



Remarks on the occasion of the inauguration of the Bulgarian EU Presidency

Sofia, 11 gennaio 2018

Antonio Tajani

Presidente del Parlamento europeo

Dear President Radev,

Dear Prime Minister Borissov,

Dear President Karayancheva,

Dear President Tusk and President Juncker,

Dear Ministers and Commissioners,

dear honourable guests,

“United we stand strong”.

The motto of Bulgaria, which was also chosen as the motto of the first Bulgarian Presidency of the Council, summarizes, in four simple words, our common endeavour for the coming six months: Together we must tackle the many challenges ahead of us and make Europe fit for the future. Together we must continue our reflection on how to improve our Union, to make it more efficient, more democratic and closer to our citizens, especially to the younger generations.

We must listen carefully to their concerns and their expectations.

Two months ago I had the privilege to participate, with leaders of political groups of the European Parliament, in a discussion with students of the University of Sofia.

I was impressed by the many talented, ambitious and enthusiastic pro-european young Bulgarians who took the floor. They have great expectations of Europe and they count on us for concrete answers.

Their main concern was better employment opportunities. If we want to create jobs for them, we need to attract more investment, especially in the fields of digital technologies, creative industries and tourism.

I welcome your intention to focus on promoting entrepreneurship based on digital technology and innovation.

The Bulgarian students were also asking us to solve the migration crisis. They are convinced that only European solutions can stop uncontrolled flows of migrants. They are right: let us not disappoint them.

We all agree on the need to adapt the European asylum system to the current challenges, but we must do it in a spirit of true European solidarity.

Together with the Bulgarian Presidency, we are now asked to transpose this understanding into concrete action: 2018 will be a crucial year in that respect.

The European Parliament is ready to assist the Presidency with all available means. You can count on us as a strong, committed and reliable partner during your Presidency: “United we stand strong”.

On behalf of the European Parliament, I wish the Bulgarian Presidency, and Europe, every success for the coming six months.

Thank you.