

Remarks by President Donald Tusk after his meeting with Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern

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I would like to start by warmly welcoming you in Brussels on your first visit to the European Union, our Institution.

Relations between the European Union and New Zealand are excellent. Geographically we are far apart, but politically and economically we are close partners and friends. We both stand by the values of liberal democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We both firmly believe in openness, cooperation, the rules-based international order and free trade.

We are currently negotiating an ambitious and comprehensive trade agreement between the European Union and New Zealand. This has enormous strategic importance for the rules-based international order, at a time when some are questioning it. We are sending a clear message that we stand together against protectionism. Our negotiators will work at an ambitious speed to reach the best outcome for our citizens and companies.

Beyond trade, we agreed to work together even more closely in many areas, from peace and security, to connectivity, energy and climate change. There is no doubt that both the EU and New Zealand have been leaders of the transition to a low-carbon economy. And we will continue to pursue ambitious climate action. Our budgets reflect the shared understanding that for many, including in the Pacific region, the threats from rising sea levels are existential.

Before I conclude, let me borrow from the Māori wisdom and say: *let us keep close together, not far apart*. In the current uncertain global environment, the friendship between the European Union and New Zealand is priceless. Thank you.

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