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Answer given by President Juncker
on behalf of the European Commission
(17.10.2018)

On 30 March 2019¹, the United Kingdom (UK) will leave the European Union (EU) and become a third country. Irrespective of the scenario envisaged, this will cause significant disruption for European citizens, businesses and administrations.

A Withdrawal Agreement, with a transition period until 31 December 2020, remains the primary objective of the Union in its on-going negotiations with the UK, but all scenarios must be prepared for. The Commission has adopted a Communication on Brexit Preparedness on 19 July 2018² recalling that, in order to be prepared for the UK's withdrawal and to mitigate the worst impacts of a potential cliff-edge scenario, all actors need to take their responsibilities.

The Commission is pursuing several work strands and has proposed legislation on the apportionment between the UK and the EU27 of tariff rate quotas included in the World Trade Organisation schedule of the Union, and has published a large number of technical notices that set out the legal and practical implications of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU.

The Article 50 Task Force, with the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, has met several agri-food organisations from Ireland as part of its stakeholder engagement. These meetings provided valuable assessments of the implications from those directly concerned and enriched our understanding of the challenges faced by the Irish agri-food sector.

¹ The United Kingdom submitted on 29 March 2017 the notification of its intention to withdraw from the Union pursuant to Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union. This means that, unless a ratified withdrawal agreement establishes another date or, in accordance with Article 50(3) of the Treaty on European Union, the European Council, in agreement with the United Kingdom, unanimously decides that the Treaties cease to apply at a later date, all Union primary and secondary law will cease to apply to the United Kingdom from 30 March 2019. At this moment in time the Commission has received no indication that the United Kingdom may request a prolongation of its EU membership.

² <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-preparing-withdrawal-brexit-preparedness.pdf>