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Excellent and impressive leadership shown by the Prime Minister as a part of the EU Presidency

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In his concluding remarks at the June European Council, the last summit held during the Maltese Presidency, the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk expressed his appreciation for the efficiency shown by Joseph Muscat at the helm of the EU Presidency during these past six months.

"This is not a typical slogan or customary words. Believe me, this has been one of the best experiences in my professional life", said the President of the European Council. Donald Tusk referred to the preparation carried out for the Brexit negotiations, the end of roaming charges, and the work undertaken in the fields of migration and internal security as some of the Maltese Presidency's achievements. "You deserve all the praise you are receiving", Tusk told the Prime Minister.

The President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker also congratulated the Prime Minister for the manner he conducted the first Maltese Presidency in history. "It was impressive. Excellent work was done. We are grateful for the work you completed for the European project", said Juncker.

The Prime Minister mentioned the excellent collaboration that existed between the EU institutions during the past six months as essential for the achieved results. These range from the end of roaming charges, to internet access in consumer homes, and from the directives against tax evasion to the advancements on the Istanbul Convention against gender discrimination.

On migration, Dr Muscat said that despite the disappointment that not all member state were living up to their expectations, considerable progress had been made. Following the Malta Declaration, 130 libyan coastal officers were trained and an other 291 will embark on this training programme. 4 boats under Italian command were transferred to the Libyan authorities to provide assistance on seafaring missions. Conditions improved in 4 detention centres and the International Organisation for Migration helped 5000 people to travel from Libya to their country of origin, on a voluntary basis.

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President Donald Tusk confirmed that important steps forward were being made and said that it is crucial for European leaders to keep taking more decisions to put an end to this tragic situation. Jean-Claude Juncker claimed that the commitment taken by the European states should be respected as a whole and that not implementing what they had promised was unacceptable.

Another theme of discussion was Brexit, on which there is a convergence for the fair treatment of all citizens, and the procedure to be used for the relocation of European agencies from the UK.

This European Council meeting also had positive news on economic growth, that started to gain ground in Europe and that should lead to more investment and less unemployment. It was stated that the results achieved in the last months in job creation had not been seen in a long time. The European Union must keep conveying the message that it is open for business while being committed to protect all of its citizens from unfair business.



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