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Mme Thorning-Schmidt, premier ministre du Danemark, s'exprimant au nom de la présidence du Conseil, a prononcé le discours figurant à l'annexe I. Ce discours comportait quatre volets: d'abord quelques mots à l'intention du Parlement européen, dont Mme Thorning-Schmidt fut membre, puis une mise en perspective historique, ensuite une analyse de la crise actuelle et, enfin, une présentation des quatre priorités de la présidence, à savoir une économie européenne responsable, une Europe plus dynamique, une Europe verte et une Europe sûre. Mme Thorning-Schmidt, prônant l'économie sociale de marché et une austérité accompagnée de solidarité et de justice, a dit que l'Europe est la solution et non le problème, et que la crise doit être surmontée en gardant intactes les valeurs européennes.

M. Barroso, président de la Commission, a prononcé le discours figurant à l'annexe II. Ce discours portait sur la réponse de la Commission à la crise économique et financière, l'action des États membres étant considérée comme insuffisante.

M. Barroso a plaidé pour la conclusion rapide des négociations sur l'accord international, estimant que la présidence danoise pourrait jouer un rôle constructif et espérant qu'elle défendrait le rôle des institutions communautaires. Quant aux perspectives financières, là aussi M. Barroso a dit espérer que la présidence soutiendrait les propositions de la Commission.

Les députés suivants ont pris la parole au nom des groupes politiques:

- M. Daul (PPE, FR) a appelé la présidence danoise à être une présidence politique en ces temps de crise. Il l'a invitée à défendre la méthode communautaire et à "oser" en matière de perspectives financières.
- M. Swoboda (S&D, AT) a regretté que les vraies décisions soient prises par les marchés et par les agences de notation, plutôt que par les institutions européennes. Il a cité le *Financial Times* qui a qualifié le pacte budgétaire de "distraction inutile" et a invité Mme Thorning-Schmidt à défendre l'État social.
- M. Verhofstadt (ALDE, BE) a d'abord parlé de la crise de l'euro, faisant valoir que la recette "Merkel-Sarkozy" n'a pas marché et que les agences de notation ont raison quand elles disent que la cause de la crise est le manque de courage politique en Europe. À son avis, la solution ce sont les euro-obligations. La deuxième crise que traverse l'Europe, c'est la crise des valeurs, selon M. Verhofstadt, comme le cas hongrois le démontre. À ce propos, il a invité le Conseil européen à inscrire ce point à son ordre du jour.
- Mme Harms (Verts/ALE, DE) a salué la nouvelle présidence et en particulier Mme Thorning-Schmidt, qui, a-t-elle fait valoir, représente une nouvelle force. Elle a plaidé en faveur des euro-obligations, de l'environnement en tant que moteur de la croissance et pour la création d'emplois. Pour ce qui est de la Hongrie, elle a estimé que le Conseil et la Commission sont co-responsables de la situation, en ayant laissé aller les choses.
- M. Callanan (ECR, UK) a salué l'opposition du Danemark à la taxe sur les transactions financières et a appelé la présidence à avoir une vision réaliste du budget de l'UE, qui, à son avis, doit être gelé.
- M. Søndergaard (GUE/NGL, DK) s'est dit déçu du programme de la présidence, qui, a-t-il dit, semble rédigé par "Merkozy" et a déploré la politique d'austérité qui ne fait qu'augmenter le chômage.

- M. Messerschmidt (EFD, DK) a lancé à Mme Thorning-Schmidt des accusations personnelles, faisant valoir, entre autres, qu'elle n'a pas de mandat du peuple.
- M. Madlener (NI, NL) a qualifié de "mots creux" le programme de la présidence.

