



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Remarks by Herman Van Rompuy  
President of the European Council,  
following the 6th Republic of Korea-EU Summit**

First let me thank you for bringing the EU and the world to Seoul. We have all been impressed by your leadership and engagement during these last couple of days. The Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul will be remembered for having taken important steps in making the world a safer place.

Korea has once again shown that it is a like-minded, dynamic and influential partner in world affairs. Sharing the same values is the backbone of our relationship. In this regard, Korea is clearly a strategic partner to the EU. And that is why I am happy we had the possibility to have this summit here today.

I would like to make three points:

First, I would say that today's summit marks a new stage of our relations: A stage where we consolidate the excellent state of our bilateral relations, and where we keep up the momentum in fulfilling the new agreements and the strategic partnership.

Over the last two years, we have seen an important upgrading of our relations; signature of two landmark agreements – the Framework Agreement and Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

At the last EU-Republic of Korea summit two years ago in Brussels the strategic partnership between the Republic of Korea and the EU was declared.

Our cooperation has increased across the board. Our trade and economic relations are deepening. We are also building a strong political component into our relations. We now have dialogues on political, development and human rights issues. We are strengthening cooperation on regional security issues in this part of the world, Asia, but also regarding issues such as related to North Africa, Iran and Syria.

**P R E S S**

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We are also stepping up cooperation on global issues of common concern and in key sectors; on climate change, science and technology, on development policy and the environment.

Second, on the European economy, including on the eurozone: the EU and the eurozone will continue to strengthen its efforts to ensure the financial stability of the eurozone.

Thanks to the measures implemented the last two years and most recently the agreement on the Fiscal Compact Treaty and the initiatives of the ECB, we reached a turning point in the crisis.

These gains are still fragile and we are not complacent. We will continue to work both at the level of the union and the eurozone as well as at the level of the individual Member States.

A decision on the adequacy of the EFSF/ESM “firewall” will be taken by the end of the week. Discussions are still on-going in a number of Member States but I am confident that we will reach a positive outcome. The “European Semester” which sets the key economic and budgetary policy objectives for Europe for the year to come, will be completed in June by country specific recommendations. Strict governance, sticking to the fiscal and economic commitments is key for the continuation of the climate of stability in the eurozone.

I believe that restored confidence in the eurozone will trigger more confidence by consumers and businesses and thus promote economic growth and employment.

My third point regards the regional issues. Issues that are one of the cornerstones of our relationship: as regards East Asia more broadly, the EU has huge trade and security interests in the region and therefore want to deepen its engagement.

Over a period of 60 years, Europe has lived through a unique process of regional cooperation and integration and put into practice the notion of ‘co-operative security’. We therefore believe that we can make a positive contribution to Asia’s own discussions about future regional cooperation.

On North Korea: The EU attaches great importance to maintaining stability in the region and reducing tensions on the Peninsula. We remain gravely concerned over North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missile programmes and its human rights and humanitarian situation.

The EU has consistently supported the goal of complete and verifiable denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. We are therefore deeply worried by the announcement on 16 March of the plans of a satellite launch by the North Korea. We urge North Korea to refrain from any destabilizing act and that it fully abides by its obligations under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and other agreements.

In addition, I need to highlight over the gravity of the North Korean human rights situation and the problem of hunger and malnutrition of the people. This should be the first priority for the DPRK, not missiles and nuclear weapons.

On Iran, we agree on the urgent need to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. We, in this regard, welcome the Korean support for our EU led 3+3 efforts. All countries should introduce robust restrictive measures against Iran. This is the only way we can convince Iran to return to meaningful negotiations over its nuclear programme.

Finally, I would like to say to the Korean public: Thank you for your hospitality this week. The EU and Korea share important fundamental values of human rights and democracy. Your democracy and your impressive economic development present a powerful example to many countries around the world.

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