

## Final remarks by President Donald Tusk to the European Parliament plenary session

Thank you for this good and lively debate. I have just a few comments.

First on **CETA**. Many in this house have suggested that we should simply ignore the views of the national parliaments on trade agreements. The debate in Belgium and Wallonia's resistance do not result from the belief that the competences of EU institutions regarding trade policy are too limited. Today, people would prefer the states and national parliaments to have a bigger influence on the course of things, not smaller. If it is even easier to govern Europe, thanks to this. Of course it is not. But no-one will change the fact that EU is still the Union of States and not institutions.

Just one remark, the fears and concerns for example on private arbitration, must be addressed and they are being addressed and explained only now. I trust that after today's talks in Belgium, the climate around CETA, and maybe around future free trade agreements, will change for the better.

When it comes to **Russia**, I would like to say two things. First, we must keep unity in our relations with Russia. The building of EU unity is a difficult process, if not to say, unaesthetic. But there is no alternative. If we want to be effective with Russia, we must stay united as the EU. Second - at the European Council - I backed those who were pushing for a stronger position on Russia's role in **Syria**. The [letter](#) written by Guy Verhofstadt, Manfred Weber and Rebecca Harms was a real support for me. Thank you for your initiative.

I want to say to those in this room, who were the harshest critics of the European Council for not taking a sufficiently univocal position, that they can help, by doing the work, both in their political families and in Member States.

When it comes to **migration**, just one remark, I am absolutely aware that the situation in Greece remains critical. It is too early to talk about success, it is clear. But please, just imagine what the situation on the Greek islands would look like without the decrease in the number of irregular migrants by 98% - not 9%, not 8% but 98% - which we managed to achieve. This is the beginning of the process and it is also the same approach we have to use for the Central Mediterranean route. This is why I started to discuss the positive aspects of our activity. Thank you.

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