

Remarks by President Donald Tusk before the G7 summit in Biarritz, France

Good afternoon, bonjour,

First of all, let me express my best wishes to the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker. I always attended G7 summits with Jean-Claude, and I must say I will miss him in Biarritz.

This is another G7 summit which will be a difficult test of unity and solidarity of the free world and its leaders. There is still no certainty whether the group will be able to find common solutions, and the global challenges are today really serious, or whether it will focus on senseless disputes among each other. The last years have shown that it is increasingly difficult for all of us to find common language when the world needs our cooperation more, not less. This may be the last moment to restore our political community. Today it would be especially urgent and essential to build our unity around the following challenges:

1. The defence of liberal democracy, rule of law and human rights, in particular in the context of the revival of nationalisms and new forms of authoritarianism, as well as threats coming from the development of digital technologies (meddling in elections, fake news, using artificial intelligence against citizens and their freedoms).
2. Climate crisis and the protection of natural environment, including forests and oceans. The burning Amazon rainforest has become another depressing sign of our times. We of course stand by the EU-Mercosur agreement, which is also about protecting the climate and environment, but it is hard to imagine a harmonious process of ratification by the European countries as long as the Brazilian government allows for the destruction of the green lungs of Planet Earth. This is about our "to be or not to be." At the same time the EU is ready to offer financial help to fight the fires.
3. Putting a stop to trade wars. Trade deals and the reform of WTO are better than trade wars. Trade wars will lead to recession, while trade deals will boost the economy, not to mention the fact that trade wars among G7 members will lead to eroding the already weakened trust among us.
4. The threat of nuclear proliferation. The rejection of the nuclear deal with Iran by the US hasn't brought about any positive results, and the divisions in the Western world when it comes to this issue, play into the hands of the Iranian Ayatollahs, as well as Russia and China. G7 leaders should make one more effort to find common language on this.
5. Russia's policy towards its neighbours, especially its aggression against Ukraine. One year ago, in Canada, President Trump suggested reinviting Russia

to G7, stating openly that Crimea's annexation by Russia was partially justified. And that we should accept this fact. Under no condition can we agree with this logic. When it comes to speculations around inviting Russia to the table I would like to say this. First: the reasons why Russia was disinvited in 2014, are still valid. What is more, there are new reasons, such as the Russian provocation on the Azov Sea. Second: when Russia was invited to G7 for the first time, it was believed that it would pursue the path of liberal democracy, rule of law, and human rights. Is there anyone among us, who can say with full conviction, not out of business calculation, that Russia is on that path? Today I will try to convince my interlocutors that it would be better to invite Ukraine, as a guest of course, to the next G7 meeting, to hear the opinion of the new President. I talked with him about it two days ago, and I know he would be very interested.

Let me also say that the EU has concrete proposals for Africa. We are keeping our longstanding commitment to the Global Fund against AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and we will contribute 550 million euros to the replenishment of the Fund. This means that our overall involvement will exceed 1 billion euros.

I am also happy to announce that the EU will join the "Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa", which is an important step in the fight for women's empowerment. The EU's contribution of over 85 million euros will help develop 100.000 businesses run by women. Last but not least, the EU will contribute an initial 1 million euros to the "International Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence" that Nadia Murad and Doctor Denis Mukwege, winners of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize, will present to G7 leaders tomorrow.

Also tomorrow, on the margins of the summit, I will have a meeting with Prime Minister Boris Johnson. He will be the third, British Conservative, Prime Minister, with whom I will discuss Brexit. The EU was always open to cooperation, when David Cameron wanted to avoid Brexit, when Theresa May wanted to avoid a no-deal Brexit, and we will also be ready now to hold serious talks with PM Johnson. The one thing I will not cooperate on is no deal. And I still hope that PM Johnson will not like to go down in history as Mr No Deal. We are willing to listen to ideas that are operational, realistic, and acceptable to all Member States including Ireland, if and when the UK government is ready to put them on the table.

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