

Press release – MEPs welcome unity on Brexit and call for reform of the EU

MEPs welcomed the unity of the 27 Member States and the EU institutions with regard to Brexit and also called for a reform of the EU to benefit all its citizens.

The President of the European Council Donald Tusk presented to MEPs the [Guidelines for Brexit negotiations](#) agreed by the Member States at the summit on 29 April. He welcomed the alignment with the '[red lines](#)' set by the European Parliament. The detailed negotiating mandate will be presented for adoption at a European Council summit on 22nd May, pointed out the President of the Commission Jean-Claude Juncker.

In line with negotiator Michel Barnier, most MEPs emphasised the unity between the EU institutions and the 27 Member States, who are determined to act together to reach a balanced agreement with the United Kingdom.

The debate focussed on the basis for future negotiations, as recalled by Michel Barnier:

- no negotiations on the future relationship between the EU and the United Kingdom can take place before “tangible progress” is made,
- guaranteeing the rights of European citizens affected by the UK’s decision to leave the EU,
- the Northern Ireland peace process must be upheld (including the absence of physical border between Ireland and Northern Ireland),
- the United Kingdom must respect all the financial commitments made as a Member State.

Michel Barnier stressed the need for transparent negotiations, which will begin after the UK national election on 8 June.

MEPs underlined the importance of unity and trust so that, in parallel to negotiations being carried out for an ‘orderly withdrawal’ of the UK, the reform of the Union can take place to rapidly respond to citizens’ concerns and make the benefits of European integration much more visible.

The vote in the UK for Brexit and the rise in populism in some countries, in particular in France and the Netherlands, should be a lesson to European leaders, said many MEPs. Whilst the victories of pro-European parties was welcomed, several MEPs urged not to pat ourselves too much on the back;

“populism and nationalism are not dead”. More than ever, it is vital to listen to citizens and respond to their expectations in defining the future of the EU: social and environmental norms in a globalised world, organisation of the job market in the face of technological challenges, taxation and the security of European citizens must all be taken into account, said MEPs.

Replay links:

[Donald TUSK](#), for the Council

[Jean-Claude JUNCKER](#), for the Commission

[Manfred WEBER](#) (EPP, DE)

[Roberto GUALTIERI](#) (S&D, IT)

[Raffaele FITTO](#) (ECR, IT)

[Guy VERHOFSTADT](#) (ALDE, BE)

[Gabriele ZIMMER](#) (GUE/NGL, DE)

[Philippe LAMBERTS](#) (Greens/EFA, BE)

[Nigel FARAGE](#) (EFDD, UK)

[Marcel de GRAAFF](#) (ENF, NL)

Closing statements:

[Michel BARNIER](#) (part 1)

[Michel BARNIER](#) (part 2)

[Donald TUSK](#)

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