

Statement by the European Commission following President Jean-Claude Juncker's phone call with Prime Minister Boris Johnson

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** spoke to Prime Minister Johnson on the phone this afternoon. The Prime Minister informed the President about the contents of the UK's latest proposal – which includes a legal text, explanatory note and letter from Prime Minister Johnson.

President **Juncker** welcomed Prime Minister Johnson's determination to advance the talks ahead of the October European Council and make progress towards a deal. He acknowledged the positive advances, notably with regards to the full regulatory alignment for all goods and the control of goods entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain. However, the President also noted that there are still some problematic points that will need further work in the coming days, notably with regards to the governance of the backstop. The delicate balance struck by the Good Friday Agreement must be preserved. Another concern that needs to be addressed are the substantive customs rules. He also stressed that we must have a legally operational solution that meets all the objectives of the backstop: preventing a hard border, preserving North-South cooperation and the all-island economy, and protecting the EU's Single Market and Ireland's place in it.

President **Juncker** confirmed to Prime Minister Johnson that the Commission will now examine the legal text objectively, and in light of our well-known criteria.

The EU wants a deal. We remain united and ready to work 24/7 to make this happen – as we have been for over three years now.

Next steps

Meetings between the EU and UK negotiation teams will take place in Brussels over the coming days.

In keeping with the EU's transparency policy, we will inform the European Parliament and the Council at every step of the way. The European Commission's Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier and his team will update the European Parliament and the Council this evening. President **Juncker** will also speak to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and will listen carefully to his views.