

Report by President Donald Tusk to the European Parliament on June European Council meetings

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The last European Council took place in a deteriorating geopolitical context. This is why I appealed to the leaders that the EU must get its act together. For me, this means increasing military cooperation, preparing for worst-case scenarios in terms of trade, and – above all – looking for unity in every aspect of European cooperation, including migration and Euro area reform. We managed to make progress on all these issues, but there is no hiding that the road ahead of us is still long and for sure not easy.

We started with a discussion among the leaders and NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, with the aim of deepening the cooperation between the EU and NATO. The leaders agreed that the EU must take greater responsibility for its own security, first and foremost because it is in our own interest as Europeans. In order to bolster our common defence, the EU will enhance investment, capability development and operational readiness.

Let me mention here the issue of foreign threats to our democracies. The European Council called on the High Representative and the Commission to present, by December, concrete proposals for a coordinated EU response to this challenge, specifically to Russia disinformation attempts, which is currently handled by a very small strategic communications team at the EEAS. This is particularly important in light of the signals about Russia's role in Brexit.

As regards migration, I put forward the following three proposals: disembarkation platforms outside Europe, a dedicated budgetary tool in the next MFF to combat illegal migration, as well as boosting EU support for the Libyan Coast Guard. They were univocally supported by the leaders.

We also agreed to support the Maltese authorities, by sending a message to all vessels, including those of NGOs, operating in the Mediterranean. The message is clear: respect the law and do not obstruct the operations of the Libyan Coast Guard.

Additionally, the leaders accepted the Franco-Italian proposal of controlled centres on EU territory. It is up to the governments to decide whether they want to create such centres. However, any obligations related to the

functioning of these centres, including relocation and resettlement, will be taken on a voluntary basis.

Last but not least, we agreed to launch the next tranche of financing for Turkey, and to transfer 500 million euros of development money to the EU Trust Fund for Africa. The leaders confirmed their will to take our cooperation with Africa to a new level. This means not only increased public funding, but also a new framework enabling private investments to grow. It is the best proof of our intentions, despite unfounded claims that Europe wants to abandon Africa. It is impossible to stop the flow of illegal migrants without close cooperation with African countries. That is why we will use all possible tools, from defence and development to visa and other cooperation, to make it happen.

Moving on to the Euro Summit. Last October, in this chamber, I said the following: 'I will do everything in my power to take the first very concrete steps, by June. If we don't reach agreement by June, I will say precisely why it wasn't possible, and who is responsible.' Today I can say that the leaders did indeed take the first decisions. This means agreement on further steps to complete the Banking Union and to strengthen the ESM.

In particular, we agreed that the ESM will be providing the common backstop to the single resolution fund. As a consequence, our Banking Union will become much stronger. Some of you may say that this is too little, too late. And you would be right, in a sense. But the fact is that after some years of standstill, we are effectively re-launching the process of deepening of the EMU. To make sure that the progress continues, I will organise another Euro Summit in December.

The leaders also adopted conclusions advancing EU cooperation on digital matters and innovation, as well as trade.

In the context of growing trade tensions, the European Council underlined the importance of preserving and deepening the rules-based multilateral system. The Commission was invited to propose a comprehensive approach to improve, together with like-minded partners, the functioning of the WTO in crucial areas. The leaders also called for the adoption of the proposal on the screening of foreign direct investments, which is crucially important for the security of our economies, and citizens. It goes without saying that the Commission has the full support of the European Council when it comes to the trade dispute with the US. I am sure Jean-Claude will elaborate on that.

A final point on Brexit. The 27 leaders shared one concern. Whilst progress was made in a number of areas, some key aspects still need to be agreed. Since there is much work ahead with less and less time, I was very honest in my assessment, including when I spoke to Prime Minister May last week. The sooner we get a precise UK proposal on the Irish border, the better the chance to finalise the Brexit negotiations this year. Put simply, we cannot make progress unless a solid backstop is presented by the UK and accepted by our Irish friends. We are now looking forward to the White Paper from the UK, and we very much hope that it will bring the necessary clarity, realism, and impetus to these negotiations. Thank you.

[Comprehensive risk and safety assessments of the Belarus nuclear power plant completed](#)

The Commission welcomes the completion of this work and looks forward to the next phase of the process and continue working on the proper implementation of the findings.

Nuclear safety is paramount in the European Union, and even more so when new facilities are being built and operating on the EU borders. The Commission and ENSREG have continually expressed their readiness to work with and support any non EU country to undertake a comprehensive peer review process and this support has been extended to Belarus.

The Peer Review Mission to Belarus took place from 12 to 16 March 2018 and was conducted in a constructive working atmosphere and in line with specifications for EU stress test. This peer review was conducted by a team of 17 experts from EU and non EU Member States including representatives from countries that use nuclear power as well as from those that do not. The team included also 2 representatives from the Commission and 3 observers. During the peer review, the Belarus nuclear regulatory authority provided detailed responses to a number of written questions from the experts.

