

VERKLARING EN OPMERKINGEN

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Statement by President Donald Tusk on the draft guidelines for the second phase of the Brexit negotiations

This morning, I received the confirmation from our negotiators that sufficient progress has been made. This allows me to present the draft guidelines for the December European Council, which I have just sent to the leaders. My proposals are the following.

First, we should start negotiating the transition period, so that people and businesses have clarity about their situation. As you know, the UK has asked for a transition of about two years, while remaining part of the Single Market and Customs Union. And we will be ready to discuss this, but naturally, we have our conditions. I propose that during this period, the UK will respect:

- the whole of EU law, including new law;
- it will respect budgetary commitments;
- it will respect judicial oversight;
- and of course, all the related obligations.

Clearly, within the transition period following the UK's withdrawal, EU decision-making will continue among the 27 member states, without the UK.

All of what I have said seems to be the only reasonable solution, and it is in the interest of all our citizens that it is agreed as soon as possible. This is why I will ask the EU leaders to mandate our negotiator to start these talks immediately.

Second, we want to begin discussions with the UK in order to explore the British vision of its future relationship with the EU. So far, we have heard a number of various ideas. We need more clarity on how the UK sees our future relations, after it has left the Single Market and Customs Union. I therefore propose to mandate our negotiator to start exploratory talks with our British friends about this problem. On our side, we are ready to start preparing a close EU-UK partnership in trade, but also in the fight against terrorism and international crime as well as security, defence and foreign policy. For this to happen, the European Council will have to adopt additional guidelines next year.

While being satisfied with today's agreement, which is obviously the personal success of Prime Minister Theresa May, let us remember that the most difficult challenge is still ahead. We all know that breaking up is hard. But breaking up and building a new relationship is much harder. Since the Brexit referendum, a year and a half has passed. So much time has been devoted to the easier part of the task. And now, to negotiate a transition arrangement and the framework for our future relationship, we have *de facto* less than a year. Thank you

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