
Brexit: MEPs set out conditions for approving UK withdrawal agreement

The Conference of Presidents endorsed a motion for a resolution drawn up by the leaders of four political groups and the Constitutional Affairs Committee, in which they set out their conditions for a final approval by the European Parliament of any withdrawal agreement with the United Kingdom. The draft resolution will be debated and voted on by the full house next Wednesday.

The motion attaches great importance to fair treatment of EU-27 citizens and stresses the need for reciprocity and non-discrimination between UK citizens living in the EU and EU citizens living in the UK.

Continued obligations

The UK must continue to both enjoy all its rights and respect all its obligations under the EU Treaty until it leaves, including financial commitments under the current EU long-term budget, even if those go beyond the withdrawal date. This also means that the UK must continue to accept the four freedoms, the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, general budgetary contributions and adherence to the EU's common trade policy until it leaves. MEPs insist on the importance of addressing the issue of the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

“An orderly exit is an absolute requirement and a precondition for any potential future EU-UK partnership. This is not negotiable. The privilege of Union membership comes with responsibilities and these responsibilities mean guaranteeing the four freedoms. The four freedoms are the glue that binds it together and are indivisible,” said Antonio Tajani, President of the European Parliament.

Sincere cooperation

The groups and the Constitutional Affairs Committee note that it would be against EU law for the UK to begin negotiations on possible trade agreements with third countries before it has left the EU and they also expect sincere cooperation from the UK in negotiations on EU legislation in other policy areas until it leaves. They warn that bilateral agreements between the UK and one or more remaining EU countries, for instance in respect of UK-based financial institutions, would be in breach of the EU Treaties.

“For us, it is an absolute priority to settle citizens’ rights as soon as possible. It needs to be the first issue to be tackled in the negotiations. Citizens should not become bargaining chips”, stressed EP coordinator on Brexit for the European Parliament Guy Verhofstadt.

No better status outside the EU than inside

MEPs are adamant that the benefits of being a member of the EU cannot be the same for a country which leaves the EU. The future relationship between the EU and the UK could, however, be an association agreement, says the motion, drawn up by Manfred Weber of the EPP, Gianni Pittella of the S&D, Guy Verhofstadt of the ALDE and Philippe Lamberts and Ska Keller of the Greens/EFA) as well as Constitutional Affairs Committee chair Danuta Hübner. Such an agreement would require continued respect by the UK of EU standards in the fields of the environment, climate change, fighting tax evasion and avoidance, fair competition, trade and social policy.

Transitional arrangements

MEPs agree that talks can start on possible transitional arrangements based on plans for the future relationship between the EU and the UK, but only if and when good progress has been made towards the withdrawal agreement. A future relationship agreement can only be concluded once the UK has actually left the EU and a transitional arrangement may not last longer than three years.

Further information

[Draft resolution \(English only\)](#)

[Video recording of the press conference](#)

[Background information Art. 50 \(Infographic and video\)](#)

[EP Think Tank: UK withdrawal from the European Union - Legal and procedural issues \(27.03.2017\)](#)

[Photos, Videos, Audio](#)

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Conference of Presidents after the UK government's triggered of Article 50 TEU