

Remarks by President Donald Tusk after his meeting with President of Georgia, Giorgi Margvelashvili

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I am very happy to welcome again President Margvelashvili to Brussels. You know how I value your visits here and our talks and cooperation. It's not only a pleasure; first of all I really appreciate how effective, how efficient your country is, and you are as a President.

EU-Georgia relations are strong and we enjoy an excellent partnership. The accomplishment of the visa-free regime and the increase in bilateral trade are some of the most visible examples of our good and expanding cooperation over the past year.

The implementation of the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area is bringing tangible results to the citizens of Georgia, contributing to political and economic stability. The European Union will continue to support Georgia's reforms.

With regard to the visa-free regime, I welcome the commitment of the Georgian authorities to continue working with EU Member States to make sure that it functions properly.

Georgia is a frontrunner in the Eastern Partnership and the EU very much appreciated Georgia's constructive and active support to making last year's Summit a success. In this context, we also discussed the future of EU-Georgia relations, including the Georgian government's pragmatic proposals for advancing integration and cooperation with the European Union. We will work to make these ideas more concrete in the coming months.

During our meeting I reassured the President that the EU remains fully committed to the conflict resolution efforts and support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders. We are concerned about attempts at a creeping annexation of the two breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The recent tragic death of Georgian citizen Archil Tatunashvili and the detention of two others in South Ossetia, was a sad reminder of the costs entailed by conflict. Thank you.

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News story: Defence Secretary praises contribution female military personnel make to keeping Britain safe

Updated: caption

On a visit to RAF Brize Norton, the Defence Secretary met with women on the front line of the RAF's transport operations, including a Voyager air to air refuelling and troop transport pilot, logisticians and engineers. Mr Williamson also recognised the hard work that has gone into making the armed forces more diverse.

Over 10% of the military is now made up of women, with the RAF leading the way with 14% female representation. Increasing numbers of women are also joining the armed forces, with over 12% of new recruits this year being female, up from 11.2% last year. The MOD is committed to reaching its target of 15% of the military being female by 2020. 42% of MOD civil servants are also female.



Defence Secretary meets with female RAF personnel on International Women's Day

Speaking at the event, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Women play a crucial role across our Armed Forces and it is important we reflect on the amazing contribution they make every single day keeping the British people safe.

It is vital that we have the very best people our society has to offer and that they also represent the society that they defend. Today has been a great opportunity to meet some of those inspiring women who make our Armed Forces the best in the world.

Women are an essential and valued part of Defence and play a key role in keeping Britain safe. Over the last year, female members of the armed forces have contributed to defeating Daesh in Iraq and Syria, delivered essential humanitarian aid to British Overseas Territories affected by Hurricane Irma and most recently helped with the military's support to snow relief in the UK. In December 2017, six Army officers also become the first all-female group to cross Antarctica.



(Left to right) Flight Lieutenant Kerry Bennett, Sergeant Sim Rezazadeh-Wilson and Squadron Leader Eleanor Taylor pictured in front of an A400M transport aircraft at RAF Brize Norton.

The military is currently in the process of opening its ground close combat roles to women, a historic move first announced in June 2016. The Royal Tank Regiment has already opened its close combat roles to women and last year the RAF became the first service to open all of its trades and branches to women, with the RAF Regiment starting to take female applications in September 2017.

By the end of this year, all infantry regiments in the Army and the Royal Marines will have opened their close combat roles to women. While visiting Brize Norton, the Defence Secretary met with a number of women who are working across a number of trades in the RAF, including Voyager Pilot Flight Lieutenant Kerry Bennett, Squadron Leader Eleanor Taylor, an engineer and Logistic Mover Sergeant Sim Rezazadeh-Wilson.

[Only Nordic-style deal can protect trade and jobs](#)

Nicola Sturgeon has called on the Prime Minister to defy Tory hardliners on Brexit, warning that only a Norway-style deal with the EU can deliver on the

promise to protect trade and jobs.

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