EU'S TUSK, UK'S MAY TO TALK BREXIT NEXT TUESDAY

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EU's Tusk, UK's May to talk Brexit next Tuesday

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - European Council President Donald Tusk said he would meet with British Prime Minister Theresa May in London next Tuesday to discuss Brexit, days after she is due to make a keynote speech on her vision for future ties with the EU.

He made the comment in a tweet after meeting May at the United Nations General Assembly.

The London meeting between the pair will come at a sensitive time - just after her speech in Florence on Friday and before an EU heads of state dinner on Sept. 28 in Tallinn, Estonia.

The Financial Times said Mays top EU adviser has told his counterparts in several European that she would in Florence offer to fill a post-Brexit EU budget hole of at least 20 billion euros.

The newspaper cited officials briefed on the discussions.

Senior EU officials have given talk of such offers short shrift. They have dismissed suggestions floated in British media that an offer of up to 30 billion euros payable during a transition period after Brexit would be acceptable to Brussels.

It could not be, they have said, an alternative to the 60 billion or so that the EU executive has estimated may be payable before Brexit in March 2019.

Brussels negotiators acknowledge privately that it may help the British government sell its settlement to domestic voters if London can meld the exit payments with transition payments to reduce the headline divorce bill.

EU officials told Reuters there would be no discussion of Brexit at the Tallinn dinner but that May might take the opportunity to brief the blocs other 27 leaders on her position.

Talks on Brexit have made little progress and deepened rifts in Mays party, setting up the Florence speech as a chance to put negotiations back on track and reassert her authority.

While Tusk is coordinating the 27 EU leaders on Brexit, only Michel Barnier is negotiating with the British and they have made clear to London that he is the only point of contact for Brexit talks.

Barniers negotiating directives have frustrated his British counterparts, who want to move the talks from divorce issues such as the EU departure bill and Irish border to future relations.

Barnier first wants to see progress on the terms of Britains exit.

Reporting by Julia Fioretti and Alastair Macdonald; Editing by John Stonestreet

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Kaynak/Source: