



Future EU-UK Partnership: European Commission takes first step to launch negotiations with the United Kingdom

Brussels, 3 February 2020

The European Commission has today issued a recommendation to the Council to open negotiations on a new partnership with the United Kingdom.

This recommendation is based on the existing European Council guidelines and conclusions, as well as on the Political Declaration agreed between the EU and the United Kingdom in October 2019.

It includes a comprehensive proposal for negotiating directives, defining the scope and terms of the future partnership that the European Union envisages with the United Kingdom. These directives cover all areas of interest for the negotiations, including trade and economic cooperation, law enforcement and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, foreign policy, security and defence, participation in Union programmes and other thematic areas of cooperation. A dedicated chapter on governance provides an outline for an overall governance framework covering all areas of economic and security cooperation.

As EU negotiator, the Commission intends to continue work in close coordination with the Council and its preparatory bodies, as well as with the European Parliament, as was the case during the negotiations for the Withdrawal Agreement.

President of the European Commission Ursula **von der Leyen** said: *"It's now time to get down to work. Time is short. We will negotiate in a fair and transparent manner, but we will defend EU interests, and the interests of our citizens, right until the end."*

Michel Barnier, the European Commission's Chief Negotiator, said: *"We will negotiate in good faith. The Commission will continue working very closely with the European Parliament and the Council. Our task will be to defend and advance the interests of our citizens and of our Union, while trying to find solutions that respect the UK's choices."*

Next steps

The Council will have to adopt the draft negotiating directives. This will formally authorise the Commission to open the negotiations as Union negotiator.

Background

On 31 January 2020, the United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).

The arrangements for the withdrawal are set out in the Withdrawal Agreement, which entered into force on 1 February 2020. It provides for a transition period during which EU law continues to apply to the United Kingdom until at least 31 December 2020, unless the Joint Committee established under the Withdrawal Agreement adopts, before 1 July 2020, a single decision extending the transition period for up to 1 or 2 years.

In the guidelines of 23 March 2018, the European Council restated the Union's determination to have as close as possible a partnership with the United Kingdom in the future. According to these guidelines, such a partnership should cover trade and economic cooperation as well as other areas, in particular the fight against terrorism and international crime, as well as security, defence and foreign policy.

The framework for this future partnership between the European Union and the United Kingdom is set out in the Political Declaration.

Today's recommendation by the European Commission is the first step in the negotiation process, as the Council is invited to authorise the Commission to formally open the negotiations for a new partnership with the United Kingdom.

For more information

- [Proposal for negotiating directives for a new partnership with the United Kingdom](#)
- Webpage:
The EU and the United Kingdom – Forging a new partnership: [Guide to the negotiations](#)
- [Questions and Answers on the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union on 31](#)

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