I was thinking when I was sitting there that I am many things and one of the things I am is a mother. On International Women's Day, I've discovered that one of the best places in the world to be a mother is Norway. So I want to pay tribute to Norway for many things, but also for that in particular.

Today, when we went to the ceremony of the Return of the Sun, and watched all the children dressed against the cold as they sang their songs, I stood next to a very particular mother who with enormous pride watched her son who was one of those who last year went to Utøya island for a week of politics and fun and sport and dancing and found himself caught up in a day of terror. Although badly injured, he was our master of ceremonies today and he spoke beautifully to the children, to his community, watched by his mother. I want to pay tribute to him, to all the survivors from the island, to the families and friends who lost loved ones and to this country which lost its children. And to admire the spirit I saw in him today, the strength, the determination, for hope and the future.

As I turn to talk to you about the European Union, let me start by saying that what was designed in the European Union a long time ago is actually very clever: what people came together to do was to learn from the terrible war, with the determination to make sure that it didn't happen again, but also to recognize that in a world that was becoming even more global in its attitudes, working together economically had a much greater chance of providing success for the people. Now we have 27 Member States and soon to be 28, with Croatia and others who will follow. I see Serbia's Ambassador is in the audience - Serbia was given candidate status last week which I'm delighted about.
Looking at how creating a single market could really make a difference was a brilliant dream and the dream became reality which is also the way in which Europe will find its way out of this economic crisis and problems. It has also provided enormous opportunities for so many people in the European Union in different ways. The chance to work in a Member State, the chance for businesses to be able to operate across borders, but also - I say this also as a former Trade Commissioner - to be able to negotiate much more effectively on trade with third countries. An example: I finished negotiations on the South Korean trade deal, which is a 21st century free trade agreement that will benefit many companies, industries and businesses right across the European Union as well as benefitting those in Korea. That would have been impossible to do with the 27 acting alone. So the economic dream was clever, smart and effective.

What happened later, with the Lisbon Treaty, was a political dream caught up with an economic dream. Looking at the effectiveness of our economic policies in terms of our relationships across the world, what you didn't really have was what I describe as joined-up Europe. You had Europe operating through different institutions, practically impossible to understand if you didn't live in Brussels, and sometimes pretty difficult to understand if you do live in Brussels, but certainly not able to use it as leverage as effectively as we might.

I often describe this as "economics meets politics". That comes into its own when you look at the way Europe is able to operate now, particularly in North Africa, but I would argue much more widely than that. Let me give you a couple of examples. If you're dealing with countries like Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, countries which have gone through dramatic change in a very short period of time, what they're in search of are two things at the same time. The kind of political reforms that will give people who are prepared to stand up for their calls the freedoms that they aspire to: democratic freedom, human rights, values.

In the middle of the fighting in Libya I was in Benghazi meeting with a group of people from civil society and a young woman said to me: "We want what you've got. You have democracy and freedom every day, that's what we want, but we need your help to get it because it's more than just finishing this fighting." And I coined the phrase "deep democracy" from that conversation which is about not just an election that can change things for now, but also about building the institutions that guarantee you the next election will take place. For me democracy is as much about throwing a government out as it is about electing a government and having independent judges - you need an administration that is not corrupt, you need police, you need the institutions that you and I live with every day but so many people do not.

Political change that takes time - I come from a country that took 1100 years to get to democracy. Sometimes we expect countries to get there remarkably quickly and those countries who have most recently been through that change know that you can take steps forward but sometimes you take steps backwards too. And you need to understand how to build democracy deep and strong. For many people it's about jobs for themselves, it's about feeding their families, about opportunities for their children so you also have to build the economic support that is going to help to achieve democracy: economics and politics.

And that means being prepared to invest in their economic future. For us in the European Union that means money, it means resources. I have been working on the Task Force for the Southern Mediterranean which brings all the financial institutions with the European institutions, with politicians, and the private sector together in one team to leverage up the money of the European Commission so that we are able to provide together a strong financial support for the transition of the countries in the region: through Task Force for Tunisia we provide support of 4 billion euros over 3 years rather than the few hundred million that would have come from the European Institutions.
And on top of that the private sector engagement. It is also about making sure that we provide them with the market access that they need so they can get their goods to our markets, so that they can reach the standards that we require for their goods. And it means allowing them to be mobile, helping particularly students and young people to get the benefits of the education that we offer and to have the opportunity too for businesses, especially the great backbone of all our countries, small businesses to be able to operate together. The three Ms - Money, Market access, Mobility. If we can achieve that economic and political coming-together then I believe we have a real chance to support them to be able to realize their dreams, what the people in Benghazi, the people in Tahrir Square that I talked to really aspire too.

And there is another part of it, which is about how you develop your strategy to capture all of the different elements that you need. Your wonderful Foreign Minister talked about the Arctic so let me talk about something else, which is the issue of piracy off the coast of Somalia. Pirates now operate at 1100 nautical miles from the coast of Somalia. They are often 15, 16 year old boys who are enticed to become pirates because the option of 2 dollars a day if you are lucky versus 10 000 dollars if you take a ship is too good. And organized crime and increasingly the potential of terrorism is linked directly into these activities. We have, along with other countries, ships that patrol the sea and help support not just prevention of piracy attacks, but the World Food Programme to deliver the food to the famine stricken areas of Africa.

And if we just did that we would be there for a long time. The first recorded fact of piracy off that coast is in Roman times and it could still be there for many years, so it is also about what we do on the land because the problem of piracy will be solved on the land and not at the sea. And that means that you put together a comprehensive approach. It means that you think about all the different things you need so I would argue we need development; we need to support those young men, young boys to have something else. You need to help communities develop particularly with the women in that part of the world who could begin to develop a local economy very effectively; you need security, you need to deal with organized crime, to follow the money and find out where it goes, to support the countries who are most affected. The Seychelles, a place of great beauty, and Kenya have lost a lot of their income from tourism because of the piracy. They need our help and support to build the capacity to patrol their own waters so it's about building that comprehensive approach.

That is what Lisbon also does - it enables me to bring together for the first time the military commanders who are in charge of the boats that actually stop the pirates or pick them up; the people who work on making sure we can prosecute them and imprison them; the leadership of those countries most affected so they own the issues for themselves; support for the United Nations in trying to get security; the people working on development in Brussels who are able to support civil society via NGOs in the region. All of that brought together in one strategy and I say that for the Sahel region as I say it for the Horn of Africa. So "economics meets politics".

Thank you.