



**European Commission -
Speech**
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Speech by Commissioner Šefčovič as the Official Speaker at the investiture ceremony of the incoming Captains Regent of San Marino

San Marino, 1 October 2025

Eccellentissimi Capitani Reggenti,
Signori Capitani Reggenti eletti,
Segretario di Stato Luca Beccari,
Illustri Autorità,
Ambasciatori e Rappresentanti del Corpo Diplomatico e Consolare,
Signore e Signori.

Your Excellencies, the Captains Regent,
Newly elected Captains Regent,
Secretary of State Luca Beccari,
Illustrious authorities,
Ambassadors and representatives of the diplomatic and consular corps,
Ladies and gentlemen.

It is a pleasure to be back in San Marino, following my first visit in 2023.

And it is a profound honour for me to be on Monte Titano today, as the first representative of the European Union to address this historic ceremony.

I first want to sincerely congratulate the newly-elected Captains Regent.

You take your place in a long, unbroken line of Sammarinese leaders, stretching back centuries – testament to the staying power of the world's oldest existing republic.

Since your founding in the year 301, you have lived through various empires, wars, and revolutions – and you have endured.

Because of your institutions, and because of the civic spirit of your citizens.

So I feel privileged to witness this ceremony, embedded in an ancient tradition inspired by the Roman Republic.

Across the millennia, San Marino has stood as a beacon of democracy and liberty, and thus embodies the European spirit.

Today, you are a member of the United Nations and have close ties not only with your Italian neighbours, but with many countries across the world and our continent, including the European Union's Member States – many of which are represented here today.

Even though San Marino sits outside the EU, its democratic traditions, the maintenance and functioning of its republican institutions, are reflected in the fundamental values which we share.

Truly, San Marino is part of the European family.

This shared European tradition was apparent back in 1979.

On the eve of the first ever European Parliament elections, Altiero Spinelli – a founding spirit of

European integration – came here to San Marino, to this very ceremony, with a message of hope.

A belief that Europe could be so much more than a market, or a treaty. It could be a true union of people.

And this Republic, though small, is not on the margins of Europe, but at its heart.

And it has always highlighted the importance of European integration.

Coming closer together is all the more important at turbulent moments in history, such as the one we find ourselves at today.

We are seeing geopolitical strife and uncertainty, including the war of aggression being waged by Russia against Ukraine on European soil.

The global trading system as we know it is being challenged and vigorously shaken up.

Across Europe, our businesses and our societies are coming under increasing pressure.

And we know there is no going back to the good old days, the way things used to be.

Rather, we must stand together in tackling the challenges we face.

As European Commissioner responsible for trade and economic security, I contend with these challenges every day.

Despite having been in this role for less than a year, I already had the opportunity to visit many countries, across different continents, working around the clock to bring predictability and stability.

Talking, negotiating, bargaining, with partners old and new, big and small, close and far.

These exchanges can often be difficult and protracted nowadays, even with traditional partners.

But what has become crystal clear to me is that Europe's unity, standing together as one, is what makes us strong; it is crucial for our security, our prosperity, and our ability to determine our common future.

In the field of trade, our belief in an open, fair, rules-based trading system, makes us an attractive prospect for others.

Trading with Europe gives our partners the trust, reliability and predictability they need, to combat the rising volatility affecting all our markets and economies.

I see this phenomenon all the time, most recently when visiting and exchanging with different countries in Asia just last week.

Being reliable and predictable can bring us many benefits, and San Marino, given the existing bonds that it shares with the European Union, can share in that opportunity.

The European Union and San Marino maintain diplomatic relations for more than forty years and are already united by agreements in areas like customs, technical cooperation and other sectoral ties that make trade and daily life more secure and predictable.

San Marino even uses the euro.

But we want to deepen our cooperation even further, through our future Association Agreement, bringing further tangible benefits to citizens and businesses alike.

For example, the future Agreement will give businesses and economic operators from San Marino access to the EU internal market on the same terms and conditions as other EU companies, under the same rules.

That means the chance to sell their goods and services to a potential 450 million consumers.

It will also give San Marino's citizens the opportunity to study, train, work and live in the European Union.

Young citizens from San Marino will have easier access and more choices to study at European universities. This will diversify educational pathways and promote young professional experiences abroad.

In turn, these educational and professional exchanges will support San Marino's socio-economic and cultural development, securing growth and jobs for future generations.

The Association Agreement includes arrangements and solutions tailor-made to the specific nature of your country, that fully respect San Marino's sovereignty while ensuring greater integration where it can have the most impact.

For example, we have agreed transitional arrangements to give San Marino time to adapt to EU legislation.

Moreover, in sectors where San Marino is not economically active, San Marino will not be obliged to apply EU law.

On top of this, the Association Agreement is also an instrument to boost our joint resilience.

It offers clarity on market access, customs, regulatory alignment and transparency.

It advances the economic integration of San Marino into the EU's internal market, with its four indivisible freedoms: the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital on the basis of common rules and a level playing field.

Thus providing legal certainty for businesses, and institutional predictability for public authorities.

And a commitment to common standards of governance, transparency and the rule of law, to ensure that together we can withstand external shocks and protect social cohesion.

In addition, it is a strategic tool, further cementing the cooperation between like-minded partners who share values as well as geography.

While fully respecting the independence of your institutions.

I know that ten years after the start of the negotiations you are all asking when this agreement will enter into force.

I fully understand this question and I fully share the desire to transform the negotiated text into tangible real-life benefits that our citizens and operators expect.

It is my objective to have our Association Agreement signed by the end of the year.

I know that successive Council Presidencies, including the current Danish Presidency have been working hard to make this happen. And I know the European Parliament stands ready to vote on its consent without delay after the signature.

My ambition as Commissioner in charge is for our agreement to apply as of Spring 2026.

Institutionally, this is now in the hands of the Member States of the European Union. They have to take a unanimous decision on how we ratify the agreement on the EU side.

Many of those Member States are represented here today.

They understand well the importance of upgrading our relationship on firm legal ground quickly.

Therefore, I am confident that we will be able to sign the Agreement in short order, and that the procedure at EU level will allow it to be applied as soon as possible in 2026.

Once that happens, the Association Agreement will become the cornerstone of a closer relationship between the EU and San Marino.

Together, we can shape the future we want for our continent. Building on what has come before.

As we have seen today, with the oath of office, and the passing of symbols from one pair of Captains Regent to the next.

It is an act which reinforces the fact that our institutions source their strength from the care and dedication which we, the people they serve, give them.

Cari amici.

In an age of sharp rhetoric and unexpected twists, we can look to San Marino's long republican history to find inspiration in the kind of steady courage we need to build a prosperous future together.

Captains Regent, I wish you all the best for your mandate, and I am sure you will serve the people of San Marino with dignity, as your forebearers have in the past.

And I look forward to a renewed and deepened partnership between the EU and San Marino which will strengthen both your Republic, and the broader European project.

Grazie di cuore.

Thank you.

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