



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Joint Statement supplementing the Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Delegations¹ will find attached the abovementioned Joint Statement. This text has been agreed at negotiators' level, agreed between Prime Minister May and the President of the European Commission Juncker on 11 March 2019 in Strasbourg, and has been endorsed by the European Commission on the same day.

¹ Following a notification under Article 50 TEU, the member of the European Council or of the Council representing the withdrawing Member State shall not participate in the discussions of the European Council or Council or in decisions concerning it.

Joint Statement supplementing the Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

1. The European Union, hereafter referred to as “the Union”, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, hereafter referred to as “the United Kingdom”, have agreed a number of measures to enhance and expedite the process of negotiating and bringing into force their future relationship, supplementing those set out in the Political Declaration endorsed by the Union and the United Kingdom on 25 November 2018.
2. First, the Union and the United Kingdom wish to emphasise their shared and solemn regard for the vision for the future relationship detailed in the Political Declaration. In this context, and in line with Paragraph 1 of the Political Declaration, both the Union and the United Kingdom reiterate the clear and important link between the Withdrawal Agreement and the Political Declaration, which while being of a different nature are part of the same negotiated package. As stated in Article 184 of the Withdrawal Agreement and reflected also in Paragraph 138 of the Political Declaration, the Union and the United Kingdom have committed to use best endeavours, in good faith and in full respect of the respective legal orders, to take necessary steps to negotiate expeditiously the agreements governing their future relationship referred to in the Political Declaration. The Union underlined this relationship between them when it published the two texts side by side in its Official Journal on 19 February, and the Parliament of the United Kingdom must consider and approve both together.

3. Second, the Union and the United Kingdom have the shared ambition to have the future relationship in place by the end of the transition period. To this end, the Union and the United Kingdom have confirmed that immediately following the United Kingdom's withdrawal, they will take the steps necessary to begin formal negotiations. The Union and the United Kingdom have agreed that negotiations on the various strands of the future relationship will then proceed in parallel. Should national ratifications be pending at the end of the transition period, the European Commission has already made clear that it is ready to propose applying on a provisional basis relevant aspects of the future relationship, in line with the applicable legal frameworks and existing practice and the United Kingdom welcomes this intent.
4. Third, with a view to providing a sound foundation for the talks and building on the commitments already contained in the Political Declaration, the Union and the United Kingdom will expeditiously:
 - a) identify those areas which are likely to require the greatest consideration, and the associated technical and legal issues that will need to be addressed, in order that the necessary technical preparations can be made on both sides; and
 - b) draw up a full schedule for the negotiations, taking into account various internal processes, including the European Parliament elections and the appointment of a new Commission.
5. Fourth, and in the context of open and fair competition, the Union notes the United Kingdom's intention to ensure that its social and employment standards and its environmental standards do not regress from those in place at the end of the transition period, and to provide its Parliament the opportunity to consider future changes in Union law in these areas.

6. Fifth, given the Union's and the United Kingdom's firm commitment to work at speed on a subsequent agreement that establishes by 31 December 2020 alternative arrangements such that the backstop solution in the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland will not need to be applied, a specific negotiating track will be established at the outset and as part of the negotiations to lead the analysis and development of these alternative arrangements. This dedicated track will consider the use of all existing and emerging facilitative arrangements and technologies, with a view to assessing their potential to replace, in whole or in part, the backstop solution in the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. That assessment will include an evaluation of their practicability and deliverability in the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland. By virtue of being embedded in the overall negotiation structure, the negotiating track on alternative arrangements will be able to take account of progress made in the wider negotiations on the future relationship, in particular on goods regulations and customs. In addition, and in support of their work on alternative arrangements, both the Union and the United Kingdom will consult with private sector experts, businesses, trade unions, the institutions established under the Good Friday or Belfast Agreement, and appropriate involvement of parliaments. In the first instance, the progress concerning alternative arrangements will be assessed at the first high level conference envisaged by the Political Declaration. To ensure that the negotiations are concluded in good time, further progress will be reviewed at each subsequent high level conference.
