

Remarks by President Donald Tusk after his meeting with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar

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As you know, I always try to present the EU's position honestly, and without beating about the bush. Telling the truth, even if difficult and unpleasant, is the best way of showing respect for partners. That's how it was in Salzburg, and that's also how we will work in the coming days.

First of all, we want to focus on practical and realistic ways of minimising the damage caused by Brexit, on both sides of the channel. Emotional arguments that stress the issue of dignity sound attractive, but they do not facilitate agreement. Let us remember that every actor in this process has their dignity, and confrontation in this field will not lead to anything good.

Second, the task of the EU's negotiators is to defend the interests of the European Union as a whole, and of all the 27 member states. We very much regret that the UK has decided to leave, and we hope for the best relationship in future, but no-one can expect that, because of Brexit, the EU will give up its fundamental values and key interests. Let me make this clear: the EU wants a relationship with the UK that is as close and special as possible. From the very beginning, the EU offer has been not just a Canada deal, but a Canada+++ deal. Much further-reaching on trade, on internal security and on foreign policy cooperation. This is a true measure of respect. And this offer remains in place. The EU is serious about getting the best possible deal. Even though we haven't changed our minds that the consequences of Brexit will be negative, for both sides.

Third, in respecting our partners, we expect the same in return. Comparing the European Union to the Soviet Union is as unwise as it is insulting. The Soviet Union was about prisons and gulags, borders and walls, violence against citizens and neighbours. The European Union is about freedom and human rights, prosperity and peace, life without fear, it is about democracy and pluralism; a continent without internal borders or walls. As the President of the European Council and someone who spent half of my life in the Soviet Bloc, I know what I'm talking about. The Soviet spirit is still alive, as demonstrated by the attack in Salisbury. You will know best where to find this spirit. Rather not in Brussels. And I am sure you will also

remember who was the first to declare full solidarity with the UK at that critical moment. Unfortunately, that was not a unique incident. Today, the Dutch and UK governments informed about a cyber attack against the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the Hague, which was carried out by Kremlin intelligence services. On behalf of the EU, I want to fully condemn this attack and express our complete solidarity with those affected. I will put the issue of cyber security on the agenda of the next European Council.

Today, after my long discussion with my guest, the Taoiseach, I want to say that the EU is united behind Ireland and the need to preserve the Northern Ireland peace process. Despite the UK government's rejection of the original EU backstop proposal, we will not give up seeking a workable solution that fully respects the Good Friday Agreement as well as the integrity of the Single Market and the Customs Union.

Unacceptable remarks that raise the temperature will achieve nothing except wasting more time. What needs to be done is maximum progress by the October European Council. I was party leader myself, for fifteen years, and I know what the rules of party politics are. But now, once the Tory party conference is over, we should get down to business. Thank you.

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ESMA updates AIFMD Q&As

ESMA has added a new Q&A clarifying the application of the AIFMD notification requirements with regard to AIFMs managing umbrella AIFs on a cross-border basis.

The purpose of this Q&A document is to promote common supervisory approaches and practices in the application of the AIFMD and its implementing measures.

Joint statement by Presidents Tusk and Juncker and High Representative

[Mogherini on Russian cyber attacks](#)

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In April the offices of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague were targeted by a hostile cyber operation carried out by the Russian military intelligence service (GRU). This operation was disrupted by Dutch intelligence services in partnership with the United Kingdom (UK).

In addition, the UK government has indicated earlier today that it has identified that a number of cyber actors widely known to have been conducting cyber attacks around the world are, in fact, the Russian military intelligence service (GRU).

We express serious concerns about this attempt to undermine the integrity of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), a respected international organisation, hosted by the Netherlands. This aggressive act demonstrated contempt for the solemn purpose of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which works to eradicate weapons worldwide under a United Nations mandate.

We deplore such actions, which undermine international law and international institutions. The EU will continue to strengthen the resilience of its institutions and those of its Member States, and international partners and organisations in the digital domain.

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[Joint statement by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, the President of the European Commission,](#)

Jean-Claude Juncker, and High Representative / Vice-President Federica Mogherini

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ESMA will focus on supervisory convergence and supervision in 2019

ESMA, in line with its Strategic Orientation 2016-2020, will maintain its focus on its activities of supervisory convergence and assessing risks in financial markets. Additionally, ESMA will take on new direct supervisory responsibilities under the Securities Financing Transactions Regulation (SFTR) and the Securitisation Regulation. It will also support the Sustainable Finance Initiative through a set of priority actions, aiming to integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations as part of the investment chain.

Preparations for the UK's withdrawal from the European Union will continue to be a major focus for ESMA in 2019. This will require ESMA to be prepared to adapt and reprioritise the WP as needed. Further adaptation of ESMA's work

programme in 2019 could be required to take account of the potential revisions of ESMA's mandate under the Review of the European System of Financial Supervision (ESAs' Review) and EMIR 2.2.

Steven Maijoor, Chair, said:

"In 2019 ESMA will continue its focus on promoting supervisory convergence and assessing risks with a continued emphasis on the consistent implementation of MiFID II/MiFIR, but with an added focus on utilising the data gathered under this regime to assist us in meeting our stability, orderly markets and investor protection objectives.

"The transition to MiFID in 2018 has required us to be flexible and adaptable in managing the introduction of the regime and this will be invaluable to the organisation as we continue our preparations for the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. This will make demands on ESMA, and NCAs, in terms of supervisory convergence work, financial stability work as well as third-country policies.

"Additionally, we continue to plan for possible changes to ESMA's mandate under the ESAs and EMIR Reviews. We will be flexible in adapting and reprioritising the Work Programme to this changing environment while continuing to meet our responsibilities in enhancing investor protection and promoting stable and orderly markets."

In 2019 the key areas of focus under ESMA's activities of supervisory convergence, assessing risks, single rulebook and direct supervision will be:

- Supporting the consistent application of MiFID II and MiFIR along with the Prospectus Regulation and Securitisation Regulation by market participants and National Competent Authorities (NCAs);
- Utilising the data gathered under MiFID II/MiFIR to support its work on stable and orderly markets;
- Contributing to the implementation of the Capital Markets Union Action Plan and of the Fintech Action Plan; and
- Enhancing the effectiveness of its supervisory activities for credit rating agencies (CRA) and trade repositories (TR), while preparing for the registration and supervision of new entities under the Securitisation Regulation and SFTR.