

**Remarks by ambassador Ole Egberg Mikkelsen at the town hall for Carlsberg staff on the occasion of the 20 anniversary of Carlsberg's operation in Kyiv, 28 June 2024**

Let me first of all thank the senior management of Carlsberg for inviting me to be part of your celebration of the 20th anniversary of your brewery here in Kyiv.

I am a frequent visitor here. I had the honor to be present one year ago at the opening of the new production line, which increased the production capacity of canned products by 80 percent. It was a mindboggling the push a button on a computer screen and then suddenly this massive production line came alive.

I was also here a couple of months ago accompanying the Danish Minister for Industry, Business and Financial Affairs, Mr. Morten Bødskov who was here with a high level business delegation. I was also accompanying the Danish minister for agriculture and food, Mr. Jacob Jensen when he was in Lviv last year and paid a visit to your brewery in Lviv.

So I almost feel to be part of the Carlsberg family.

But what does the ambassador of Denmark have to do with beer and breweries?

After all: Diplomats are supposed to handle official relations between governments. This is of course also what we are doing at the embassy. We work full time and with our all our energy to strengthen the Danish-Ukrainian partnership. We are doing our utmost to support Ukraine's resilience and fighting power.

Denmark is one of Ukraine's closets partners and in per capita terms Denmark is among the top donors. And what are we providing?

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 to prevail in the epic battle against the aggressor.

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. Some are saying that reconstruction and recovery can only happen when there is peace. Then big conferences should be held and every detail should be planned and inscribed in big plan.

I do not agree. We have to start now - even in a frontline city as Mykolaiv. This is what we demonstrating 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 contacts. This is where you come into the picture.

Doing business with Ukraine and investing in Ukraine is crucial for Ukraine's resilience. Without economic life there will be no jobs, there will be no taxes for the state and local communities and most importantly: There will be no victory on the battlefield.

That is why Carlsberg's activities and new investments in Ukraine are so important. By continuing your operations and by making new investments - as you did last year with your record investment in the new production line - you are demonstrating in deeds that a global player and industry leader like the Carlsberg Group, has faith in Ukraine and is ready to invest in Ukraine at a time, when the fight against Russian aggression is still ongoing.

You could have postponed your investment, saying that first we need peace. But you continued your investment, thus demonstrating your unwavering faith in Ukraine's resilience and final victory.

What you are doing demonstrates that the struggle for Ukraine's freedom is not only being fought on the battlefield. It is also being fought on the factory floors and in the fields. Keeping the economic wheels turning is crucial for Ukraine's resilience.

This fits very well to the close Danish-Ukrainian partnership at the political level. And that's why I am here today as Denmark's ambassador. You are just as much part of Danish-Ukrainian relations as I am.

I am often being asked why Denmark is so engaged in supporting Ukraine and why the support is so unwavering. The answer is simple. Ukraine's freedom is also our freedom.

Let me take this opportunity to salute all 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. You are both supporting Ukraine's victory.

I also wish to salute Carlsberg's management. You are setting an example for other foreign investors, including potential Danish investors. I hope that they will follow your example. The embassy is ready to assist.

Finally, I wish to thank the Carlsberg management for your efforts to support Ukraine's resilience through humanitarian aid donation for your measures to protect your employees and to ensure their safety 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 Carlsberg has been known for its corporate social responsibility, long before that notion 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 to congratulate the entire Carlsberg team on the 20 years of operation of your Kyiv plant.