

Statement by Michel Barnier following his meeting with Dominic Raab, UK Secretary of State for Exiting the EU

Good afternoon.

Dominic and I focused on what needs to be done in our three work streams:

- a backstop solution for avoiding a hard border on the island of Ireland;
- the other outstanding issues of the Withdrawal Agreement, for instance the protection of existing Geographical Indications, amongst others;
- the political declaration on our future relationship.

Our teams will sit together again tomorrow, to try and make progress.

Last week, our teams already had a discussion on Ireland and Northern Ireland.

As you know, we need a legally operational backstop solution in the Withdrawal Agreement.

We must find pragmatic solutions, in line with the commitments made by Prime Minister May in December and March.

We must de-dramatise the issue, and spell out which controls are needed, where, and how they should be done.

Next time we meet, Dominic and I will take stock of this work.

The negotiations are now entering the final stage.

We have agreed that the EU and the UK will negotiate continuously from now on.

And Dominic and I will meet regularly to take stock and move the negotiations forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The principles of the EU in these negotiations are well-known and have been consistent for the last two years.

They have been defined by the EU leaders, with a great sense of responsibility for the European project and the integrity of the single market.

Also, the EU respects the choices made by the UK government.

We can find common ground based on the EU principles on the one hand and, on the other hand, the choices made by the UK.

As I said in July, we are more, far more advanced in defining that common ground for foreign policy and security than for the economic relationship.

Our challenge for the coming weeks is to try and define an ambitious partnership between the UK and the EU. A partnership that has no precedent.

This partnership has to respect the single market and the foundations of the European project.

If this is well understood, we can conclude the negotiations successfully.