

Speech: PM statement at the European Council: 11 April 2019

I have just met with Donald Tusk, the President of the European Council, where I agreed an extension to the Brexit process to the end of October at the latest.

I continue to believe we need to leave the EU, with a deal, as soon as possible.

And vitally, the EU have agreed that the extension can be terminated when the Withdrawal Agreement has been ratified – which was my key request of my fellow leaders.

For example, this means that, if we are able to pass a deal in the first three weeks of May, we will not have to take part in European Elections and will officially leave the EU on Saturday, 1st June.

During the course of the extension, the European Council is clear that the UK will continue to hold full membership rights, as well as its obligations.

As I said in the room tonight, there is only a single tier of EU membership, with no conditionality attached beyond existing treaty obligations.

Let me conclude by saying this.

I know that there is huge frustration from many people that I had to request this extension.

The UK should have left the EU by now and I sincerely regret the fact that I have not yet been able to persuade Parliament to approve a deal which would allow the UK to leave in a smooth and orderly way.

But the choices we now face are stark and the timetable is clear.

So we must now press on at pace with our efforts to reach a consensus on a deal that is in the national interest.

Tomorrow I will be making a statement to the House of Commons.

Further talks will also take place between the Government and the Opposition to seek a way forward.

I do not pretend the next few weeks will be easy or that there is a simple way to break the deadlock in Parliament.

But we have a duty as politicians to find a way to fulfil the democratic decision of the Referendum, deliver Brexit and move our country forward.

Nothing is more pressing or more vital.