

Press release: Secretary of State to meet Michel Barnier in Brussels

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is in Brussels today to meet Michel Barnier, the European Union's Chief Negotiator. During her visit, she will reinforce her commitment to upholding Northern Ireland's interests as the UK prepares to leave the EU, and to help secure a deal that works for the entire United Kingdom.

The Secretary of State will also use the opportunity to update MEPs on efforts to restore devolved Government in Northern Ireland; and to set out the Government's steadfast commitment to avoiding a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, while maintaining the constitutional and economic integrity of the United Kingdom.

Speaking ahead of her visit, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP said:

My visit to Brussels today comes as we look ahead to this week's June European Council.

I am here to reiterate the UK Government's commitment to securing a deal that delivers for all parts of the United Kingdom.

This includes the Government's commitment to avoiding a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, and maintaining the constitutional and economic integrity of the UK as a whole.

We are confident that we will secure a good deal for the whole of the UK, and we are working towards finalising this with the EU in the autumn.

As we do, we will ensure that our departure from the EU does not do anything to set back the historic progress we have made in Northern Ireland over the past 20 years, and that the Belfast Agreement is protected in all its parts as set out in the December Joint Report. This is the message I will be reinforcing during my meetings today.