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The President

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**Press statement following the meeting
of the President of the European Council Donald Tusk
with the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani
and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah**

Today I met President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. I used the meeting to reiterate the European Union's continued support to Afghanistan's transition and to the new Afghan leadership. Afghanistan receives the most development cooperation from the EU of any country in the world. I stressed that the EU is committed for a long term to Afghanistan's security and economic development as well as to the rule of law.

We discussed the ambitious reform agenda that President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah will present tomorrow in London. I am encouraged by steps already taken by the new administration and their strong ownership of the reforms. We discussed the importance of electoral reform, of combatting corruption, of strengthening the rule of law and of human rights, in particular the rights of women and girls.

We agreed that it is vital to maintain the momentum. The early establishment of the Government of National Unity offers a unique opportunity to bring about change in the country tested for so long by conflicts and violence. Political and economic reforms create the opening for a peace process in the longer term.

We also touched upon the need to engage all regional actors in Afghanistan's journey of political change, reconciliation and economic cooperation.

President Ghani invited me to Afghanistan, which I gladly accepted.
