

Keynote speech by President Donald Tusk at the BusinessEurope day

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Thank you, Emma (Marcegaglia), for your reflections, for your determination and dedication, and of course, for inviting me to this 60th anniversary event; and thank you for our excellent cooperation in the framework of the Tripartite Summit, where the social partners will meet again this month. I want to, first and foremost, wish BusinessEurope a very happy birthday. Certainly from my own experience, I can tell you that this is when life really gets going, at 60. With the European economy expanding strongly, I can say with confidence that your best days are ahead.

I am here as your guest today, full of appreciation for your hard work. The confederation of European business and industry has, since the days of the Coal and Steel Community, been a consistently positive voice in Europe's story, always good at balancing ambition and moderation. First as CIFE, then as UNICE, and now as BusinessEurope, a fraternity that stretches north and south, east and west – from the Italian *Confindustria*, to the German BDI, to the Confederation for British Industry and, of course, to the Polish *Lewiatan*, which I know well. Your service to Europe truly deserves acknowledgment and praise. And I extend it here without reservation.

But the main source of my respect for you is that – at the end of the day – businesses, both large and small, hold the key to the success of the European economy. You are on the front-lines of making Europe the workshop of a changing world economy. Politicians do not create jobs, generate wealth or adapt to technological revolutions; enterprises and employees do, working hard each day in a global market place that does not tolerate complacency or waste.

To support your efforts, it is our job as politicians to provide the right conditions, set the right incentives and maintain the independent institutions that are needed to underpin a prosperous economy. Has the European Union done a good job in this regard? I believe that we have, and would even say that our track record of the last years is something we can look at with satisfaction.

Let me just mention a few steps that we took. Three years ago, EU leaders created the European Fund for Strategic Investments to kick-start investment in Europe. We pushed forward an ambitious market opening agenda on trade,

such as the CETA agreement with Canada, while at the same time protecting ourselves against unfair trade practices. We redoubled our efforts to fight youth unemployment. We took further steps towards a more sophisticated and complete internal market, progressing the capital markets union, the energy union, and the digital agenda. And last but not least, we agreed on the process that will decisively strengthen Economic and Monetary Union.

The economic statistics confirm that we are on the right track. The economy is now growing at its fastest pace in a decade, with robust growth expected to continue. And all EU countries share in this expansion: each and everyone of them are showing positive growth numbers. Fortunately, these good growth figures are also translating into a stronger labour market. Unemployment is declining fast, and the total number of people employed is at a record high.

However, it would be foolish to let a little good news obscure the unfinished business that we still have in economic policy. The effects of the past crisis are still visible, especially when it comes to youth unemployment. Leaders are due to have tough debates over the coming weeks that will incorporate our strategies for the single market and common policies on tax, trade, and research and innovation. My first priority is to complete our work on EMU, to make our monetary union stronger and more resistant to future economic shocks. Despite the current positive outlook, these will surely come, sooner or later.

In December, leaders agreed that it makes sense to prioritise completing the Banking Union and further developing the European Stability Mechanism. Politically, we are not as far away from a consensus on these matters as some imagine. Indeed, if not now, then when? And economically, this is the moment to remove a key vulnerability of EMU: the fiscal link between sovereigns and banks. A complete Banking Union and a more solid ESM will help break this link. Accordingly, I have asked the Finance Ministers in the Council to speed up their work on these topics, so that we are ready to take decisions on them in June. In the meantime, leaders will have another broader discussion in March on the long-term development of EMU, including on more ambitious proposals in the fiscal and economic dimension.

Last week, leaders began discussions on modernising the EU budget to better reflect our economic priorities, but also to take greater account of new political imperatives like security, defence, and stemming illegal migration. At our discussion last week, I was pleased to see that all the leaders approached this question with open minds, rather than red lines, and agreed that the EU will need to spend more on these new priorities, while not losing sight of traditional areas like agriculture and cohesion policy. Even though many leaders said that they are ready to contribute more to the post-2020 EU budget, it is clear that this will be a very difficult debate. But it is one which we must have anyway, if only because of the revenue gap of some €10 billion annually that will be caused by Brexit.

Brexit is indeed, as your programme puts it, the “one big question” that hangs over everything. Yesterday, Michel Barnier published a draft Withdrawal Agreement, which will be discussed by Member States in the coming days. But I am absolutely sure that all the essential elements of the draft will be

accepted by all. I would like to underline here again that Mr Barnier has the full support of both the EU institutions and the EU27.

