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News story

David Davis' closing remarks at the end of the fifth round of EU exit negotiations in Brussels

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From: Department for Exiting the European Union (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-exiting-the-european-union>) and The Rt Hon David Davis MP (<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/david-davis>)

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The statement follows the fifth round of negotiations for a new partnership with the EU.



Thank you Michel.

At the last round of talks we spoke of a new dynamic and Michel has referred to that.

Our negotiating teams have continued to work constructively together in a professional and determined manner this week.

And they have developed as Michel says, an increased sense of shared political objectives.

Now while there is still work to be done, much work to be done, we have come a long way.

And it is important to recognise the significant progress we have made since June.

Let me, as Michael did, take the issues in turn.

Citizens' rights

On citizens' rights, we have made further progress to give British citizens in the EU and EU27 citizens in the UK the greatest possible legal certainty about the future.

Our legal orders will, in the future, be distinct and different.

So this week we explored ways of making sure the rights we agree now will be enforced in a fair and equivalent way.

And in a way that gives citizens confidence that their rights will be upheld.

We have also explored ways in which we could fulfil the Prime Minister's commitment to implement the Withdrawal Treaty fully into UK law which would give confidence to EU citizens living in the UK that they would be able to enforce their rights - as are set out in the Agreement - in UK courts.

And we have discussed ways of ensuring the consistent interpretation of the concepts of EU law that will underpin much of our Agreement.

While we have not yet arrived at a single model that achieves this we have explored creative solutions and are confident that we'll reach an agreement soon.

We have also focussed this week on the other remaining issues on which we have not yet arrived at a solution and Michel referred to a few of them. These are:

- the right to bring in future family members;
- to export a range of benefits;
- to continue to enjoy the recognition of professional qualifications;
- to vote in local elections;
- to move within the 27 as a UK citizen;
- to leave for a prolonged period and yet continue to enjoy a right to remain or permanent right of residence on return.

These issues are not easy, but we have approached them with a shared spirit of trying to find solutions and both teams will now reflect further on that.

We are taking a pragmatic approach. As demonstrated by our offer of a guaranteed right of return for settled citizens in the UK in return for onward movement rights for UK citizens currently living in the EU. We look forward to hearing the European Union's response to this.

I want to highlight one particularly productive area of our talks this week.

And I recognise that there has been some anxiety about EU citizens' rights to settled status in the United Kingdom.

But today I can confirm that we want to reassure those European citizens living in the UK that their rights and status will be enshrined in UK law by the Withdrawal Agreement.

And yes, there will be a registration process but the administration process will be completely new. It will be streamlined, and it will be low cost.

And in addition to that any EU citizen in the UK already in possession of a permanent residence card will be able to exchange it simply for settled status in a simple way. They will not have to go through the full application process again.

And to reassure those affected I can confirm that the tests associated with this process will be agreed and set out in our Withdrawal Agreement.

We will also make sure that citizens' rights of review of - and redress for - any errors will be quick, accessible and fair.

I will set out our position on ensuring citizens' future rights in a statement for the Commission, a written statement, which they can share with the European Union 27.

And as a result of our productive discussions, the Commission is also able to offer similar guarantees in return for those British citizens in the European Union.

This is a very welcome clarification and has built real confidence that the rights of EU citizens in the UK - and British citizens in the European Union - will continue to be accessible in the most straightforward way possible.

In summary, I think that this week of talks has brought us even closer to a deal that gives citizens rights to the legal certainty that they deserve.

Northern Ireland

I welcome the advances too that we have made on the discussions on Northern Ireland and Ireland.

This week we developed the joint principles on the continuation of the Common Travel Area.

Our teams have also mapped out areas of cooperation that operate on a North South basis.

As Michel said, there is more work to do here in order to build a fuller picture of how we overcome the challenges to North-South cooperation once the UK has left the European Union.

But I'm pleased to say we have made further progress here.

We have also agreed, based on critical guiding principles which both sides recognise, we will start working on a common understanding on possible commitments and undertakings necessary to effectively protect the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement in all its dimensions.

I said last time that we were determined to tackle the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland by focusing creatively on specific solutions and we have begun to do so.

As the Prime Minister said in her statement to Parliament this week, "We owe it to the people of Northern Ireland—and indeed to everyone on the island of Ireland—to get this right."

Financial settlement

On the financial settlement, we have continued in the spirit fostered by the Prime Minister's significant statements in her Florence speech.

In line with the process agreed at our last round of talks, we have undertaken a rigorous examination of the technical detail where we need to reach a shared view.

This is not a process of agreeing specific commitments - we have been clear this can only come later.

But it is an important step, so that when the time comes we will be able to reach a political agreement quickly and simply.

Separation issues

On separation issues we have continued to work through the detail on a range of issues.

And while we have made good progress, particularly on those areas relating purely to our withdrawal, we believe these issues are dependent on discussions on our future relationship.

And as I've said before, we are ready and well-prepared to start those discussions.

Conclusion

So, our aim is to provide as much certainty as possible to business, citizens and the European Union.

And on this we are making real and tangible progress.

But I make no secret of the fact that to provide certainty we must talk about the future.

The Prime Minister's speech set out the scale of our ambition for our deep and special partnership with the European Union.

And also laid out the case for a simple, clear and time-limited period of implementation on current terms.

As I said when I stood here last time, I hope the leaders of the 27 will provide Michel with the means to explore ways forward with us on that.

And to build on the spirit of cooperation we now have.

I have always been clear that we would enter these negotiations in a constructive and responsible way.

The work of our teams and the substantial progress that we have made over recent months proves we are doing just that.

As we look to the October European Council next week, I hope the Member States will recognise the progress we have made, and take a step forward in the spirit of the Prime Minister's Florence speech.

Doing so will allow us to best achieve our joint objectives by turning the ideas we have explored into concrete shared proposals.

That's the way that we'll move towards a deal that works for both the United Kingdom and the European Union.

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