

Brexit: European Commission recommends sufficient progress to the European Council (Article 50)

It is now for the European Council (Article 50) on 15 December 2017 to decide if sufficient progress has been made, allowing the negotiations to proceed to their second phase.

The Commission's assessment is based on a Joint Report agreed by the negotiators of the Commission and the United Kingdom Government, which was today endorsed by Prime Minister Theresa **May** during a meeting with President Jean-Claude **Juncker**.

The Commission is satisfied that sufficient progress has been achieved in each of the three priority areas of citizens' rights, the dialogue on Ireland / Northern Ireland, and the financial settlement, as set out in the [European Council Guidelines of 29 April 2017](#). The Commission's negotiator has ensured that the life choices made by EU citizens living in the United Kingdom will be protected. The rights of EU citizens living in the United Kingdom and United Kingdom citizens in the EU27 will remain the same after the United Kingdom has left the EU. The Commission has also made sure that any administrative procedures will be cheap and simple for EU citizens in the United Kingdom.

As regards the financial settlement, the United Kingdom has agreed that commitments taken by the EU28 will be honoured by the EU28, including the United Kingdom.

With regard to the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom acknowledges the unique situation on the island of Ireland and has made significant commitments to avoid a hard border.

Full details of the Commission's assessment are available in the [Commission's Communication on the State of Progress of the Negotiations with the United Kingdom](#).

Jean-Claude **Juncker**, the President of the European Commission, said: *"This is a difficult negotiation but we have now made a first breakthrough. I am satisfied with the fair deal we have reached with the United Kingdom. If the 27 Member States agree with our assessment, the European Commission and our Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier stand ready to begin work on the second phase of the negotiations immediately. I will continue to keep the European Parliament very closely involved throughout the process, as the European Parliament will have to ratify the final Withdrawal Agreement."*

Michel Barnier, the European Commission's Chief Negotiator, said: *"The Commission's assessment is based on the real, genuine progress made in each of our three priority areas. By agreeing on these issues, and settling the*

past, we can now move forward and discuss our future relationship on the basis of trust and confidence.”

Next Steps: If the European Council (Article 50) considers that sufficient progress has been made, the negotiators of the European Commission and of the United Kingdom Government will begin drafting a Withdrawal Agreement based on Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union on the basis of the Joint Report and the outcome of the negotiations on other withdrawal issues. In line with the Guidelines of 29 April 2017, and once the Member States agree with the Commission’s assessment, the Commission stands ready to begin work immediately on any possible transitional arrangements and to start exploratory discussions on the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom.

Background

On 29 March 2017, the United Kingdom notified the European Council of its intention to withdraw from the European Union in accordance with Article 50 TEU. On 29 April 2017, the European Council (Article 50) adopted a set of [political Guidelines](#). On 22 May 2017, the General Affairs Council (Article 50) authorised the European Commission to open negotiations with the United Kingdom and adopted directives for the negotiation ([the negotiating directives](#)).

Negotiations should be completed by autumn 2018 to allow good time for the Withdrawal Agreement to be concluded by the Council after obtaining consent of the European Parliament, and to be approved by the United Kingdom in accordance with its own procedures before 29 March 2019.

For More Information

[Communication from the Commission to the European Council \(Article 50\)](#)

[Joint Report from the Negotiators of the European Union and the United Kingdom Government](#)

[Joint EU/United Kingdom Technical Table on Citizens’ Rights](#)

[European Council Guidelines, 29 April 2017](#)

[Council negotiating directives, 22 May 2017](#)

[European Council conclusions, 20 October 2017](#)

For more information, please see our [webpage](#).