

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

Our meetings in September and October set orientations in developing a comprehensive European response to the migration crisis and led to some positive results. The fact that thanks to European contributions the World Food Programme has been able to increase its assistance to refugees in the region gives hope to those most affected. However, the situation is still very serious, both in the region and in Europe. The migratory flow continues at an unprecedented pace. In October we experienced a record level of 218,000 refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean.

Faced with such a migratory wave, some EU states have been introducing different measures at internal Schengen borders. As I have warned before, the only way not to dismantle Schengen is to ensure proper management of EU external borders. We must do all we can to keep Schengen intact and so any initiative that may lead to the re-establishment of borders within Schengen should be withheld. If we are to avoid the worst we must speed up our actions. This is why I have decided to call an informal meeting of EU Heads of State or Government, to be held just after the Valletta Summit, on 12 November at 14.30.

The purpose of this meeting will primarily be to assess the state of implementation of the measures we have decided so far, notably as regards:

1. Stepping up our cooperation with third countries, including Turkey, in order to stem the flows;
2. Implementing the decisions we have taken on relocation;
3. Setting up hotspots in Greece and Italy, as well as reinforcing reception capacities and providing FRONTEX and EASO with the required additional expertise;
4. Finally, we should discuss how to effectively reinforce the control of our external borders.

Given the speed at which events are developing, it is essential for all of us to have up-to-date information. I therefore welcome the initiatives taken by the Luxembourg Presidency to activate the EU's Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements and to convene an extraordinary Justice and Home Affairs Council on 9 November, which should usefully inform our discussions in Valletta.

While we will come back to the issue of migration at our regular meeting in December, I do not exclude that we would need to set further orientations already in Valletta. I will keep you informed in the run-up to our meeting.