

Remarks by President Donald Tusk before the G20 summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina

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Let me just add a few words to what President Juncker has said. As this is a difficult moment for international cooperation, I would like to appeal to the leaders to use this summit, including their bilateral and informal exchanges, to seriously discuss real issues such as trade wars, the tragic situation in Syria and Yemen and the Russian aggression in Ukraine. I see no reason why the G20 leaders shouldn't have a meaningful discussion about solving these problems. Especially because all the instruments lie in their hands. The only condition is good will.

We also cannot underestimate other issues which remain difficult for some leaders, such as human rights, freedom of press and basic safety of journalists. It is our obligation, as the EU, to take this opportunity and press our partners to respect these basic principles.

Many leaders will certainly have questions about Brexit. Therefore, let me say this. The European Union has just agreed an orderly divorce with the United Kingdom. A few days before the vote in the House of Commons, it is becoming more and more clear that this deal is the best possible, in fact, the only possible one. If this deal is rejected in the Commons, we are left with, as was already stressed a few weeks ago by Prime Minister May an alternative: "no deal; or no Brexit at all." I want to reassure you that the EU is prepared for every scenario.

Question: The European Union announced that it will react appropriately to the use of force by Russia in the sea of Azov. What does it mean an appropriate reaction? Is it possible to have an appropriate reaction without EU sanctions if there is no de-escalation in the next weeks?

Answer: The escalation in the Sea of Azov is a cause of grave concern to us and of course Russia's use of force against Ukrainian ships is totally unacceptable. I would like to underline that Europe is united in its support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is why I am sure that the EU will roll over the sanctions against Russia in December.

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