

Remarks by ambassador Ole Egberg Mikkelsen at an event in Ivano-Frankivsk on the occasion of Goodvalley's 20 years anniversary in Ukraine,

Mr. Governor, dear friends

Let me first of all thank the senior management of Goodvalley for inviting me here today to speak on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Goodvalley.

I am very pleased with the strong presence of local stakeholders and local and regional authorities. It is a strong sign that Goodvalley has become an integrated part of the local community.

I am equally pleased that there is a strong presence from Goodvalley's Headquarters in Denmark. Travelling here is a complex journey and it takes time. But coming here is not only a journey. It is an act of solidarity. You share the wartime conditions that Ukrainians have been facing since the full scale Russian aggression and you show that you have confidence and faith in Ukraine.

Goodvalley is leading pork producer and you might ask yourselves the question what does the ambassador of Denmark have to do with pork production? After all: diplomats are supposed to take care of official relations between states and their governments – not pork production and agriculture.

It is true that most of what we do at the embassy has to do with official relations between Denmark and Ukraine.

Denmark and Ukraine are close partners and the partnership has grown even stronger since the full scale Russian aggression.

I am often being asked what we are doing at the embassy?

Since the full scale Russian aggression we have been doing three things: Weapons, Weapons and weapons.

Of course that is an exaggeration, but it reflects that the bulk of what we are doing is weapons and defense equipment. It is more than 90 percent if you calculate our support in monetary terms.

There is a very simple reason for this: Without weapons Ukraine will not be able prevail in the epic battle against the invaders.

But there are also important civilian components in our support. Denmark is implementing the European Anti-corruption Initiative on behalf of the European Union, supporting the independent anti-corruption institutions. The fight against corruption is crucially important for Ukraine's European path and for the transformation of Ukrainian society that the people of Ukraine demanded in 2014 during the Revolution of Dignity. Denmark is proud to be your partner in this struggle.

Denmark has also assumed the patronage for the rebuilding and recovery of the city and the oblast of Mykolaiv. Work has been ongoing since 2022. We hold the view that rebuilding and recovery cannot wait until there is peace. We have to start now - even in a frontline city as Mykolaiv. This is what we demonstrate in the Denmark-Mykolaiv partnership.

However, the Danish-Ukrainian partnership is not only about official government-to-government contacts. It is just as much about people to people contacts and commercial contacts. This is where Goodvalley comes into the picture.

Danish farmers have been active in Ukraine since the early nineties. One of them was the founding father of Goodvalley, Mr. Tom Axelgaard,

Back in 1992 you travelled to Ukraine where you visited a number of farms to see how they were operating and whether or not your knowledge of Danish agricultural practices could benefit the quality and sustainability of production.

After setting up a major operation in neighboring Poland you started operations in Ukraine in 2004.

What you have achieved is really impressive. I saw some of it this morning. An efficient and sustainable production model with a strong focus on limiting emissions not least through your groundbreaking bio gas system.

You are also a pioneer when it comes to corporate social responsibility – not least in time of war.

As the entire Danish farming community in Ukraine you continued production at all time since the full scale Russian attack, securing workplaces for 630 employees and a steady supply of food for the Ukrainian market. You have also generously supported internally displaced with food in your area.

Operating in wartime conditions has not always been easy for you. You have been facing many operational and financial challenges. But never the less you have stood your ground and kept your operation going despite the difficulties you have been facing.

Let me take this opportunity to salute both the senior management and all staff – the entire Goodvalley family for your steadfastness and tenacity in keeping agriculture going in wartime conditions. That is an important part of Ukraine's resilience and crucial for Ukraine's fighting power.

And this the reason why I have travelled to Ivano-Frankivsk to celebrate your anniversary with you. The success of Goodvalley is also part of the strong Danish-Ukrainian partnership.

You can be proud of what you have achieved in the last twenty years. Congratulations and continue the good work.