Recently, London has definitively confirmed its red lines, including “no customs union” and “no single market”. We acknowledge these red lines without enthusiasm and without satisfaction. But we must treat them seriously. With all their consequences. And one of the possible negative consequences of this kind of Brexit is a hard border on the island of Ireland. The EU wants to prevent this scenario. Hence, if no other solution is found, the proposal to “establish a common regulatory area comprising the Union and the United Kingdom in respect of Northern Ireland”. And, until now, no-one has come up with anything wiser than that. In a few hours I will be asking in London whether the UK government has a better idea, that would be as effective in preventing a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Everyone must be aware that the UK red lines will also determine the shape of our future relationship. Next week I will present the draft guidelines in this respect. Here I want to stress one thing clearly. There can be no frictionless trade outside of the customs union and the Single Market. Friction is an inevitable side effect of Brexit. By nature. Thank you

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Joint statement on the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive

Joint statement by European Parliament Co-Rapporteurs Elisabeth Morin-Chartier and Agnes Jongerius, Bulgarian Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Policy Zornitsa Roussinova and Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne Thyssen on the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive:

After intensive negotiations this evening we, the negotiators on behalf of the European Parliament, the Council and Commission, are satisfied to have covered all issues during the 7th trilogue meeting. We reached a common understanding on the contours of a possible agreement on the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive. We believe that the proposed package agreement on the table is balanced. The possible agreement establishes the principle of equal pay for equal work on the same place, whilst providing more legal certainty for both workers and employers.

We will now present the results of our negotiations within our respective institutions and will do our utmost to secure the mandates necessary for the final conclusion.

We will hold a joint press point on 1 March 2018 at 10 AM in the Justus

Thursday 8 March 2018: EU Mayors' Conference on "Building Urban Defences Against Terrorism" in Brussels

The news:

On 8 March, the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions are jointly organising the EU Mayors' Conference on "Building Urban Defences Against Terrorism: Lessons Learned From Recent Attacks". The conference will focus on lessons learned from recent terrorist attacks and the sharing of best practices and useful solutions to enhance the protection of public spaces, including the implementation of "security by design" solutions. Participants will also discuss measures to enhance the prevention of radicalisation at local level, public-private cooperation – building on the recently established Operators Forum – as well as funding opportunities under the different EU financial instruments.

The background:

Delivering on the [EU Action Plan to support the protection of public spaces](#), presented by the Commission in October 2017, the conference will gather mayors and representatives from a number of European cities, together with national policy makers representatives from networks of cities and members of the Committee of the Regions Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX). As a follow up to the [Nice Declaration](#) of 29 September 2017, the conference will draw lessons from recent attacks and identify good practices emerging in cities across Europe.

The event:

The conference is taking place at the European Committee of the Regions in Brussels. Journalists are invited to attend the opening session from 9:00-9:45, including the opening speeches by Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King**, Mr. Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the Committee of the Regions and Mr Christian Estrosi, the Mayor of Nice. Closing remarks will be delivered by Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Cretu** and Commissioner Julian King at 16:45, and will also be open to journalists.

The agenda of the conference and registration details can be found here:
<https://eumayorsconference.eu>

The sources:

[Registration for the EU Mayors' Conference](#)

[EU Action Plan to support the protection of public spaces](#)

[13th Security Union Progress Report](#)

Explanatory note on the CSM Assessment Body referred to in Regulation (EU) N°402/2013 and in OTIF UTP GEN-G of 1.1.2014 on the Common Safety Method (CSM) for risk assessment

Explanatory note on the CSM Assessment Body referred to in Regulation (EU) N°402/2013 and in OTIF UTP GEN-G of 1.1.2014 on the Common Safety Method (CSM) for risk assessment Reference: ERA-GUI-01-2014-SAF Publication Date : 28/02/2018 Published by: Safety Document Types: Guide Keywords: Common safety method; independent safety assessment; accreditation; recognition; cross-acceptance Description: This is an explanatory note on the main requirements to be fulfilled by the assessment body defined in Article 6 of the CSM for risk assessment. It does not contain any legally binding requirements. Related documents:

□The main objectives of this note are to describe the roles and responsibilities of the assessment body and the way to acknowledge their compliance with the requirements defined in the CSM. In particular, the note is intended to help the Member States understanding the responsibilities set on them in Article 13 of the CSM and deciding on whether they opt for the accreditation or recognition of the assessment bodies or any combination of these two options.

The note contains only explanatory information of potential help for concerned users who directly or indirectly need to apply the CSM for risk assessment. It may serve as a clarification tool however without dictating in any manner mandatory procedures to be followed and without establishing any legally binding practice. The note provides explanations on the provisions contained in the CSM for risk assessment. It should be helpful for the understanding of the legal requirements described therein.

The note needs to be read and used together with the CSM for risk assessment in order to facilitate its understanding and application. It does not replace or otherwise amend the CSM.

