

General information

The withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) have taken place on the 31st of January 2020 and since then a transitional period was given until the 31st of December 2020, during which the parties could negotiate a new partnership for the future.

What happens during the transition period?

During the Transition Period (until 31st of December 2020), the United Kingdom is no longer a Member State of the European Union or of the European Atomic Energy Community. As a third country, it will no longer participate in the EU's decision-making processes. It will also no longer be represented in the EU institutions (such as the European Parliament and the EU Council of Ministers), EU agencies, offices or other EU bodies.

However, and as agreed with the United Kingdom:

- All EU law, across all policy areas, is still applicable to, and in, the United Kingdom, with the exception of provisions of the Treaties and acts that were not binding upon, and in, the United Kingdom before the Withdrawal Agreement entered into force. In particular, the United Kingdom will remain in the EU Customs Union and in the Single Market with all four freedoms (of movement of goods, capital, persons and services) and all EU policies applying.
- All institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the European Union continue to hold the powers conferred upon them by EU law in relation to the United Kingdom and to natural and legal persons residing, or established in, the United Kingdom throughout the transition period.
- The United Kingdom continues to participate in EU programmes and to contribute to the Union's budget covering the period 2014-2020.

The Court of Justice of the European Union continues to have jurisdiction over the United Kingdom during the transition period. This also applies to the interpretation and implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement.

The United Kingdom also continues to apply the EU's Justice and Home Affairs policies, including the European Arrest Warrant.

The United Kingdom is bound to the Common Fisheries Policy of the EU and the terms of relevant international agreements.

The EU Common Foreign and Security Policy applies to the United Kingdom during the transition period and the UK must implement the EU's sanctions regimes and support EU statements and positions in third countries and international organisations.

International agreements of the Union and Euratom

During the Transition Period, the United Kingdom will apply the international agreements of the Union. The United Kingdom can, however, take steps to prepare and establish new international

arrangements of its own. Where such agreements cover areas of Union exclusive competence, they can only enter into force, or start to apply, during the Transition Period if the UK is explicitly authorised by the EU for this purpose.

The Union formally notified its international partners about the UK's withdrawal and of the transitional arrangements foreseen in the Withdrawal Agreement, including with respect to EU international agreements through a Note Verbale, which was also endorsed by the United Kingdom. The Note Verbale informs international partners that the UK is treated as a Member State for the purposes of international agreements of the Union during the Transition Period. The Note Verbale has been sent after signature of the Withdrawal Agreement to international partners, including third countries and international organisations.

What happens if the transition period is extended?

If the transition period is extended, all the above conditions would continue to apply.

The UK would not participate as a Member State in the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, or long-term EU budget, as of 2021.

However, an extended transition period will require a financial contribution from the United Kingdom to the EU budget, because the United Kingdom would continue to participate fully in the Single Market with all its benefits.

The exact amount of this financial contribution would have to be decided by the Joint Committee established for the governance of the Withdrawal Agreement. From that date onwards, it will also only be able to participate in EU programmes as a third country.

Non-extension of the transitional period

If there is no extension of the transitional period, from 1st of January 2021, the UK will leave the Customs Union and the single market and will therefore be considered as a Third Country.

Therefore, from 1st of January 2021, all consignments of food / food contact materials from the UK will be inspected by the Public Health Services before they are placed on the market.

These controls will include documentary checks, identity checks and where necessary, physical checks including sampling in accordance with the Union and National legislation and the relevant guidelines.