

Remarks by President Donald Tusk before the G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany

One of the topics of the G20, as you know, is migration. Europe has been struggling with the unprecedented wave of illegal migration for two years now. We have managed to overcome to a great degree the crisis on the East Mediterranean route. We have worked out an agreement with Turkey and strengthened our cooperation with the Balkan states. The result is the decrease in the number of irregular migrants from 158 thousand in the first half of 2016, to 9 thousand in the first half of 2017. However, the situation on the Central Mediterranean route, that is from Libya to Italy, still remains critical. In order to address it, we need solidarity and cooperation of the international community. Today it is Italy in particular, that needs this solidarity. Our objective should be to effectively stop this wave at its source, namely in North Africa. This is the main task for the EU. In this respect, Italy can count on Europe's help in every dimension. But this cannot mean a wider opening of Europe's door towards illegal migration. That is why, here at the G20, I will call on all the leaders to be ruthless in the fight against smugglers.

We are engaged in this not just because of the migration pressure on Europe, but as it is a real humanitarian issue. Migrant smuggling is an organised business. Last year it generated 1.6 billion dollars in Libya alone. These profits allow the smugglers to control some parts of the country. They also cooperate with terrorists and further undermine the stabilisation of Libya. But above anything else, innocent lives are lost. So far this year more than 2,000 people have died at sea. And the number of people dying in the desert is even higher.

We need more efforts at the international level to break the smugglers' business model. This is why I will propose to all the G20 leaders to pursue targeted UN sanctions against smugglers. By this I mean assets freezes and travel bans. It is the very minimum that can be done at the global level. Unfortunately I have to say that today we do not have the full support even for this minimum. If we do not get it, it will be a sad proof of the hypocrisy of some of the G20 members. But I still hope we will succeed. Thank you.