

Press release – European Parliament to scrutinise deal on future EU-UK relations



On Monday 28 December, the leaders of the political groups in the European Parliament and President David Sassoli exchanged views with Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and EU Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier on the deal reached on 24 December on the future relationship between the EU and the UK.

The Conference of Presidents reiterated Parliament's thanks and congratulations to the EU negotiators for their intense efforts to reach this historic agreement that can now form the basis of a new partnership.

In the spirit of unity that prevailed throughout the negotiation process, and given the particular, unique and specific circumstances, the Conference of Presidents accepts a provisional application to mitigate the disruption for citizens and businesses and prevent the chaos of a no-deal scenario. This decision on this specific provisional application neither constitutes a precedent nor reopens established commitments made among EU institutions. It should not serve as a blueprint for future consent procedures, underlined the political groups' leaders.

The Conference of Presidents also decided to examine with the Council presidency and the Commission a proposal to slightly extend the period of provisional application, allowing for a parliamentary ratification during the March plenary session.

The Committees on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, together with all associated committees, will now carefully examine the agreement and prepare Parliament's consent decision to be discussed and adopted in plenary in due time and before the end of the provisional application. In parallel, the

political groups will prepare a draft resolution accompanying the consent vote.

The political groups' leaders stressed Parliament's will to monitor closely the implementation of the EU-UK agreement in all its details. They underlined that parliamentary cooperation is a key part of the future treaty between the EU and the UK. When the right time comes, Parliament will seek to establish contact with the UK Parliament to cooperate.

On a specific note, leaders regret the UK's choice not to include Erasmus programme in the agreement.

[Ethiopia: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union](#)



The European Union is closely following the crisis in Ethiopia. The EU remains concerned by the humanitarian situation, as well as allegations of human rights violations and ethnic targeting. Ongoing reports of non-Ethiopian involvement raise additional worries.

The conflict and its regional impact are of growing concern for the international community. The EU commends Sudan, which has opened its borders to those fleeing this conflict.

It is of paramount importance that hostilities cease completely, that civilians are protected and that all parties to the conflict uphold international humanitarian law, including ensuring the safety of aid workers. Unimpeded humanitarian access to all people in need in all affected areas of the country must be guaranteed, to carry out needs assessments, deliver response and monitor aid in line with the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, and independence. The EU welcomes the recent steps taken to this end and urges the Ethiopian government to pursue its efforts. All refugees and displaced people within Tigray and beyond must be effectively protected, including preventing any act of forced and premature relocation or return. The EU welcomes work that has been initiated to restore telecommunication to some parts of Tigray. It is crucial that communication channels and media access are reinstated and guaranteed.

As a longstanding friend of Ethiopia, the EU is deeply concerned by recent reports, including from the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, on grave violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Furthermore, reports of ethnically targeted violence in Benishangul-Gumuz as

well as all other allegations of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law need to be impartially investigated and accountability ensured.

The EU encourages all parties to seize the opportunities offered, most recently by high-level envoys of the African Union and the IGAD Summit, to put an end to the conflict and to help establish a dialogue within Ethiopia to address issues of peace and coexistence through consultation and consensus. The European Union stands ready to support Ethiopia in these efforts.

[Press release – Sassoli: Deal on EU-UK future relations brings clarity for EU citizens and workers](#)



“I welcome the fact that a deal has been reached today on the future relationship between the EU and UK which the Parliament will now scrutinise in detail. The Parliament thanks and congratulates the EU and UK negotiators for their intense efforts to reach, albeit at the last minute, this historic agreement. Although I still deeply regret the UK’s decision to leave the EU, I have always believed that a negotiated settlement is in the best interests of both sides. This deal can now form the basis for us to build a new partnership.

“In just a few days, EU law will no longer apply in the UK. The UK government was clear that it wants to leave the Single Market, Customs Union, and end free movement. Decisions have consequences – travel and trade between the EU and UK will not be as frictionless as before. It was also the choice of the

UK government not to allow for a smoother transition by an extension of the deadline to reach an agreement.

“The Parliament welcomes the intense dialogue and unprecedented exchanges and unity between the EU institutions throughout the process. However, Parliament regrets that the duration of the negotiations and the last-minute nature of the agreement do not allow for proper parliamentary scrutiny before the end of the year. The Parliament is now ready to react responsibly to minimise disruption to citizens and businesses and prevent the chaos and negative consequences of a no-deal scenario. The Parliament will continue its work in the responsible committees and the full plenary before deciding whether to give consent in the new year.

“Parliament has been clear from the outset on our red lines and we have worked closely throughout the negotiations with the EU’s chief negotiator, Mr Michel Barnier, who had our full support. Parliament has consistently advocated for a fair and comprehensive agreement and we are confident that our priorities are reflected in this final deal. If the European Parliament decides to approve the agreement, it will monitor closely how it is implemented.

“We would like to thank Vice President Maroš Šefčovič for his work to ensure that the Withdrawal Agreement is fully and faithfully upheld. For Parliament, protecting citizens’ rights and avoiding a return to a hard border on the island of Ireland have always been the priority.

“Regardless of Brexit, the EU and the UK continue to share common values and interests. We are both Unions built on democracy and respect for the rule of law and we face many common challenges – from climate change to terrorism. This agreement is a starting point on which to build our new partnership,” concluded President Sassoli.

David McAllister (EPP, DE), the head of the UK Coordination Group and Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs added: “I would like to thank Michel Barnier for his patient and tireless work. This is the end of a long and difficult process four years after the British referendum. Many things will change for the UK, since it will no longer participate in our Single Market and Customs Union. The EU has achieved its main objective, namely to preserve our unique model of integration and stability as well as to protect the long-term interests of EU citizens and businesses.”

[Press release: European Council President Charles Michel on the](#)

agreement on the future EU-UK relationship



The announcement that the negotiators have reached an agreement is a major step forward to establish a close relationship between the EU and the UK.

We thank the President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen and Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier for their tireless efforts.

Charles Michel, President of the European Council:

“For our citizens and businesses a comprehensive agreement with our neighbour, friend and ally is the best outcome. Over the past years the EU has shown unity and determination in its negotiations with the UK. We will continue to uphold the same unity.”

“These have been very challenging negotiations but the process is not over. Now is the time for the Council and the European Parliament to analyse the agreement reached at negotiators’ level, before they give their green lights.”

Forward look: 24 December 2020 – 3 January 2021



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