Les intervenants à titre individuel ont fait écho aux représentants des groupes. La crise économique a dominé le débat et les recettes fournies pour en sortir se sont déclinées en fonction des différentes orientations politiques. Ainsi les partis de gauche ont insisté auprès de la présidence pour qu'elle encourage les mesures favorisant la croissance et l'emploi, certains ont insisté sur l'Europe verte en tant que créateur d'emplois, et d'autres encore ont souligné la nécessité de renforcer le marché unique et la compétitivité de l'Europe. Plusieurs députés, indépendamment de l'appartenance politique, ont lancé un appel en faveur de la défense de la méthode communautaire. Quelques interventions ont évoqué le cas de la Hongrie, le Conseil ayant été invité à agir.

En reprenant la parole à la fin du débat, M. Barroso, au nom de la Commission, a constaté que la présidence danoise pouvait compter sur un large soutien, au sein du PE, et il a espéré que les six prochains mois seraient un semestre de prise de décisions.

Mme Thorning-Schmidt s'est félicitée du soutien recueilli par son programme et est revenue sur un certain nombre de points évoqués dans le débat. Concernant les perspectives financières, elle a dit que la présidence y travaillerait sérieusement, dans le but de les moderniser et de favoriser la croissance. Quant à la taxe sur les transactions financières, elle a tenu à préciser que la présidence agirait en tant que médiateur honnête. À propos de la Hongrie, elle a rappelé que c'est la Commission la gardienne des traités et a ajouté que la présidence du Conseil soutient cette institution dans les démarches qu'elle a entreprises en application du traité. Concernant la crise de la dette, elle a tenu à rappeler que celle-ci est due au fait que les États membres n'ont pas respecté le pacte de stabilité et de croissance. La présidence, a-t-elle insisté, appuiera le pacte budgétaire, mais, à lui seul, il ne sera pas suffisant, car il faut aussi une stratégie de croissance et d'emploi. Au Conseil européen du 30 janvier, la présidence soulignera ce point. Enfin, Mme Thorning-Schmidt a parlé de la méthode communautaire, disant qu'elle mérite toujours d'être défendue, et cela dans l'intérêt de tous les États membres (pas seulement des plus petits), puisque l'UE n'est pas gouvernée par les plus forts mais par la règle de droit.

## **The Danish Prime Minister's speech in the European Parliament January 18th 2012**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President of the European Parliament,  
Mr. President of the European Commission,  
Distinguished Leaders of the Political Groups,  
Members of the European Parliament and the European Commission.

I am honoured to stand before you today to present the priorities of the Danish Presidency.

One of the greatest Europeans of our age, the late Czech President Václav Havel, said:

“For twenty years now, Europe is no longer severed in half. I firmly believe that it will never again allow itself to be divided, but, on the contrary, it will provide scope and initiative for ever deeper solidarity and co-operation.”

Havel was Europe at its best. A champion of liberty and creativity. A guardian of rule of law and democracy. A driver of progress and integration. A helping hand under the weak and vulnerable.

At this critical time in our history, it is our shared responsibility to fulfill Havel's belief in Europe. We must do our part to fulfill, and to keep on advancing, Europe's potential of peace, opportunity, freedom and prosperity.

That is the challenge facing Europe as Denmark takes over the Presidency of the Council.

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I have been looking forward to speaking to you today as Prime Minister of Denmark but also as a former member of this great, unique Parliament.

Every day, in the political engine rooms of this house, decisions are taken that form the building blocks of tomorrow's Europe.

Like in any parliament, there are lines of division and heated debates. As there should be. But what makes this assembly special is the shared commitment to Europe and its citizens that runs through the veins of the great majority of members.

You are a parliament of Europe and for Europe.

It has been truly fulfilling for me to be part of the crucial work that you do here. I was honoured to serve in improving Europeans' right of free movement in the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and in furthering European integration as part of the European Convention that led to the Lisbon Treaty. And it was a particular pleasure and privilege to be active in achieving the changes which have significantly and rightly enhanced the legislative powers of the European Parliament.

Over the coming six months, I ask for your support, cooperation and partnership. This will be crucial if we are to achieve real progress on the heavy agenda in front of the European Union today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I belong to a European generation that was young in the eighties. For many, it was a time of hardship with high unemployment and with limited job opportunities. Especially for the young who were also disadvantaged by cut-backs in our education systems.

