

## **Remarks by the Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras following the Tripartite Social Summit**

“The Tripartite Summit is by now an institutionalized form of an ongoing dialogue among the social partners in Europe. I think it has served us very well for the last eleven years highlighting the social dimension of our Union. I believe that, although the worst of the crisis is over, this is not yet visible in the labor market and in the social cohesion indicators. So, today, we have to address and we have to reverse this distrust of Europeans’ citizens towards this European construction and I think that the most important economic resource that Europe has, is its human capital. This is our greatest competitive advantage. We have to invest in it, not let it depreciates through its chronic unemployment problem. And therefore today, I have to say we had the most fruitful deliberation with all social partners, with the President of the European Council, with the President of the European Commission and, I have to say, the Commission is always very fruitful in bringing up new ideas on sensitive issues like this one. So, in the wake of this Spring European Council on Industrial Competitiveness, Energy and Climate, we had those deliberations and I think, that the conclusion is, that we are all looking ahead for more and better Europe. And the only way to advance such an ambitious perspective is through growth. I am talking about sustainable growth. Leaving no one behind, creating opportunities for everyone and this would therefore mean more competitiveness, more efficiency, more innovation and more democratic accountability.

In the short run, this means supporting recovery and fighting unemployment, especially youth unemployment, which is currently in record highs all across Europe. And even more so, in my country, in Greece, as you know. So we cannot move ahead while our youth is excluded or left on the side lines. We have to reverse this trend immediately and we can only do this when we are together. I believe that also this prospect means advancing the Economic Union and especially the Banking Union. And allow me also to say that today indeed is a very important day for Europe, as since a great leap forward has taken place with the completion of the most difficult part of the European Union’s Banking, which was the SRM. And in today’s trilogies with Parliament, led by the Greek Presidency, and in close cooperation with the Chair of the Intergovernmental conference on the SRM, we reached an agreement with Parliament and I believe that this again attests to the credibility of the Union and ensures the credibility of the Union Banking Sector. And I think that this is a milestone that also serves as one of the key building blocks of the Common European Currency, the Euro. In that, it safeguards from the repetition of financial crisis, such as the one we have been going through in my country, for instance, following those immense sacrifices of the Greek people. Now reaching the time we are readily, steadily on the road to recovery and to growth.

So I would like to take this opportunity about the SRM and thank all those involved in the negotiating process and particularly the Parliament and the Commission, on reaching a very good, a very positive, a very balanced compromise on such an important file.

Now, as far as the economies concern, I think, there is no recovery without liquidity, in a sense of financial stability what is of particular importance and I think of primary, immediate

priority now, is the access of SMEs to liquidity across the Union. I believe the SMES are providing the largest part for the solution of our problem which is employment and growth and we cannot achieve any of our targets without providing our SMEs all over Europe to have easier access to bank credit and without our banks been able to provide such a credit, but only on a healthy financial basis.

Lastly, may I say that we must demonstrate that Europe works both vis a vis, the long-term prospects of our integration and immediate needs of our European citizens. And we can prove that Europe works and we can most importantly prove through all these things we are talking about that Europe cares, which is even more important. In my country, in Greece we are currently getting out of the most severe crisis in the last many decades. We did it, as I said, with the sacrifices of our people. We also did it with the strong support of our partners. We did it because we believe in ourselves, because we believe in Europe, we believe in our common European future and we also made it because our partners believe in European solidarity.

Therefore, Greece is getting stronger and at the same time I believe Europe is getting stronger and then European solidarity is getting stronger, we still have a long way to go, yes. But the overall message I think and that the one of the Greek Presidency also, is to deepen the social dimension of the European family together with the 2020 European strategy.

So we have to ensure that the fresh sense of recovery will lead to a long term sustainable, smart and all inclusive growth and today we need to show and convince all Europeans that Europe works, that Europe cares and that Europe moves ahead united.

Thank you very much.”