

Remarks by President Donald Tusk after the special meeting of the European Council (Art. 50) on 25 November 2018

“Today, the European Council endorsed the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community. On this basis, the European Council invited the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council to take the necessary steps to ensure that the agreement can enter into force on 30th March 2019, so as to provide for an orderly withdrawal.

The European Council approved the Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The European Council restated the Union’s determination to have as close as possible a partnership with the United Kingdom in the future.”

I quote this passage of today’s conclusions, as it contains the essence of our meeting. Ahead of us is the difficult process of ratification as well as further negotiations. But regardless of how it will all end, one thing is certain: we will remain friends until the end of days, and one day longer.

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European Council (Art. 50) conclusions, 25 November 2018

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[Invitation letter by President Donald Tusk to the members of the European Council \(Art. 50\) ahead of their special meeting on 25 November 2018](#)

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We are meeting in the European Council (Art. 50) tomorrow to finalise and formalise the outcome of the Brexit negotiations.

At the very beginning of these talks, almost two years ago, we agreed the EU27 negotiating guidelines. They set the following objectives:

- to minimise the uncertainty and disruption caused by Brexit for our citizens, businesses and Member States;
- to settle the status of EU citizens who live, work and study in the UK with reciprocal guarantees;
- to make sure that the UK honours all financial commitments and liabilities;
- to avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland;
- to prevent a legal vacuum for our companies.

The EU negotiator has achieved these objectives. The Withdrawal Agreement ensures that the rights of our citizens are fully protected, the peace process in Northern Ireland should not be affected, the UK will continue its payments to the EU budget during the transition period and legal certainty will be secured. Our negotiator has thereby managed to reduce the risks and losses resulting from the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.

The Political Declaration sets the direction as regards the future relations.

We intend to work resolutely towards building the best possible relationship with the UK after Brexit, as friends and partners. And we will have around two years to work out and agree a precise framework for such cooperation. And if, in spite of our best efforts, additional time is needed to negotiate the future relationship, an extension of the transition period by up to two years will be possible.

During these negotiations, no-one wanted to defeat anyone. We were all looking for a good and fair agreement. And I believe that we have finally found the best possible compromise. Given all of the above, I will recommend that on Sunday we approve the outcome of the Brexit negotiations. And although no-one will have reasons to be happy on that day, there is one thing I would like to stress: at this critical time, the EU27 has passed the test of unity and solidarity.

The meeting of the 27 Leaders will start at 9.30 with an exchange of views with European Parliament President Tajani. We will then hold an EU27 working session to endorse the Withdrawal Agreement and approve the Political Declaration for the future relationship. Finally, we will meet with Prime Minister May to jointly consider the next steps.

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Main topics and media events 25 November – 9 December 2018

Overview of the main subjects to be discussed at meetings of the Council of the EU over the next two weeks.

Special meeting of the European Council (Article 50), Sunday 25 November 2018

EU27 leaders will meet to endorse the Brexit withdrawal agreement and approve the political declaration on future.

Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council, Monday 26 November 2018

Ministers are expected to reach a partial general approach on a proposal for a Regulation on the European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027 and on a Regulation on the Erasmus programme. On Tuesday 27, ministers will focus on the Creative Europe programme, and on how to tackle the spread of disinformation online. They will also hold a debate on major sporting events as drivers for innovation in the presence of a guest speaker, Martin Kallen, CEO of UEFA events.

Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council, Tuesday 27 November 2018

Ministers will focus on the Creative Europe programme, and on how to tackle the spread of disinformation online. They will also hold a debate on major sporting events as drivers for innovation in the presence of a guest speaker, Martin Kallen, CEO of UEFA events.

Foreign Affairs Council (Development), Monday 26 November 2018

Development ministers will discuss the Africa-Europe alliance for sustainable investment and jobs, the future financial architecture for sustainable development and neighbourhood, and gender and human rights issues.

Competitiveness Council, Thursday 29 November 2018

The Competitiveness Council is expected to agree on general approaches on the draft regulations on platforms to business, the single market programme (partial general approach) and the general safety of vehicles. It will also adopt conclusions on the future EU industrial policy strategy and will exchange views on the future of the single market.

Competitiveness Council, Friday 30 November 2018

The Council will take stock of progress so far on the proposed EU space programme. It will be invited to adopt a partial general approach on the Horizon Europe (framework programme) and take stock of progress on the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe. The Council will also adopt conclusions on the European Research Area.

General Affairs Council on cohesion, Friday 30 November 2018

The Council will hold a policy debate on the legislative package for cohesion policy after 2020.

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Transport), Monday 3 December 2018

The Council will aim for a general approach on a number of proposals including key rules for the road transport sector, and for a partial general approach on the proposal on the Connected Europe Facility (CEF). The proposals to stop seasonal time changes and update rail passenger rights will be the topic of a progress report.

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Telecommunication), Tuesday 4 December 2018

The Council will aim to agree on a partial general approach on the proposed Digital Europe programme. It will assess progress and exchange views on a draft regulation on ePrivacy. It will also take stock of progress on a proposal to establish a European Cybersecurity Industrial, Technology and Research Competence Centre and a Network of National Coordination Centres.

Economic and Financial Affairs Council, Tuesday 4 December 2018

The Council will discuss the digital services tax, take stock of progress on completing the banking union and adopt an action plan on tackling anti-money laundering.

Justice and Home Affairs Council (Home), Thursday 6 December 2018

Home Affairs ministers are expected to discuss the European Border and Coast Guard, the prevention of dissemination of terrorist content online and the Justice and Home Affairs priorities for the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

Justice and Home Affairs Council (Justice), Friday 7 December 2018

Justice ministers are expected to reach agreement on a number of files, including the e-evidence regulation, the sales of goods directive and the so-called Brussels IIa regulation on parental responsibility in cross border cases.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council, Thursday 6 December 2018

Ministers will aim at reaching a general approach on a proposal for a regulation establishing a European Labour Authority and a proposal for a Directive on carcinogens or mutagens at work (third batch) with the aim of reaching a general approach on both proposals. They will also hold a policy debate on the European semester 2019.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council, Friday 7 December 2018

Ministers will focus on ways to strengthen the cooperation against vaccine preventable diseases and will hold an exchange of views on tackling vaccine hesitancy at national and EU level.

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[Weekly schedule of President Donald Tusk](#)

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