

Statement by the European Commission following President Jean-Claude Juncker's phone call with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** spoke to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar this afternoon, where they discussed the UK's latest Brexit proposals.

President **Juncker** confirmed that while the UK has made some progress, a number of problematic points remain in the proposal, on which further work is needed by the UK.

President **Juncker** emphasised that the governance of the backstop should be stable and predictable. He reiterated that the Withdrawal Agreement must have a legally operational solution now, and cannot be based on untried arrangements that would be left to negotiation during the transition period. Accepting such a proposal would not meet 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. For this reason, further discussions with the United Kingdom's negotiators are needed.

President **Juncker** reaffirmed his unwavering support for Ireland.

Both the President and the Taoiseach agreed that they would be in favour of the UK publishing the legal text of their proposal.