



European Council
The President

Brussels, 15 October 2018

Dear colleagues,

We will meet later this week to discuss European and global challenges, first among ourselves and then with our partners from across Asia.

The European Council will start on Wednesday evening with a debate on Brexit. I have invited Prime Minister May to address the EU27, giving the UK Government's assessment of the negotiations. Later at 27, we will decide on how to take the negotiations forward, on the basis of a recommendation by our chief negotiator, Michel Barnier. As you remember from Salzburg, we wished for maximum progress and results that would lead to a deal in October. As things stand today, it has proven to be more complicated than some may have expected. We should nevertheless remain hopeful and determined, as there is good will to continue these talks on both sides. But at the same time, responsible as we are, we must prepare the EU for a no-deal scenario, which is more likely than ever before. Like the UK, the Commission has started such preparations, and will give us an update during the meeting. But let me be absolutely clear. The fact that we are preparing for a no-deal scenario must not, under any circumstances, lead us away from making every effort to reach the best agreement possible, for all sides. This is what our state of mind should be at this stage. As someone rightly said: 'It always seems impossible until it's done.' Let us not give up.

We will reconvene at 28 on Thursday morning for the regular European Council. After our usual exchange with the President of the European Parliament, Chancellor Kurz will debrief us on progress in implementing our previous conclusions, including on migration. We will then have a debate and adopt conclusions on migration, internal security and external relations. Our aim is to send a strong message about fighting smuggling networks, protecting our external borders and building our cooperation with countries of origin and transit. On the internal security front, we need to strengthen our resilience and our resolve, especially when it comes to cybersecurity. The latest cyber-attack against the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague demonstrated that we are facing evolving threats. We should also address our new partnership with Africa and the upcoming summit with the League of Arab States, as well as other global issues, in particular the fight against climate change ahead of COP 24 in Katowice.

Later, the Euro Summit will meet informally over lunch in an inclusive format of 27 to discuss the EMU reform state of play. Eurogroup President Centeno will update us on the ministers' work on the reform, while European Central Bank President Draghi will give us his assessment of the situation. In the current global environment, we need to focus especially on strengthening Europe's resilience also on the economic front. We need to make sure that there is a good progress in the EMU reform by the end of the year.

Before concluding, let me recall that the European Council will be followed by the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), hosted this year by the EU. Together with 21 Asian countries, the 28 Member States, along with Norway and Switzerland, will focus on how to make connectivity sustainable and how we can fortify the rules-based international order. The ASEM starts on Thursday evening and finishes on Friday afternoon. After that meeting, the EU will hold a Summit with the Republic of Korea, followed by the EU-ASEAN Leaders' Meeting.

Yours sincerely,



D. TUSK