



## EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Nieuwe Badkapel, 15-12-2015

Geachte Vice-President van de Raad van State, Excellenties, Vrienden van Luxemburg, Beste Gasten,

Hartelijk welkom in deze schitterende Kerk, de Nieuwe Badkapel, voor onze laatste evenement van dit jaar met populaire Europese KerstLiederen.

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This evening is an occasion to thank you all for your support and understanding over the course of the six months of the Luxembourg EU presidency. Later this week the European leaders will meet at their traditional December Council, and in two weeks from now, the semestrial responsibility for chairing the EU Council activities will be taken over by our Dutch colleagues.

The last months were marked by consecutive challenges. Challenges for the EU, their member states, associates and candidate countries' capacities on how to deal in a cooperative and solidary way with cumulative crisis moments: refugees, terrorism, Greece, Syria, Russia and uncertainties about an eventual British EXIT. The final answers to these challenges will keep several presidencies busy. The Luxembourg presidency aimed at preparing Europe to stand at the end of these trials stronger, and also to become more relevant to its citizens.

The Paris Climate Agreement, reached last weekend in Paris, is good news, and proof that together with the world community of nations, we are able to move forward. We should be equally united and bold to find an answer to the plight of the thousands of refugees that continue to arrive, an answer anchored in the values and rules Europe stands for.

Once more, I would like to thank you all for your cooperation, my own collaborators and staff for their dedication during uncounted extra hours, and the collaborators from Badkapel for being able to be here this evening, and of course Nathalie Merfort + Svetlana Lohman for their performance of European Christmas Carols we are about to hear.

*Na het concert bent u van harte welkom bij een traditioneel Kerstdrankje.*  
Please join us after the concert for a traditional Christmas drink.

*I wens u allen een vredig en gezegend Kerst seisoen.*  
I wish you all a Peaceful and a Blessed Christmas Season!

thank you / dank u