back Better World' and the 'European Global Gateway' that are reinforcing each other. We know that we build on the same principles. And now we are looking into identifying together the most promising projects where we can invest in, in our common initiatives. So that was a brief summary.

STATEMENT/21/5906

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