

Press release – Sassoli: Deal on EU-UK future relations brings clarity for EU citizens and workers



“I welcome the fact that a deal has been reached today on the future relationship between the EU and UK which the Parliament will now scrutinise in detail. The Parliament thanks and congratulates the EU and UK negotiators for their intense efforts to reach, albeit at the last minute, this historic agreement. Although I still deeply regret the UK’s decision to leave the EU, I have always believed that a negotiated settlement is in the best interests of both sides. This deal can now form the basis for us to build a new partnership.

“In just a few days, EU law will no longer apply in the UK. The UK government was clear that it wants to leave the Single Market, Customs Union, and end free movement. Decisions have consequences – travel and trade between the EU and UK will not be as frictionless as before. It was also the choice of the UK government not to allow for a smoother transition by an extension of the deadline to reach an agreement.

“The Parliament welcomes the intense dialogue and unprecedented exchanges and unity between the EU institutions throughout the process. However, Parliament regrets that the duration of the negotiations and the last-minute nature of the agreement do not allow for proper parliamentary scrutiny before the end of the year. The Parliament is now ready to react responsibly to minimise disruption to citizens and businesses and prevent the chaos and negative consequences of a no-deal scenario. The Parliament will continue its work in the responsible committees and the full plenary before deciding whether to give consent in the new year.

“Parliament has been clear from the outset on our red lines and we have

worked closely throughout the negotiations with the EU's chief negotiator, Mr Michel Barnier, who had our full support. Parliament has consistently advocated for a fair and comprehensive agreement and we are confident that our priorities are reflected in this final deal. If the European Parliament decides to approve the agreement, it will monitor closely how it is implemented.

"We would like to thank Vice President Maroš Šefčovič for his work to ensure that the Withdrawal Agreement is fully and faithfully upheld. For Parliament, protecting citizens' rights and avoiding a return to a hard border on the island of Ireland have always been the priority.

"Regardless of Brexit, the EU and the UK continue to share common values and interests. We are both Unions built on democracy and respect for the rule of law and we face many common challenges – from climate change to terrorism. This agreement is a starting point on which to build our new partnership," concluded President Sassoli.

David McAllister (EPP, DE), the head of the UK Coordination Group and Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs added: "I would like to thank Michel Barnier for his patient and tireless work. This is the end of a long and difficult process four years after the British referendum. Many things will change for the UK, since it will no longer participate in our Single Market and Customs Union. The EU has achieved its main objective, namely to preserve our unique model of integration and stability as well as to protect the long-term interests of EU citizens and businesses."