

Report by President Donald Tusk to the European Parliament on June European Council meetings

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The last European Council took place in a deteriorating geopolitical context. This is why I appealed to the leaders that the EU must get its act together. For me, this means increasing military cooperation, preparing for worst-case scenarios in terms of trade, and – above all – looking for unity in every aspect of European cooperation, including migration and Euro area reform. We managed to make progress on all these issues, but there is no hiding that the road ahead of us is still long and for sure not easy.

We started with a discussion among the leaders and NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, with the aim of deepening the cooperation between the EU and NATO. The leaders agreed that the EU must take greater responsibility for its own security, first and foremost because it is in our own interest as Europeans. In order to bolster our common defence, the EU will enhance investment, capability development and operational readiness.

Let me mention here the issue of foreign threats to our democracies. The European Council called on the High Representative and the Commission to present, by December, concrete proposals for a coordinated EU response to this challenge, specifically to Russia disinformation attempts, which is currently handled by a very small strategic communications team at the EEAS. This is particularly important in light of the signals about Russia's role in Brexit.

As regards migration, I put forward the following three proposals: disembarkation platforms outside Europe, a dedicated budgetary tool in the next MFF to combat illegal migration, as well as boosting EU support for the Libyan Coast Guard. They were univocally supported by the leaders.

We also agreed to support the Maltese authorities, by sending a message to all vessels, including those of NGOs, operating in the Mediterranean. The message is clear: respect the law and do not obstruct the operations of the Libyan Coast Guard.

Additionally, the leaders accepted the Franco-Italian proposal of controlled centres on EU territory. It is up to the governments to decide whether they want to create such centres. However, any obligations related to the

functioning of these centres, including relocation and resettlement, will be taken on a voluntary basis.

Last but not least, we agreed to launch the next tranche of financing for Turkey, and to transfer 500 million euros of development money to the EU Trust Fund for Africa. The leaders confirmed their will to take our cooperation with Africa to a new level. This means not only increased public funding, but also a new framework enabling private investments to grow. It is the best proof of our intentions, despite unfounded claims that Europe wants to abandon Africa. It is impossible to stop the flow of illegal migrants without close cooperation with African countries. That is why we will use all possible tools, from defence and development to visa and other cooperation, to make it happen.

Moving on to the Euro Summit. Last October, in this chamber, I said the following: 'I will do everything in my power to take the first very concrete steps, by June. If we don't reach agreement by June, I will say precisely why it wasn't possible, and who is responsible.' Today I can say that the leaders did indeed take the first decisions. This means agreement on further steps to complete the Banking Union and to strengthen the ESM.

In particular, we agreed that the ESM will be providing the common backstop to the single resolution fund. As a consequence, our Banking Union will become much stronger. Some of you may say that this is too little, too late. And you would be right, in a sense. But the fact is that after some years of standstill, we are effectively re-launching the process of deepening of the EMU. To make sure that the progress continues, I will organise another Euro Summit in December.

The leaders also adopted conclusions advancing EU cooperation on digital matters and innovation, as well as trade.

In the context of growing trade tensions, the European Council underlined the importance of preserving and deepening the rules-based multilateral system. The Commission was invited to propose a comprehensive approach to improve, together with like-minded partners, the functioning of the WTO in crucial areas. The leaders also called for the adoption of the proposal on the screening of foreign direct investments, which is crucially important for the security of our economies, and citizens. It goes without saying that the Commission has the full support of the European Council when it comes to the trade dispute with the US. I am sure Jean-Claude will elaborate on that.

A final point on Brexit. The 27 leaders shared one concern. Whilst progress was made in a number of areas, some key aspects still need to be agreed. Since there is much work ahead with less and less time, I was very honest in my assessment, including when I spoke to Prime Minister May last week. The sooner we get a precise UK proposal on the Irish border, the better the chance to finalise the Brexit negotiations this year. Put simply, we cannot make progress unless a solid backstop is presented by the UK and accepted by our Irish friends. We are now looking forward to the White Paper from the UK, and we very much hope that it will bring the necessary clarity, realism, and impetus to these negotiations. Thank you.

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