

## Statement by the President on his end of term

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear colleagues,

This is my last full plenary session I am chairing as President of the European Parliament and it is a moving moment for me.

Five years ago, after being elected as President, I said that it was my goal to make the European Parliament more visible, more audible and more influential. Five years later, I can say that together we have achieved this: today the Parliament is more visible, more audible and more influential than ever.

In the previous years, we have managed to turn the European Parliament into a space of European democracy. It is here in this chamber where the most important debates take place and where decisions are made which make the life of the people better and safer.

By introducing Spitzenkandidaten for the post of Commission President, we have managed to make the EU more democratic and to strengthen the influence of the citizens. Through this, we have strengthened our transnational democracy.

This very transnational democracy is in great danger today. Everywhere on our continent, dividers and ultranationalists are on the rise again. They incite people to turn against each other and preach the abandonment of the liberal, social and ecological model of society in Europe. Through this they endanger one of the greatest achievements of civilization that our continent has ever seen.

I have fought against this hatred with all my strength and I will continue to do so in the future, even though from a different position! Because it is and will always remain our duty to fight against these destructive forces, irrespective of the post we hold.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The European Parliament, with its 751 members from 28 sovereign states who represent 508 million citizens is a unique institution. Being President of this institution was an extraordinary honour for me and I am very thankful for it.

I have never been a convenient or easy President. Nevertheless, I have always tried to fight for the cause of Europe to the best of my conscience, so that Europeans can overcome the trenches and so that we can all contribute together to a more peaceful world.

To my successor and to all of us, I wish the best of luck, strength, and confidence to change things for the better. We must never stop striving to make this Europe a better place that is an example to others and that gives hope to those who have lost it. Yesterday's Sakharov prize ceremony has reminded us of this forcefully.

It is on us to leave to our children and grandchildren a Europe that represents this hope.

I humbly thank you for our common work.

**For further information:**

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