

**Remarks by ambassador Ole Egberg Mikkelsen, at a reception held 16 November 2023 at the Danish residence on the occasion of the visit to Ukraine by the CEO of the Carlsberg Group, Mr. Jacob Aarup-Andersen**

Deputy ministers, members of the Verkhovna Rada, Mr. Aarup-Andersen, dear Ukrainian and Danish friends

I am very pleased to welcome you all to my residence. I am delighted that so many have accepted my invitation. Politicians, senior officials, representatives of the Ukrainian-Danish business community and representatives of Ukraine's vibrant civil society, as well as Danish humanitarian organizations, and not least: media representatives. You are doing different things, but you have one thing in common: you are all friends of Denmark. Let me take this opportunity to thank you for your work to strengthen Danish-Ukrainian relations in whatever capacity you are doing that.

We are gathered here today on the occasion of the visit to Ukraine by Mr. Jacob Aarup-Andersen, the group CEO of Carlsberg, since September this year.

I don't need to introduce my guests to the Carlsberg Group. The Carlsberg legacy is well known. Founded in 1847, the company currently employs around 41,000 people. Carlsberg is a global industry leader, currently the 6th largest brewery in the world based on revenue.

I am very pleased that the CEO of Carlsberg has chosen to come to Ukraine at this difficult time. On the surface of it, your visit here is just a business trip. However, visiting Ukraine at this difficult time is more than just an ordinary business trip. It is also an act of solidarity with Ukraine. By coming here, you show that you have faith in Ukraine's resilience. You are also showing that you are willing to share the challenges and the risks that Ukrainians are facing every day.

The Carlsberg Group is however not only showing its confidence and trust in Ukraine by your visit. Back in June I had the privilege to take part in the inauguration of the new production line at your brewery in Kyiv. It was a landmark event. It was the largest foreign investments in Ukraine in 2023.

I was extremely proud to be present on this occasion, because this major investment has a symbolic importance extending far beyond the beverage industry in Ukraine. It is a sign that a global player and industry leader, the Carlsberg Group, has faith in Ukraine and is ready to invest in Ukraine at a time when Ukraine's epic struggle against Russian aggression is still ongoing.

This fits very well into the close Danish-Ukrainian partnership at the political level. Denmark is one of Ukraine's closest partners. We have been that from day one and also before the full scale Russian attack. The reason is very simple: Ukraine's freedom is also our freedom and Ukraine's struggle is therefore also our struggle.

What is Denmark providing? Two thirds of Denmark's support are defense equipment. There is however also an important civilian component of our support. It is primarily focused on reconstruction and early recovery. An important part of our support is bilateral support for the city and the oblast of Mykolaiv. The city was a frontline city for 8 months and the frontline is still close. So why are we doing this?

First of all because president Zelensky asked us to do it back in March 2022.

Secondly: Because we cannot wait for peace and a big reconstruction plan before we can start reconstruction and recovery. There have been many conferences about rebuilding Ukraine: Lugano, London and this week in Warsaw. Holding conferences and giving speeches about reconstruction is fine. But what is needed is to do something tangible and concrete on the ground in Ukraine that makes a difference for Ukrainians. This is what we are doing in Mykolaiv, rebuilding infrastructure and supporting the private sector so enterprises can get back in business. We want to create jobs and revenue instead of reports and conferences. And we can't wait for a big plan for the reconstruction before we start.

This is exactly the same the Carlsberg Group is doing by investing in Ukraine. You could have postponed your investment, waiting for peace to come. You did not do that. You went ahead with your investment, thus demonstrating an unwavering faith in Ukraine's resilience and final victory. It illustrates that the struggle for Ukraine's freedom is not only being fought on the battlefield. It is also being fought on the factory floors, in the offices and in the fields. Keeping the economic wheels spinning is crucial for Ukraine's resilience. This is what Carlsberg is doing.

Let me also take this opportunity to salute the Carlsberg staff who has been working tirelessly during the full scale Russian aggression under difficult conditions. I salute both those of you who kept the operations going and those who have been mobilized and who are now at the frontlines.

Finally, I wish to thank the Carlsberg management for your efforts to support Ukraine's resilience through humanitarian aid, for your measures to protect your employees and for your reintegration program for veterans and support for mobilized colleagues.

Carlsberg is an icon in Denmark's industrial development. From the very beginning, corporate social responsibility has been a part of Carlsberg's DNA, long before the notion of CSR was invented. You have always been caring for your employees and for the communities and the countries where you are operating. What you are doing in Ukraine is yet another example of this proud legacy.

I wish the entire Carlsberg team good luck. Your hard work contributes to Ukraine's resilience and victory. And may your example of investing in times of war and uncertainty inspire other foreign investors.

Thank you for your attention.