We were sometimes described as “the No Future generation”.

But in Europe, we saw a path to a more prosperous and promising future. We saw leaders of vision and vigour. Like Havel.

And as the years passed, Europe delivered the conditions which  
Brought– the Single Market.  
Helped to breach the Berlin Wall and promote the– re-unification of Germany.  
Produced the Maastricht Treaty.–  
Secured– the Enlargements.

Out of the gloom and pessimism came an era of growth, progress and optimism. Europe inspired the world with a truly unique model of cooperation.

It is an achievement that we must be proud of when we recall that, in the course of just a few decades, Europe moved from being a continent of repeated conflict and division to a Union of 27 nations based on openness, rule of law and democracy.

In our Union, we have created an unparalleled framework for decision-making at the European level – the Community Method – that enables us to raise standards of freedom and fairness in economies and societies without diminishing the diversity of cultures and communities.

And the keystone of that construction is the common values of solidarity, participation and inclusion.

For us they are not only noble ideals – they are practical working realities. That is why we have built a Europe with a strong social dimension.

We aim at both prosperity and solidarity because we know that, in the modern World, they are not merely desirable, they are interdependent. In this century, even more than in the past, justice, care and opportunity are components of efficiency whilst efficiency is the vital source of investment in justice, care and opportunity. That mixture is at the core of the European success.

I draw very particular attention to it today not only to honour the past but – more important – to give confidence and guidance for the future.

No one here needs to be told that Europe is in a profound economic crisis that has rocked the very foundation of our cooperation.

Growth is low. Debt is high. Businesses are struggling. Jobs are being lost. Insecurity has become part of everyday life for millions of European families.

And because of the nature of the current afflictions, citizens throughout Europe are experiencing and will experience cutbacks and reductions.

We must confront the economic challenge with decisive action. To restore confidence in Europe. To create a new foundation for growth and progress. To ensure the long-term viability of the European model.

We owe it to all generations throughout Europe and, in particular, we owe it to our youth.

What our youth demand of us is only fair: access to the same education and job opportunities that previous generations have enjoyed. A chance to contribute to their societies and to build a secure future.

They will work for that – but they can only be sure of achieving it if we encourage and enable them. If we want them to be providers for us in the future, we must be providers for them in the present. That is the contract between generations. We must honour it with determination.

And we have to show the same steady resolve in ensuring robust public finances. Because ensuring robust public finances are the true bulwark against shortsighted speculation. The only sustainable future for our social market economies is to embrace change and increase competitiveness. The essential basis for that is stability that fosters growth, and opportunity that maximizes innovation.

Restraint in spending is not a departure from solidarity – in present conditions it is a precondition for dependable solidarity. I am certain that the great majority of people understand that, and are prepared to be part of it, if it is fairly applied. People are ready to make sacrifices – but they will not be sacrificed.

People will accept austerity with justice. But they will resist austerity that is manifestly unequal and unfair. As leaders of Europe, we must work in that knowledge and respond to that reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Europe's destiny is Denmark's destiny. This has been the leitmotif of Denmark's European engagement for decades:

40 years ago, Denmark was part of the first enlargement of the Community. And our partners trusted us with the Presidency the same year we became a member.

30 years ago, Denmark held the Presidency in a period of Cold War and economic uncertainty – but also in the first period with an elected European Parliament.

20 years ago, we held the Presidency at a time when the Single Market was launched.

And 10 years ago, Denmark held the Presidency when the EU fulfilled its historic obligation and united Europe.

Like now, these were crucial periods in the history of the European Union. In the coming six months, we will again work hard to move Europe forward.

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European citizens expect their political leaders to act – and rightly so. We must keep one thing in mind: Democratic politics are judged by results, not by intentions.

The Danish Presidency will work tirelessly during the next six months to ensure that the EU continues to produce tangible, useful results. Results that benefit all Europeans, young and old, students and workers, in the North and in the South.