[Explanatory note on the assessment body referred to in the CSM for risk assessment – EN](#)

Press statement by Michel Barnier following the publication of the draft Withdrawal Agreement between the EU and the UK

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je suis très heureux de vous retrouver à un moment important. Le Collège des Commissaires vient d'approuver cette proposition de texte sur l'accord de retrait que je vais maintenant vous présenter.

C'est aussi un moment important pour la négociation, je dirais presque même un moment clef ou charnière dans ce long processus complexe de cette négociation extraordinaire que nous voulons réussir.

Et donc je suis heureux de vous présenter maintenant ce projet d'accord qui vient d'être diffusé. C'est un texte qui comprend 168 articles, et donc un projet complet d'accord de retrait.

Je voudrais faire trois remarques avant de venir à la substance :

1/ Si nous voulons réussir cette négociation, et je veux la réussir, nous devons accélérer.

Le 30 mars 2019, dans 13 mois, le Royaume-Uni ne sera plus un Etat membre de l'Union européenne. C'est ce qu'il a voulu. Et ce jour-là, nous devrons avoir organisé son retrait de manière ordonnée.

Nous avons maintenant besoin de négocier sur la base d'un texte. Parce que le temps est court entre aujourd'hui et l'automne prochain, où nous devrons aboutir à un accord définitif sur ce projet de retrait ordonné. Je rappelle toujours qu'il faut garder un certain nombre de mois pour le temps de la ratification, du côté européen par le Conseil des ministres et par le Parlement européen, et aussi par le Parlement britannique. Et voilà pourquoi notre choix est maintenant de travailler et de proposer à nos partenaires britanniques de travailler sur la base d'un texte juridique qui apporte de la clarté.

2/ Il s'agit d'un projet, dont nous allons maintenant discuter avec les Etats membres, en lien étroit avec le Parlement européen.

Nous ne mettrons ce projet officiellement sur la table des négociations avec le Royaume-Uni que lorsque ce travail à 27 et avec le Parlement européen aura été terminé.

Dans le respect de notre engagement de transparence tout au long de cette négociation, nous venons de publier ce projet.

Et ainsi, chacun peut bien prendre la mesure des sujets sur lesquels nous devons nous mettre d'accord avec le Royaume-Uni. Et puis je pense que cette transparence est aussi un outil nécessaire dans le débat public sur le Brexit, partout en Europe. Mais désormais, grâce à ce texte, un outil de débat sur la base de principes juridiques, des faits, de solutions concrètes et réalistes. J'espère que ce document sera également utile pour votre propre travail.

3/ Ce projet de texte ne contient aucune surprise pour nos partenaires britanniques :

Il traduit juridiquement les engagements pris ensemble par l'Union et le Royaume-Uni en décembre dans le "Joint Report".

Il inclut les positions de l'Union déjà connues sur les autres sujets du retrait sur lesquels nous n'avons pas réellement pu progresser depuis décembre.

Il inclut la position de l'Union sur la gouvernance de l'accord de retrait.

Enfin, il inclut la position de l'Union sur la transition qui fait partie de l'accord de retrait, puisque je rappelle que la seule base juridique possible pour la transition, c'est l'article 50.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to develop briefly each of these points.

I – First, our draft translates into a legal text our joint commitments.

Nothing in here will be a surprise for those who have followed the negotiations.

The draft text ensures that:

- citizens' rights, our priority, will be protected as we had agreed – and we will be vigilant on the need to keep administrative procedures simple and affordable;
- all financial commitments undertaken at 28 will be respected by the UK and the EU;
- North-South cooperation on the island of Ireland will be protected and a hard border will be avoided.

A few words on Ireland:

Our text contains the legal commitments necessary for the protection of the rights of individuals, as well as for the protection of the Common Travel Area.

These points have been already agreed between the EU and the UK.

The withdrawal agreement must also contain a solution to avoid a hard border and to protect the Good Friday Agreement in all its dimensions.

This is a joint commitment by the UK and the EU.

The Joint Report lists in paragraph 49 three options for tackling the problem.

1. First, to deal with this through the agreement on the future relationship, if possible. Obviously, this solution will not be in place at the moment of withdrawal.
2. Second, the UK committed to proposing specific solutions to address the unique circumstances of the island of Ireland. We look forward to receiving these proposals.
3. Third, to maintain full alignment with those rules of the Internal Market and the Customs Union which, now or in the future, support North-South cooperation, the all-island economy and the protection of the Good Friday Agreement.

This is the backstop solution that we have to put in the Withdrawal Agreement. It is the only way to guarantee that our joint commitments will be upheld in all circumstances, as the Joint Report requires.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have applied imagination and creativity to find a specific solution to the unique challenge that Brexit poses for the protection of the Good Friday Agreement.

