



Statement by the European Commission following the first meeting of the EU-UK Joint Committee

Brussels, 30 March 2020

Today, the European Union and the United Kingdom held their first Joint Committee meeting on the implementation and application of the Withdrawal Agreement, by means of teleconference. The Joint Committee is co-chaired by European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič and the UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove. The discussion took place in a constructive and productive atmosphere.

The proper and timely implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement is a key priority for the EU. This concerns in particular safeguarding the rights of around 4.5 million EU citizens and UK nationals, and maintaining peace and stability on the island of Ireland in the context of the Good Friday Agreement, while ensuring the integrity of the Single Market. A new partnership can only be built on the faithful and effective implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement.

The detailed legal obligations of both parties are clearly set out in the Withdrawal Agreement, which entered into force on 1 February 2020. Both sides now have to implement this agreement with rigour and discipline.

Vice-President Šefčovič welcomed the UK's commitment to continue to ensure that EU citizens can register as lawful residents in the UK, so that they can enjoy their rights granted by the Withdrawal Agreement. He confirmed that the Commission will support Member States in making sure that UK nationals in the EU will be in a position to exercise their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement, and will continue to monitor that this is done correctly.

The parties agreed on the importance for the UK to set out its plans over the coming months with regard to the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. The Commission committed to working with the UK to implement the Protocol. There is an urgent need to present a detailed timetable and proceed with the necessary measures, such as preparing for the introduction of customs procedures for goods entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain, and ensuring that all necessary sanitary and phytosanitary controls as well as other regulatory checks can be carried out in respect of goods entering Northern Ireland from outside the EU.

Both parties agreed that clear, reliable answers are key to allowing businesses to prepare for change, to address the challenges, and to seize the opportunities, of the Protocol. Providing such answers to businesses cannot wait.

The parties have decided to launch the work of the six Specialised Committees on the key areas for the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement. They have agreed that, in particular, the Specialised Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland should engage without delay in discussing and preparing the decisions the Joint Committee has to adopt in relation to the Protocol before the end of the transition period.

Both sides will now work closely to prepare the next meeting of the Joint Committee, currently foreseen for June.

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