

UK statement on the meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee: 9 June 2021

The Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee met in London today. Lord Frost and Vice-President Šefčovič commended the extensive technical discussions that have already taken place on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

The UK set out the extensive steps already taken to operate the Protocol, both by the UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive, and by businesses across the UK.

The UK made clear its continued commitment to constructive engagement in order to find pragmatic solutions that ensure the Protocol operates in a way that safeguards the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions, minimises its impact on the day-to-day lives of communities in Northern Ireland, and maintains the integrity of the EU's Single Market. The UK will continue to put forward detailed proposals, as we have throughout this year, and looks forward to discussing any proposals the EU may put forward.

There is an urgent need for further discussions in order to make real progress, particularly to avoid disruption to critical supplies such as medicines.

The UK's assessment of the state of play is as follows.

The UK is concerned that substantive progress has not yet been made in many areas, notably:

- SPS / veterinary arrangements. The UK has made a proposal which recognises the high standards of both Parties and establishes mechanisms to identify and address any risk arising from changes made on either side;
- Arrangements further to reduce and remove burdens for trusted agri-food traders moving goods for use or consumption in Northern Ireland, for example – enabling streamlined processes for highly trusted retailers with full traceability and auditability of supply chains. Here too the UK has made a proposal.
- Prohibition on imports to Northern Ireland of fresh minced meat or other SPS commodities such as seed potatoes;
- Pet travel from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. The UK sees no reason why Part 1 listing could not be granted by the EU, which would resolve the problems.
- The application of tariff rate quotas (TRQs) for goods entering Northern Ireland, including on steel. As a result of EU legislative changes last year, Northern Ireland traders are currently at a unique disadvantage;
- The criteria for the UK Trader Scheme (UKTS) and the application of the

concept of “goods not at risk”. Movements of goods sent from Great Britain to Northern Ireland in parcels In the following areas, whilst progress has not yet been made, the UK has been led to understand that further proposals will be received from the EU:

- The supply of medicines to Northern Ireland.
- Approval processes for high-risk plants intended for export to the EU to be moved into Northern Ireland;
- Livestock movements between Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

Finally, there has been some progress towards solutions on the following limited areas:

- Assistance dogs entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain;
- EU access to UK customs IT systems and databases – on which the UK has provided detailed plans for interim and long-term arrangements;
- Clarifying and refining the process for allocating “XI” Economic Operator Registration and Identification numbers (EORI) for those trading in Northern Ireland;
- Setting out the basis on which Northern Ireland businesses importing second-hand vehicles from Great Britain can benefit from a VAT margin scheme;
- Implementing a technical Interface between the UK and EU ECHO and TRACES systems.
- Implementation of the Export and Transit Trans-European Systems in Northern Ireland.

The UK will continue to work actively to find solutions. If solutions cannot be found, the Government will of course continue to consider all options available for safeguarding peace, prosperity and stability in Northern Ireland.

The Joint Committee also discussed the ongoing implementation of citizens’ rights for persons eligible under the Withdrawal Agreement. The UK set out the continued success of the UK’s EU Settlement Scheme, where over 5 million applications have been concluded, underlined its determination to respect EU citizens’ rights, and urged the EU and Member States to do likewise as regards UK citizens within the EU.