In the spirit of good neighbourly relations all parties worked together constructively during this peer review with the commitment to increase transparency and improve nuclear safety. The information provided allowed to produce a comprehensive technical evaluation in line with the EU Stress Test scope and ensured an equal treatment for Belarus as regard to other non EU countries which participated to this peer review process in the past.

The Peer Review report, which was presented to the Belarussian authorities in June 2018, has now been endorsed by the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group. a comprehensive report and detailed recommendations for ensuring nuclear safety in Belarus be published on the ENSREG website together with an executive summary, further to the public event held today in Brussels.

The Commission considers that this outcome is proof of the pragmatic cooperation and problem-solving spirit of the EU with its neighbouring countries including on nuclear safety matters.

The report confirms the adequacy of nuclear safety features as established by the national safety regulator at the time of the license in 2014. It also identifies a number of safety features developed since then. In addition, it

makes recommendations requiring thorough follow up and continued implementation measures.

The report makes, in particular, an in depth assessment of the plant in relation to:

- Earthquakes, flooding and other extreme weather events:
- Loss of electrical power and ultimate heat sink
- Severe accident management

The Commission calls on the Belarusian authorities to develop a National Action Plan, to ensure timely implementation of all safety improvement measures in accordance with their safety significance.

The Commission expresses its willingness to participate in the review of the implementation of the respective measures of the Action Plan.

The Action Plan should be subject to a future independent review. This was done by all EU and non EU countries which voluntarily participated to the stress test process since Fukushima.

The Commission considers nuclear safety cooperation a central topic in the EU's partnership with Belarus and will continue discussions on the follow-up to the recommendations.

Background

In 2011 the Republic of Armenia, **Republic of Belarus**, Republic of Croatia, Russian Federation, Swiss Confederation, Republic of Turkey, Ukraine, in cooperation with the EU, **confirmed their willingness to undertake on a voluntary basis comprehensive risk and safety assessments ('stress tests')**, taking into account the specifications agreed by the European Commission and the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) on 24 May 2011.

At that time Belarus was not ready to take directly part to the 2012 EU Stress Tests process like Ukraine and Switzerland did. The European Commission services of DG ENERGY kept since that time regular contact with the Belarus nuclear regulatory authority (Ministry for Emergency Situation (MES) represented by its department Gosatomnadzor (GAN)) to ensure that the peer review process is conducted in Belarus. Since 2013 the Commission supported the regulatory authority GAN with technical assistance focusing on the development of its expertise and independence building through the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation.

In October 2017, the Belarus Ministry for Emergency Situation (MES) represented by its department Gosatomnadzor (GAN) submitted its National Report on Stress Tests for Belarus Nuclear Power Plant to the Directorate-General for Energy of the European Commission and the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) for peer review.

The Peer Review Team and Peer review Board recognise and commend the open and transparent way in which GAN and the licensee sought to address all their comments and questions during the review.

Detailed information on the Belarus Stress Test process and associated documents have been regularly published on the [ENSREG website](#) during the peer review process.

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Fonds européen de la défense: le Parlement européen entérine l'accord sur le programme industriel

La Commission se félicite du vote aujourd'hui des députés européens, réunis en plénière à Strasbourg, qui entérine le Programme européen de développement industriel dans le domaine de la défense (EDIDP) et ce à peine plus d'un an après [son lancement par la Commission](#) et un peu plus d'un mois après qu'un [accord provisoire a été trouvé en trilogue](#). EDIDP est un des deux piliers du Fonds européen de la défense, annoncé par le président **Juncker** dès septembre 2016. Ce programme vise à encourager la coopération dans le développement des technologies et des équipements dont l'Europe a besoin pour faire face aux défis de défense et de sécurité actuels et à venir. La commissaire Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, en charge du marché intérieur, de l'industrie, de l'entrepreneuriat et des PME, a commenté: *"Les trois institutions de l'Union européenne ont travaillé dur pour parvenir à un accord et le texte voté aujourd'hui est équilibré, inclusif et aidera efficacement l'industrie de la défense européenne à mieux collaborer. Ce texte montre notre engagement européen à faire de l'Union de la défense une réalité et il ouvrira la voie au futur Fonds européen de la défense que nous venons de proposer pour la prochaine période budgétaire"*. Dans le cadre d'EDIDP, l'Union européenne cofinancera des projets mis en œuvre par au moins trois entreprises dans au moins trois États membres. 500 millions d'euros sont prévus à ce titre pour 2019 et 2020. Pour les prototypes, jusqu'à 20% du coût total pourrait être financé par le programme tandis que d'autres actions telles que la conception ou la phase de tests pourraient voir leur financement totalement couverts. En outre, les projets développés dans le cadre de la Coopération structurée permanente (PESCO) ou impliquant des PME ou des entreprises à moyenne capitalisation éligibles pourront bénéficier de taux de cofinancement plus élevés. Le Fonds européen de la défense a par ailleurs déjà commencé à financer des projets de recherche paneuropéens (plus d'informations [ici](#)). Le 13 juin dernier, dans le cadre de la proposition de la Commission relative au prochain budget à long terme de l'UE, la Commission a [proposé d'allouer 13 milliards d'euros](#) pour un futur [Fonds européen de la défense](#) parfaitement intégré. (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tél.: +32 229-80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tél.: +32 229 55040)

