

# Invitation letter by President Donald Tusk to the members of the European Council ahead of the informal meeting in Salzburg on 19 and 20 September 2018

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We will start our dinner on Wednesday with a discussion on migration. During the summer, tensions among Member States resurfaced once again in connection with the influx of migrants to the EU. I want to openly state the following: the quest to end the migration crisis is a common task of all the Member States and EU institutions. If some want to solve the crisis, while others want to use it, it will remain unsolvable. I am hoping that in Salzburg we will be able to put an end to the mutual resentment and return to a constructive approach. It is precisely this kind of approach that has brought about the desired effects in recent months: today, the influx of illegal migrants to the EU is back at pre-crisis levels.

After my visit in Cairo together with Chancellor Kurz, I have no doubt that we should endorse the initiative to call an EU-League of Arab States summit in early 2019. We should also discuss the potential to step up cooperation with Egypt, including in the area of migration. It is worth recalling that the Egyptian authorities have made the fight against smuggling and trafficking their priority. As a result, there have been no irregular departures from Egypt to Europe this year (compared to almost 13 000 in 2016).

On Thursday we will focus on collective efforts to ensure a high level of security in Europe, as foreseen by the Leaders' Agenda. The objective is to upgrade police and judicial cooperation, to strengthen border security and to ensure resilience in cyberspace. I would like us to assess the progress made over the past years and to have a broad political debate on the challenges ahead, on the basis of the enclosed Note. We will also briefly raise the issue of a common response to man-made and natural disasters, while Prime Minister May will brief us on the Skripal case.

Finally, we will meet over lunch at 27 with our chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier. With only six months to go before the United Kingdom's

withdrawal from the EU, we are entering the final weeks of negotiations. Therefore, I want us to review progress in these talks and to discuss the way forward with three objectives in mind. First, we should reach a common view on the nature and overall shape of the joint political declaration about our future partnership with the UK. Second, we will discuss how to organise the final phase of the Brexit talks, including the possibility of calling another European Council in November. Third, we should reconfirm the need for a legally operational backstop on Ireland, so as to be sure that there will be no hard border in the future. Let me recall that limiting the damage caused by Brexit is our shared interest. Unfortunately, a no deal scenario is still quite possible. But if we all act responsibly, we can avoid a catastrophe.

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