To illustrate that, I want to highlight our key priorities:

Firstly, the Danish Presidency will aim at ensuring a responsible European economy.

That is the only path out of the crisis. We need to put Europe back on track so that we can ensure the prosperity and security of our citizens.

This requires discipline and political will from all of us to implement and comply with the new rules on economic governance. We need a modern and responsible budget. And we must bring public deficits under control.

Secondly, we will work for a more dynamic Europe.

Growth in Europe must be restored and sustained. We need to stimulate long-term growth and job creation, not least for the younger generation.

Modernising and developing the Single Market will be a key part of this effort.

And looking outward, we must do more to help our companies exploit trade opportunities with the emerging economies outside Europe.

Thirdly, we will work for a green Europe.

The EU has developed an ambitious policy on energy and climate issues. We are a leader on the global stage. But to maintain our position, and to encourage others, we need new initiatives in areas such as energy efficiency and renewable energy.

More than 20 million European jobs are linked to the environment in one way or another. There is a huge potential here. But we face a real risk that high-tech research and knowledge-intensive jobs will move out of Europe to more attractive regions.

The Danish Presidency will work hard to ensure that the center of green research and green jobs stays in Europe in the future.

Fourthly, we will work for a safe Europe.

In a globalised world, only a joint European effort will be truly effective. To ensure the safety and freedoms of our citizens. To combat terrorism and cross-border crime. To manage our borders. To establish a well-functioning European Asylum System.

Beyond our own region, the EU's voice must be heard even more clearly as we promote our common values and protect our interests. The Presidency will support and assist the High Representative and the European External Action Service.

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Budget discipline. Growth and jobs. Green policies. And ensuring the safety of our citizens and the voice of Europe in the world. These are our priorities.

We need to be bold and ambitious. In the middle of an economic crisis, I do not expect the Danish Presidency to be easy. But I can assure you that our Presidency will not be daunted either. We are not built like that.

Obviously, a Presidency cannot fulfill its ambition on its own. We need active cooperation from all stakeholders – the Member States, the European institutions and civil society. We need a European Union that is united in meeting and overcoming the challenges facing us today.

Your input and your support in this Parliament will be critical in this effort.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I stand here today as Prime Minister of Denmark, I can assure you of my personal commitment to Europe. I am a European at heart and, most of all, I am a European for my children. I know that, ultimately, their security, opportunity and liberty will depend upon the safety, the life chances and the freedom of their generation everywhere. This Union is the best implement for helping to spread and strengthen those conditions in our continent and throughout the World.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: the ultimate measure of our Union and our solidarity is not where we stand in moments of comfort. It is where we stand in times of challenge.

This is such a time.

As I have stressed today, the challenge facing the EU today is basically three-fold:

Firstly, we need to rely on the strong rules and institutions for decision-making that are already firmly established in our Union. We are a Union based on cooperation, rule of law and democracy.

During times of crisis, when tough decisions and compromises need to be made, these fundamentals – our Community Method – are more important than ever.

Relying on our fundamental rules and procedures is not only in the interest of small countries like Denmark. It is what sets our Union apart. It is what makes our cooperation so strong and so durable. That is in the interest of all of us.

Secondly, we must maintain that Europe is part of the solution to the current crisis, not the problem. The path out of this crisis goes through more Europe, not less Europe. In current conditions, to be inward-looking is to be blind to reality. It is up to the leaders of Europe to show this to our citizens and to the outside world. It is the practicality of Europe that will restore faith in the European project.

Thirdly, we must bring Europe out on the other side of the crisis with our values intact. Fiscal restraint is crucial to stabilize our economies and restore confidence. But when the social market economic model has proven so successful for us over the decades, it must continue to be our guiding purpose through and beyond the current challenges.

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There is no doubt that the current crisis has put the European Union to the test.

The countries of the Eurozone have taken on a huge responsibility in securing economic stability in our region. The Fiscal Compact will play a key role in stabilizing the Euro.

