

Remarks by President Donald Tusk after the Salzburg informal summit

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Let me start by thanking the beautiful city of Salzburg, the Austrian EU Presidency and you personally, Sebastian, for hosting this remarkable summit. It is a truly impressive; the hospitality, the logistics, and it is not an empty compliment. It is one of the best political performances I ever experienced. Congratulations.

As you mentioned, we have discussed migration, internal security and Brexit here in Salzburg.

The migration debate showed that we may not agree on everything but we agree on the main goal, which is stemming illegal migration to Europe. There was a constructive debate and good atmosphere and we decided to continue our focus on what unites us and what has already brought results. This means strengthening our external borders as well as strengthening cooperation with third countries. Such cooperation should not be just on migration or fighting smugglers and traffickers. It should be about a much broader vision of partnership.

Together with Chancellor Kurz we have started a dialogue with the Egyptian President and now we can say that there is a backing from the European Council for this and similar dialogues. I will meet President Al Sisi on Sunday to take this forward. And we will be reaching out to other African partners in the coming weeks, with Chancellor Kurz, the Commission and also with a group of member states. In this context we also agreed to organise a summit with the League of Arab States in February next year, in Egypt.

On internal security we agreed priorities for immediate actions. That's why there is a shared determination to take forward the Commission's proposal for a strengthened European Border and Coast Guard as a priority. At the same time, as the Chancellor underlined, it is also clear that there are issues regarding sovereignty and the size of Frontex that will have to be further discussed. In addition, we agreed to step up the fight against all forms of cyber crime, manipulations and disinformation.

Fires this summer demonstrated the importance of the European cooperation and it is an example of concrete European solidarity. It is also in this context that we decided to speed up work on the Civil Protection Mechanism.

At our EU27 working lunch today we had a good discussion on Brexit, which once again reconfirmed our full unity. Let me highlight three points.

First, we reconfirmed that there will be no Withdrawal Agreement without a solid, operational and legally binding Irish backstop. And we continue to fully support Michel Barnier in his efforts to find such a model.

Second, we agreed to have a joint political declaration that provides as much clarity as possible on the future relations. Everybody shared the view that while there are positive elements in the Chequers proposal, the suggested framework for economic cooperation will not work. Not least because it risks undermining the Single Market.

Third, we also discussed the timetable for further negotiations. The moment of truth for Brexit negotiations will be the October European Council. In October we expect maximum progress and results in the Brexit talks. Then we will decide whether conditions are there to call an extraordinary summit in November to finalise and formalise the deal.

Thank you.

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