Commission and World Bank put forward solutions to make life easier for businesses in the EU

Today the Commission and the World Bank are publishing *Doing Business in the European Union*, a new [report](#) assessing what supports or hinders entrepreneurs in setting up and expanding businesses in 25 cities in Croatia, the Czech Republic, Portugal and Slovakia. The report identifies solutions to improve local business environments and save time and costs for companies in 5 key areas: starting a business; dealing with construction permits; enforcing contracts; getting electricity; and registering property. Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *“This report shows how to make the life of businesses and entrepreneurs easier. The future Cohesion Policy for 2021-2027 will continue to support Member States’ efforts to make EU regions more attractive places to work and invest in.”* Indeed, the Commission has been working closely with national and regional authorities, in the context of Cohesion Policy, to [improve the way they invest EU funds](#) and to set the right conditions for growth and job creation. Under the [Catching up initiative](#), the Commission, in partnership with the World Bank, provides tailored support to a number of [low-growth and low-income regions](#) to guide structural reforms that can help EU and national investments unleash their full potential and attract more private capital. This publication is the second in a series of report on business environments in the EU; most EU Member States should be covered by these reports in the future. *(For more information: see the [World Bank press release](#) or contact Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)*

Commission implements 2018 Work Programme commitment to withdraw 15 pending legislative proposals

Following its announcement in the [2018 Commission Work Programme](#), the Commission today formally withdrew 15 pending legislative proposals, after consulting Parliament and Council. In line with the Interinstitutional Agreement of 13 April 2016 on Better Law-Making and the Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the Commission, the reason for each withdrawal was set out in [Annex IV](#) of the Commission Work Programme 2018. The Commission responded in May to the observations made by the Parliament. This annual exercise allows the co-legislators to focus their attention on the priority files that have a realistic chance of making progress, in line with the Joint Declarations on legislative priorities. *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602)*

Nuclear safety: Comprehensive risk and safety assessments of the Belarus nuclear power plant completed

The Peer Review Report of the EU Stress Test in Belarus has been presented today. The review has been carried out by the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group. The Commission welcomes the completion of this work and looks forward to the next phase of the process and continue working on the proper implementation of the findings. Nuclear safety is paramount in

the European Union, and even more so when new facilities are being built and operating on the EU borders. The Commission has continually expressed its readiness to work with and support any non EU country to undertake a comprehensive peer review process and this support has been extended to Belarus. The full Peer Review Report will be published tomorrow Wednesday. A full press release is [available online](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of GlobalLogic by Partners Group and CPPIB

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over GlobalLogic Holdings Limited of the US by Partners Group AG of Switzerland and Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board (“CPPIB”) of Canada. GlobalLogic provides outsourced software development and related consultancy services to a variety of sectors. Partners Group is a global private markets and investment management company. CPPIB is a professional investment management organisation that invests assets transferred to it by the Canadian Pension Plan. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited overlap between the companies’ activities. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission’s [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8972](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l’acquisition de Direct Energie par Total

La Commission Européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l’acquisition de Direct Energie par Total, toutes deux sociétés basées en France. Direct Energie est active dans la production, le commerce et la fourniture d’électricité et de gaz. Total est active dans tous les segments de l’industrie pétrolière et gazière, ainsi que dans les secteurs des énergies renouvelables et de la production d’énergie. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence en raison de chevauchements horizontaux et de relations verticales très limités entre les activités des deux entreprises en France et en Belgique. L’opération a été examinée en vertu de la procédure simplifiée de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le site internet [concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d’affaire [M.8926](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