This is in the clear interest of the entire European Union.

However, the crisis should not lead us astray. On the contrary, it is more evident than ever that we share a common destiny. It is of paramount importance that we work together and stand together.

If we are to realize Václav Havel's vision of cooperation and solidarity, we need to secure a Europe at work again. And together we will.

Thank you.

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**José Manuel Durão Barroso**

President of the European Commission

**Speech at the European Parliament debate on  
the start of the Danish Presidency of the  
Council of the European Union**

Check Against Delivery  
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi  
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

European Parliament

**Strasbourg, 18 January 2012**

Mr President,  
Prime Minister Thorning-Schmidt,  
Honourable members of the European Parliament,

I would like to start by thanking you, Prime Minister, for your opening address, which set out your vision for a responsible, dynamic, green and safe Europe. Prime Minister, when we met in Brussels soon after your election in October last year, I told you of my conviction that Denmark will make a decisive contribution to our common project.

Having listened to you today, your inspiring remarks about your sincere commitment to the European values and to the Community method, I am even more convinced of this.

Honourable members,

We are all aware of the harsh economic realities in today's European Union.

In October last year the Commission presented a 5 point Roadmap to stability and growth. We said we needed to work – at the same time – to:

- Give a decisive response to the problems of Greece
- Enhance the Euro area's backstops against the crisis
- Strengthen the banking system, namely through recapitalisation
- Frontload stability and growth enhancing policies
- Build a more robust and integrated economic governance.

Let's be clear: without implementation of a credible response to the Euro area crisis, our prospects for economic growth will not be achieved.

The Commission will urge the Member States to complete what is still pending in this Roadmap – from a lasting solution for Greece, to implementation of a credible system of firewalls.

While we put these instruments in place, our response cannot only be about discipline and sanctions. Yes, discipline is needed but we also need convergence. Yes, stability is indispensable but we also need growth. Europe needs greater convergence, solidarity and growth.

More and more, our partners and international investors are asking the following question: what is Europe's medium and long-term prospect for growth? It is clear that we will not overcome this crisis without a credible response to the question of growth.

The Commission has been saying for years what needs to be done, but let's be frank action by the Member States has been uneven and in some cases insufficient. If we are serious about overcoming the crisis, we must be serious about adding decisive action on growth to the decisive action already underway on financial and fiscal consolidation.

So where is this growth going to come from? Since there is reduced fiscal space in most of our Member States, it will come mainly from delivering structural reforms, increasing our competitiveness and targeted investment.

We must deepen the internal market, invest in priority projects namely in innovation, get the best possible effect from funds not yet spent, and gain market access in fast-growing economies outside Europe.

Let's look at the real economy and just consider as an illustration the following point: we have roughly 23 million people unemployed across Europe. We also have around 23 million small and medium sized enterprises. If we can create the right conditions for each SME, on average, to create one job, we could succeed in our fight against unemployment. So the answer for growth is in our enterprises including our small and medium size companies.

The way to reach this goal is by having more flexible and competitive markets, less red tape and better access to finance. These are the problems of our companies today in many of our Member States: they do not have access to finance. We have put proposals on the table, namely to use the structural funds as guarantees to finance SMEs and also proposals for venture capital. I hope there will be swift progress with these proposals.

We have also made concrete proposals to tackle youth unemployment, one of the greatest challenges we have today in Europe. We have proposed the Youth Opportunities Initiative. I hope that the informal European Council on the 30th January will agree to move forward these concrete proposals.

Social justice is also part of the solution. Social justice is also a central element of our growth strategy because the sacrifices must be fairly distributed throughout society. Our crisis response is not credible without this element of social justice. I believe that social dialogue is crucial in this regard and I will meet with the social partners next Monday in Brussels and I hope the same is followed in all our Member States.

As I said earlier growth in Europe must come from deepening our Single Market. We should release its full potential, namely through the adoption of key measures such as the framework for venture capital, updated procurement rules and a better framework for online commerce and e-payments.

