

Remarks by President Donald Tusk at the opening ceremony of the 12th ASEM summit

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Dear colleagues, dear friends, it is my great pleasure to welcome you all for the 12th Asia-Europe Meeting in Brussels, the informal capital of Europe.

ASEM is a unique forum that brings Europe and Asia closer, to increase the prosperity and security of our countries, regions, our citizens, and of our planet as a whole.

Together we represent 60% of the global population, 65% of the global economy and 75% of global tourism. And we should all make use of this impressive weight to tackle global challenges, such as trade tensions that put millions of jobs at risk, the growing distrust in multilateral institutions, undermining the stability of our societies, and the growing threat of climate change.

Naturally, we have our differences. But we also realise that these global challenges can only be overcome if we work together. And I hope that Asia and Europe can be united in this fight, as it is in our common interest. This is why the main theme of our Summit is "*Global Partners for Global Challenges*".

During our summit we will discuss issues of key importance for Europe-Asia cooperation, ranging from climate change, to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, from connectivity between our continents, to global sustainable development.

Let me take climate change. In recent times especially, we can see that it is no longer a theoretical, but a real danger, costing the nature, displacing populations and claiming lives. I hope that together we will reaffirm our joint commitment to implementing the rules of the Paris Agreement swiftly and effectively. We should send a strong signal to push for an ambitious outcome at COP 24 this December in Katowice, Poland.

I also hope that we will re-commit to the global non-proliferation regime, and I look forward to our discussions tomorrow on supporting peace and denuclearisation on the Korean peninsula, as well as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran.

We also need to be determined in promoting and protecting key principles and values such as respect for democracy, human rights, the rule of law,

sovereignty, and a strong and independent civil society.

But whatever the subject of our discussion, let me stress how important it is to base our common actions on rules. Because only rules-based solutions can stand the test of time and protect our people in the long term. To those who prefer quick fixes, without clear rules, I say it is not worth it. A world of no rules is, by definition, a world of chaos. Therefore, let us discuss our differences, but not compromise on the rules-based world order.

I strongly believe that we will find a common understanding on all these issues, which will help to shape our common future. I look forward to our discussions and your contributions.

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