La Commission approuve une nouvelle indication géographique protégée de France

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d’inscription de la [«choucroute d’Alsace»](#) dans le registre des indications géographiques

protégées (IGP). Les feuilles de choux sont préparées en Alsace pour devenir de la «Choucroute d'Alsace» pouvant être servie crue ou cuite. La choucroute est associée à l'Alsace depuis longtemps comme en témoigne par exemple l'étymologie et l'origine du terme choucroute en français, proche du terme alsacien Sürkrüt (sür: qui signifie aigre et krüt: chou). La fermentation naturelle permettait dès le Moyen-âge de conserver le chou durant de longues périodes. Ce légume ainsi cuisiné est ensuite consommé comme une garniture à de nombreux plats dont la fameuse choucroute garnie, accompagnée de saucisses, pommes de terre et lard. De nombreux villages organisent chaque automne leurs fêtes de la «Choucroute d'Alsace». Cette nouvelle appellation va rejoindre plus de 1430 produits déjà protégés dont la liste est disponible dans la base de données [DOOR](#). Pour plus d'informations, voir aussi les pages sur la [politique de qualité](#). (pour plus d'information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 2 29 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52 509)

Eurostat: Les prix à la production industrielle en hausse de 0,8% dans la zone euro

En mai 2018 par rapport à avril 2018, les prix à la production industrielle ont augmenté de 0,8% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 1,0% dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En avril 2018, les prix étaient restés stables dans la zone euro et ils avaient augmenté de 0,1% dans l'UE28. En mai 2018 par rapport à mai 2017, les prix à la production industrielle ont augmenté de 3,0% dans la zone euro et de 3,6% dans l'UE28. Plus d'informations [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tél.: +32 229-80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tél.: +32 229 55040)

Eurostat: Volume of retail trade unchanged in euro area

In May 2018 compared with April 2018, the seasonally adjusted volume of retail trade did not change in the euro area (EA19) and increased by 0.3% in the EU28, according to estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In April, the retail trade volume decreased by 0.1% in the euro area and increased by 0.3% in the EU28. In May 2018 compared with May 2017 the calendar adjusted retail sales index increased by 1.4% in the euro area and by 2.3% in the EU28. More information [here](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

STATEMENTS

President Juncker to the European Parliament on occasion of the start of the Austrian Council presidency

Austria took over the Presidency of the Council of the EU on 1 July, and Chancellor Sebastian Kurz presented the country's programme of activities to the Plenary of the European Parliament on Tuesday, 3 July. On the occasion,

President **Juncker** welcomed the Austrian presidency in his keynote speech, and said: *“I look forward to this Austrian Presidency [...] I have known Sebastian Kurz for many years and I know that he is led by European convictions. The same is true for the Austrian Federal Government. [...] The government program of the Austrian Federal Government has a clear pro-European tonality.”* *“[...] We will have to work together a lot. The Commission’s offer is that we do this in friendship and in mutual understanding, and I am convinced that we will succeed,”* President **Juncker** continued, as he highlighted the Commission would propose strengthening the European border and coast guard in September. He also said that he would like to see the conclusion of the reform of the Common European Asylum System by the end of the year. President **Juncker** also pleaded for a consistent focus of the Austrian Presidency on the advancement of the next multiannual financial framework. In this context, he said: *“If we finish too late and are not ready on 1 January 2019, we lose thousands of research grants in Europe and we will not be able to support tens of thousands of students and teachers with the Erasmus program.”* The debate with MEPs was followed by a [joint press conference](#) by Presidents **Juncker** and Tajani with Austrian Chancellor Kurz. President **Juncker** and the College of Commissioners will pay an official visit to Vienna at the end of this week. The keynote speech by President **Juncker** is available [online](#) and can be watched [on Ebs](#). (For more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel.: +32 229 60524; Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382)

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)

[**Eurogroup statement on the updated draft budgetary plan of Germany for 2018**](#)

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EASO publishes first country guidance

The 'Country Guidance: Afghanistan' is the result of a pilot development, aimed at fostering convergence in Member States' decision practices.

In its 28th meeting of 6-7 June 2018, the EASO Management Board endorsed the first country guidance note. This guidance note is the result of a pilot process, in which EASO coordinated the efforts of senior-level policy officials from Member States in producing a joint assessment of the situation in Afghanistan. The pilot process was launched in accordance with the [Outcome of the 3461st Council meeting of 21 April 2016](#), and is a step in the preparation for the enhanced mandate envisaged for the Agency under the [proposed Regulation on the European Union Agency for Asylum \(EUAA\)](#).

The country guidance is based on common up-to-date [country of origin information](#) (COI), produced in accordance with the EASO COI methodology. This information is analysed in accordance with EU legislation on qualification for international protection ([Directive 2011/95/EU](#)), the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union and, where appropriate, of the European Court of Human Rights. It also takes into account general EASO guidance on the examination of applications for international protection ([EASO practical tools](#)) and takes note of the relevant UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines.

It is a non-binding document, which aims at assisting decision-makers from the national asylum authorities in examining the applications from the particular country of origin and, ultimately, at fostering convergence in the decision practices of Member States.

For further information on EASO's work on country guidance and to access the 'Country Guidance: Afghanistan', see <https://www.easo.europa.eu/country-guidance>.