

**Speaking points for  
Vice-President Siim Kallas  
at the opening of  
Europe House  
in the UK**

**December 6<sup>th</sup> 2010**

President, Foreign Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen.

- I am delighted to be here with you this evening. Can I, on behalf of the European Commission, welcome you all to Europe House. President José Manuel Barroso has asked me to say that he is extremely sorry that tomorrow's summit with Russia has kept him in Brussels. I know he very much wanted to be here this evening.
- The opening of Europe House is a very clear symbol of Europe's active engagement here in the United Kingdom - just as the United Kingdom coalition government is, today, very actively engaged in Brussels.
- Many of the challenges facing today's globalised world require a collective response. Pooling our efforts in Europe to make us all stronger in the world seems to me to be common sense.
- And, there is a great deal of common ground between us on many of the big ticket issues facing us today. The EU needs a strong and engaged UK. But equally, I believe that the EU can help Britain to deliver some of its own important policy goals more effectively. I would offer the following as practical examples.
- The sovereign debt crisis has exposed just how interconnected we are and the need for joint action to stabilise the markets. And the UK has recognised that it is in Britain's interests to participate in this action.
- And take the financial markets. A strong City is an asset not only for Britain but also for the European Union as a whole. The UK is helping to shape the way the sector is regulated and supervised in the future and is pressing for ambitious reforms on bank capital and remuneration.
- Then, there is climate change where a very substantial reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is vital to address global warming. Both this Government and its predecessor have been vocal in pressing the EU – and the world – to make climate change a top priority.
- And we also need to continue to work together to deal with terrorist threats which know no national borders. Here, I'm very pleased to have been able to cooperate very closely with the UK on airline security issues for example.
- Minister Lidington - you said recently that over 3 million British jobs are dependent on the Single Market. But only 8% of Europe's 20 million SMEs actually engage in cross-border trade. We want to release the potential of online commerce and services by removing the remaining barriers, and we are glad of the strong UK support for this work.
- In my own policy area, we need to develop our transport systems to meet the challenge of increasing global competition while progressively decarbonising them. If we want to ensure journeys across Europe are not blocked by incompatibilities between new technologies, a consistent approach at EU level is vital.

- The EU institutions are also working to connect better with citizens and national parliaments – which have new powers to scrutinize EU proposals under the Lisbon Treaty. In particular my colleagues from the Commission are visiting Parliaments -including Westminster - on a regular basis..
- We are very conscious that there are things in the EU that we must do better: better regulation, more transparency, focusing spending on priority areas which really add value, listening more to stakeholders and being more responsive to their views.
- We will also keep providing the facts about what the EU does - and rebutting the wilder Euromyths that appear in the media. We are not abolishing the 999 emergency number... Or removing the portrait of Her Majesty the Queen from British passports... Good examples of not letting a fact get in the way of a good story.
- Europe's strength is its people and the European institutions need to reflect that. So, we need a good diverse mix of talented and innovative people from all backgrounds and member states in Brussels. We are working hard with the Foreign Office on encouraging students and post-graduates to see a career in the EU as varied, worthwhile and stimulating. I am delighted that the European Fast Stream has been relaunched and is helping the brightest and best UK graduates to make the jump to Brussels.
- Through Europe House – and directly from Brussels – the Commission will be active in its engagement here in the UK. I wish all who work here, and all those that will visit and make use of what there is on offer, all the very best for the future.