

## **Press statement by President Donald Tusk at the press conference before the G7 summit in Schloss Elmau, Germany**

Good morning, Grüss Gott. I am happy to be here in the Bavarian Alps for the G7 summit. Especially because it is my very first one. Still I remember well that every G summit (G7, G8, G20) causes emotions and opposition. The current demonstrations are proof of it. Freedom and pluralism matter as much to those who demonstrate as to us. I believe that G7 is the best guarantee, that the countries from the G7 group are the best guarantee, that those values, freedom and pluralism, have survived and will survive. We do not need to apologise for our meeting, it is only because of the G7 countries that people can demonstrate, can think what they want, can say what they want and even look like they want. I am sorry for this maybe too trivial truth, but from time to time it is important that someone says it so openly.

All of us would prefer to have Russia around the table in the G8 format. That is why Russia was invited in the 90ies. But our Group is not only a political and economic group of interests, but first of all this is a community of values. And that is why Russia is not among us here today and will not be invited as long as it behaves aggressively against Ukraine and other countries. This evening, we will discuss our policies towards Ukraine and Russia in light of the recent surge in fighting and killing in eastern Ukraine, the most severe disruption of the Minsk agreements since February. I want to underline that already in March the European Council took a political decision of linking our sanctions regime on Russia with the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements. My intention is that today we re-confirm the G7 unity on the sanctions policy. So let me state clearly, given the current situation, if anyone wants to start a debate about changing the sanctions regime, the discussion could only be about strengthening it. The European Union, as the entire G7, continues to stand firm in support of Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence.

Foreign policy issues will also include discussions on Syria, Iraq, Iran and Libya. Discussions on Friday in the sanctions committee of the UN Security Council is another proof that the formation of a government of national unity in Libya will not be easy.

We will also discuss cross-cutting challenges such as terrorism and migration. Tomorrow, we will discuss counter-terrorism during our outreach session in the company of the leaders of Ethiopia, Iraq, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia. We want to listen, not to lecture. Foreign fighters now pose a greater threat to international security than ever. We will exchange experiences with the leaders around the table given how important it is for the European Union to work with the countries most affected by this issue. As with our forthcoming Valetta summit with African countries on migration, it is hugely important for the European Union to establish a working dialogue with the countries most affected.

Beyond that, we as Europeans will aim for a united G7 approach in climate talks. Climate change is our shared challenge. In view of the Paris COP21 in December, we will use this summit to encourage our G7 partners to be ambitious. Europe cannot solve this problem alone. G7 needs to become united, also on this. The fight against climate change is a global fight and goes way beyond Europe and even the G7. If we are not united in the G7, how can we convince others?

Finally, I am really satisfied that some leaders want to use the summit to discuss corruption, including the recent FIFA scandal. We do not need empty declarations against corruption but we have to be ready to fight against those who were corrupted and those who corrupt. We need to fight corruption in its all dimensions, no matter how powerful the actors of these disgraceful practices are. Thank you. With this I pass the ball over to you, Jean-Claude.

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