

Brexit: the time has come for the UK to clarify its position

In the debate following the UK House of Commons' meaningful vote, MEPs underlined that Europeans will remain united and that citizens' rights are still the EP's priority.

Following the rejection of the Withdrawal Agreement and the Political Declaration in the UK's House of Commons yesterday evening, it is now up to the UK government and UK Parliament to let the EU know where a positive majority lies and what type of relationship they want with the European Union, MEPs stressed.

The Withdrawal agreement is the best and only compromise possible within the red lines established by the UK government, underlined the EU's Brexit chief negotiator, Michel Barnier. It allows for legal certainty where Brexit creates uncertainty. The EU will not accept established guidelines to be watered down, including the peace process and the border on the island of Ireland or on citizens' rights, added Frans Timmermans for the European Commission.

EP Brexit coordinator, Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE, BE) called for a cross-party dialogue in the UK in order to build a positive majority to break the deadlock and possibly redefine the UK's red lines. He underlined that changes in the UK's position might allow a deeper future relationship between the UK and the EU to be considered.

A no-deal exit would be in nobody's interests, MEPs underlined. The EU will intensify its preparation and contingency work with the member states and the EP, added Melania Ciot, on behalf of the Romanian Council Presidency.

Live replays :

[Opening statement by Antonio TAJANI](#), EP President

[Melania CIOT](#), Romanian State Secretary for European Affairs, for the Romanian Presidency

[Frans TIMMERMANS](#), First Vice-President of the European Commission

[Michel BARNIER](#), EC Chief Negotiator

[Mandred WEBER](#) (EPP, DE)

Roberto GUALTIERI (S&D, IT)

Syed KAMALL (ECR, UK)

Guy VERHOFSTADT (ALDE, BE)

Philippe LAMBERTS (Greens/EFA, BE)

Martina ANDERSON (GUE/NGL, UK)

Nigel FARAGE (EFDD, UK)

Gerard BATTEN (ENF, UK)

Further information

[Meeting of the EP BREXIT steering group on 15/01 - arrivals and roundtable + statements \(Verhofstadt, Barnier, Brok\)](#)

[The UK's withdrawal from the EU - extracts from the opening statements, 16/01](#)

[The UK's withdrawal from the EU - extracts from the debate, 16/01](#)

[All related AV footage will be available in multimedia package Brexit](#)

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