

[Brexit: European Commission publishes draft Article 50 Withdrawal Agreement](#)

The [draft Withdrawal Agreement](#) translates into legal terms the [Joint Report from the negotiators of the European Union and the United Kingdom Government](#) on the progress achieved during phase 1 of the negotiations, published on 8 December 2017, and proposes text for those outstanding withdrawal issues which are mentioned in, but not set out in detail, in the Joint Report. It also integrates the text on the transition period, based on the supplementary [negotiating directives](#) adopted by the Council (Article 50) on 29 January 2018.

The draft Withdrawal Agreement consists of six parts – including introductory provisions, citizens’ rights, other separation issues such as goods placed on the market before the withdrawal date, the financial settlement, transitional arrangements, and institutional provisions – and a protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland. This protocol operationalises the third option outlined in the Joint Report, in order to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland. This is the fall-back solution of the Joint Report, which applies in the absence of other agreed solutions. This draft protocol does not prejudice discussions on the other two options.

The draft Withdrawal Agreement is published online in accordance with the Commission’s transparency policy. The Commission has presented the draft Withdrawal Agreement now to first allow for time for consultation with the Member States and the European Parliament and, subsequently, for negotiation with the United Kingdom. Given that the Withdrawal Agreement needs to be agreed and ratified before the withdrawal of the United Kingdom, it is important to leave sufficient time for negotiation.

Next steps

The draft Withdrawal Agreement will now be sent to the Council (Article 50) and the European Parliament’s Brexit Steering Group for discussion, before being transmitted to the United Kingdom for negotiation.

The European Council (Article 50) has called on the United Kingdom to provide further clarity on its position on the framework for the future relationship, with a view to its meeting on 22 and 23 March, where it is expected to adopt additional guidelines.

The overall Article 50 Withdrawal Agreement will need to be concluded by the Council (Article 50), the European Parliament, and the United Kingdom according to its own constitutional requirements.

The United Kingdom will leave the European Union on 30 March 2019.

Background

On 15 December 2017, the [European Council \(Article 50\)](#) welcomed the progress

achieved during the first phase of negotiations as reflected in the Commission's Communication and the Joint Report of 8 December 2017.

It called on the Commission as Union negotiator and the United Kingdom to complete the work on all withdrawal issues, including those not yet addressed in the first phase, to consolidate the results obtained, and to start drafting the relevant parts of the Withdrawal Agreement. It stressed that negotiations in the second phase can only progress as long as all commitments undertaken during the first phase are respected in full and translated faithfully into legal terms as quickly as possible.

[The European Council \(Article 50\) guidelines of 29 April 2017](#) as well as the general principles and the procedural arrangements for the conduct of the negotiations established in the Council negotiating directives of 22 May 2017 continue to apply in their entirety to this phase of the negotiations.

For More Information

[Text of the draft Withdrawal Agreement](#)

[Memo](#)

[EU negotiating documents and position papers](#)