And we must urgently reach agreement on the European patent. We have been discussing this for decades. I fully expect negotiations on this to be completed early in the Danish Presidency. I call on the three Member States, France, Germany and the United Kingdom, who are holding this up over a site issue of some offices, to swiftly find a compromise. Frankly, it is not acceptable! It is not acceptable that such a crucial initiative is blocked over such a trivial disagreement. Europe needs to innovate to grow. And innovation is severely hampered by the current complex and expensive rules that we have been trying to overcome for decades. It is time now to make history and to score a victory for ambition, for common sense and above all for Europe's innovators.

Honourable Members,

Many of the measures we need are already on the table in the Europe 2020 growth strategy. There will be no resolution to this crisis unless we get serious about implementing them. We have to be consistent, perseverant and determined over time.

The Europe 2020 strategy is not a strategy that can wait until 2020 – it needs action now.

Central to the strategy is sustainable growth. We share with Denmark the priority given to green growth.

The Commission looks to the Danish Presidency to conclude negotiations on the energy efficiency directive that we proposed in June last year, and to move forward with the low-carbon energy roadmap for 2050 that we presented in December.

The Danish Presidency will also oversee the second European Semester for economic policy coordination. This will be the first European Semester to be implemented within our new system of economic governance.

We must build on the experience of the first Semester to show that we are serious about the need to reform and ready to take full account of the deep interdependence of our economies. The Commission brought forward the publication of this year's Annual Growth Survey to allow plenty of time for the European Parliament and the Council to examine the priorities we have identified before the Spring European Council. It is critical to ensure that the intelligent fiscal consolidation, growth-boosting measures and structural reforms recommended in the Survey are pursued in a determined manner across all the European Union.

Honourable Members,

The governance aspects of the economic agenda are also likely to retain a high profile.

We expect to conclude the negotiations on the new fiscal compact, discussed at the European Council last December. I am convinced that the Danish Presidency will play a constructive role in acting as a bridge between the countries that are inside and those outside the Euro area. The Commission looks to the Danish Presidency to uphold not only the principles of unity between all Member states, but also the legitimate role of the European Union Community Institutions in the negotiations on this agreement.

You will also be charged with pushing forward the two new proposals on strengthened economic governance for the Euro area, proposals the Commission put forward in November under Article 136 of the Treaty. These build on what was already agreed in the so-called 'six-pack'.

The Danish Presidency will also be leading negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework, which will be a key engine for growth and job creation in Europe over the coming years.

These discussions will not be easy in the current climate but I believe that the proposals on the table are balanced and at the same time ambitious and realistic. I am confident that you will support the Commission's efforts to simplify the budget and to focus every euro on delivering tangible, concrete results for Europe's citizens.

Let me close by saying a few words about our ambitions for an open and safe Europe. The European Union is today a very different place from 10 years ago when Denmark last held the Presidency.

At that time (I remember well I participated as a Prime Minister of my country in that historic European Council in Copenhagen) Denmark chaired the negotiations that enabled 10 new member states to join the European Union. In that way Denmark has shown its very important commitment to openness. The Commission supports a strengthening of Europe's voice on the global stage and to the role of the High Representative and the External Action Service. I also expect Europe to play a key role in the Rio+ 20 negotiations, confirming our leadership role on matters of sustainable development.

We welcome the Presidency's intention to strengthen the Schengen agreement and the common asylum system. I would like to underline here my sincere appreciation of the decision taken by the Prime Minister and the new Danish government's commitment to the full respect of free movement in the European Union.

To close, Prime Minister Thorning-Schmidt, allow me to state that in challenging times such as these, I am sure that the European Union will benefit from Denmark's progressive and innovative attitude more than ever before.

The challenges are great, the programme is extensive, but with the right, responsible approach, and with the support of the other European institutions, I am sure the Danish Presidency will achieve its goals.

Prime Minister, I wish you the greatest of success.

Thank you for your attention.

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