

PRESS RELEASE

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Invitation letter by President Donald Tusk to the members of the European Council

We will meet on Thursday to discuss defence policy, migration as well as economic issues. This time, as agreed, we will start with the traditional exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament at 12.30.

We will then continue over lunch. Prime Minister Fico will update us on the progress in implementing the previous European Council conclusions. We will then turn to migration, where we have made important steps forward, not least on our external borders, but there is still work to be done. We will review the progress on the internal and external strands, including the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement and the Partnership Framework, as well as on financial mechanisms to support origin, transit and host countries. Thereafter, we will discuss external affairs: a draft decision on the Association Agreement with Ukraine, so as to open the way for the ratification of the agreement; President Hollande and Chancellor Merkel will present the state of play as regards the implementation of the Minsk Agreements and the situation in Syria. Finally, President Anastasiades will inform us about the Cyprus settlement negotiations.

The afternoon working session will start with defence policy, for which Europeans must take greater responsibility. Our aim is clear: to strengthen Europe's security in a challenging geopolitical environment, and to better protect our citizens. We need to give a strong, political impetus on key issues, in order to invest more and cooperate better amongst ourselves and with our partners. The onus lies with Member States, but the EU can and will support their efforts. NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg will join us at the beginning of this session to exchange views on EU-NATO cooperation.

After the adoption of the conclusions on security and defence, we will turn to economic and social issues. We will review the proposed extension of the Investment Plan for Europe and the recent initiatives dedicated to youth, including on mobility, education and skills development. I have also asked the President of the European Central Bank to deliver a brief intervention and give us his views on the economic recovery and outlook. We should conclude our proceedings before dinner.

After the conclusion of the European Council, there will be an informal meeting over dinner of the EU27 leaders to discuss Brexit. The purpose is to agree on our internal organisation and procedures, and thus ensure that we are ready for the Brexit talks. I look forward to seeing you in Brussels.

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