

Remarks by President Donald Tusk ahead of the informal Salzburg summit

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The Brexit negotiations are entering their decisive phase. Various scenarios are still possible today, but I would like to stress that some of Prime Minister May's proposals from Chequers indicate a positive evolution in the UK's approach as well as a will to minimise the negative effects of Brexit. By this I mean, among other things, the readiness to cooperate closely in the area of security and foreign policy. On other issues, such as the Irish question, or the framework for economic cooperation, the UK's proposals will need to be reworked and further negotiated. Today there is perhaps more hope, but there is surely less and less time. Therefore, every day that is left, we must use for talks. I would like to finalise them still this autumn. This is why, at tomorrow's meeting of the twenty-seven, I will propose calling an additional summit around mid-November.

This evening I will call on leaders to stop the migration blame game. Despite the aggressive rhetoric, things are moving in the right direction. Mostly because we have been focused on external border control and cooperation with third countries, which has brought down the number of irregular migrants from almost 2 million in 2015 to fewer than 100.000 this year. In fact, this is less than in the years before the migration crisis. So, instead of taking political advantage of the situation, we should focus on what works and just get on with it. We can no longer be divided into those who want to solve the problem of illegal migrant flows, and those who want to use it for political gain.

Tonight, I will ask for support for our efforts to intensify cooperation with North African countries and the idea of calling an EU-League of Arab States summit in Egypt in February next year.

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