Two issues are key to avoid border checks:

- First, full alignment with Union law on goods, veterinary and plant health rules;
- Second, Northern Ireland has to be covered by the Union customs code.

Our approach is strictly focused on those areas where it is needed to avoid border checks.

Daily life around the border should continue as today.

As I have said before, already today Northern Ireland has rules in place that are different from the rest of the UK.

But let me repeat what I said in my last press conference: we stand by our commitment to discuss all three options set out in the Joint Report in parallel.

On all these issues, on behalf of the 27, I will continue the dialogue with the political leaders of Northern Ireland. I will meet Michelle O'Neill and Arlene Foster early next week.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

II – Deuxièmement, notre projet de texte inclut nos propositions sur les autres sujets de la séparation.

Là non plus, il n'y a pas de surprise, puisque nous avons traduit juridiquement les positions de l'Union exprimées dans nos "Essential Principles Papers", que vous connaissez.

- Sur plusieurs de ces sujets, les négociations ont effectivement commencé, sans que nous ne trouvions au moment où je vous parle un accord. C'est le cas pour Euratom, qui est un sujet important, ou pour la question des biens placés sur le marché. Il y en a d'autres.
- Sur d'autres sujets du retrait ordonné, comme la propriété intellectuelle ou les marchés publics, nous n'avons pas reçu de position britannique, et sur ces sujets-là les négociations n'ont donc pas pu commencer.

Nous espérons aussi progresser sur la gouvernance de l'accord de retrait, qui est un point clé.

Sur ce point, notre position n'a pas changé : nous pensons que la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne doit jouer un rôle pour l'interprétation et la mise en œuvre de l'accord de retrait, chaque fois que cet accord se réfère au droit européen.

C'est la position que nous avons intégrée dans notre projet de texte, avec des dispositions spécifiques déjà agréées dans le "Joint Report" pour la protection des citoyens.

Sur tous ces sujets importants, nous espérons que notre projet de texte permettra de faire avancer et d'accélérer les négociations.

Nous sommes convenus avec la partie britannique de nous retrouver toute la semaine prochaine pour un nouveau round de négociation.

III – Troisièmement, je veux rappeler que notre projet de texte inclut notre proposition sur la période de transition qui a été demandée officiellement par Theresa May au nom du gouvernement britannique, et sur laquelle les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement et le Parlement européen ont marqué leur accord de principe.

Sur la transition, les discussions techniques de cette semaine confirment, je veux vous le dire franchement, qu'il reste des divergences importantes sur plusieurs points, et je voudrais en citer deux :

Sur les droits des citoyens, notre priorité, le Royaume-Uni souhaite toujours traiter moins favorablement, à la fin de la période de transition, les citoyens qui seront arrivés au Royaume-Uni pendant la transition, par rapport à ceux arrivés avant la transition, c'est-à-dire avant le jour du retrait en mars 2019. Cela reste un sujet majeur pour nous, et aussi pour les Etats membres et le Parlement européen, puisque tout l'acquis de l'Union s'appliquera pendant la transition. Il me paraît juste, normal, de traiter les citoyens qui sont arrivés avant ou pendant de manière équitable ou égale.

J'ajoute aussi que notre proposition devrait permettre du côté du Royaume-Uni un système plus simple à gérer sur le simple plan administratif.

Sur l'application des règles européennes pendant cette période courte, du 30 mars 2019 au 31 décembre 2020, le Royaume-Uni demande toujours à pouvoir s'opposer en cas de désaccord avec une nouvelle règle européenne qui entrerait en vigueur pendant la transition. Nous avons rappelé que les règles doivent être les mêmes pour tous pendant cette période. Nous ne prendrons aucun risque de divergence réglementaire pendant la transition.

Et compte tenu de ces désaccords, tels que je viens d'en rappeler deux, mais il y en a quelques autres, je répète simplement que, pour le moment, la transition n'est pas acquise. Et voilà pourquoi je pense que le prochain round de négociation est aussi sur ce point à la fois utile et important.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Nous allons maintenant discuter en détail, cet après-midi même au Coreper, de ce projet avec les Etats membres. J'ai déjà eu l'occasion d'en parler hier avec les ministres à l'occasion du Conseil affaires générales, et aussi dans la soirée avec les membres du *Brexit steering group* du Parlement européen.

Ces discussions évidemment auront lieu avec toutes les institutions avant que nous ne transmettions officiellement ce document comme un projet pour la négociation avec le Royaume-Uni.

J'espère ainsi que, grâce à ce document, grâce aux négociations que nous allons avoir, nous allons continuer d'avancer comme je le souhaite vers un retrait ordonné du Royaume-Uni de l'Union européenne.

Merci pour votre attention