



Speech by Michel Barnier following the sixth round of Article 50 negotiations with the United Kingdom

Brussels, 10 November 2017

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the interest you show in this negotiation.

Do not expect from us today, at this stage, announcements or decisions.

The discussions over the past days – in between the two European Councils – are a moment of deepening, clarification and technical work.

We are determined to reach a deal on the orderly withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, in view of the UK's decision to leave.

This is our absolute priority - as well as mine and my team's - in view of the European Council on 14 and 15 December.

The decisions and guidelines of the European Council, particularly last month, and the resolutions of the European Parliament guide me every day in this work.

When you read these resolutions and conclusions, you see again that only sufficient progress, i.e. sincere and real progress, on the three key areas of this negotiation will allow us to open the second phase of the negotiations. These three subjects are – I repeat – inseparable.

I would like to repeat that in this extraordinary negotiation, which is extraordinarily complex, that we are not demanding concessions from the United Kingdom, and we do not intend on issuing concessions either.

We work on the basis of fact, and law, and on precise, reciprocal commitments.

And we should - and we wish to - create certainty, especially legal certainty, where Brexit has created uncertainty and a lot of worry.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On citizens' rights, we are making some progress, although we need to work further on a number of points.

The UK wants to put in place administrative procedures through which EU citizens can obtain "settled status".

The EU needed reassurances on how such a system would work: it should be simple to use, and low cost. We also needed reassurance on how people, when rejected, can appeal effectively.

The UK has now provided useful clarifications that are a good basis for further work.

We also had encouraging discussions on direct effect of the withdrawal agreement. This is a key point to guarantee citizens' rights.

There are still a number of points that need more work:

- o family reunification;
- o the right to export social security benefits;
- o and the role of the European Court of justice in guaranteeing consistent application of case law in the UK and in the EU.

These three issues are important for people, as the European Parliament has also stressed.

We will continue our dialogue on Ireland and Northern Ireland.

We have to ensure a common reading, the same reading, of the conditions, consequences and implications of Brexit on the Good Friday Agreement and the Common Travel Area.

This should lead us to identify the technical and regulatory solutions necessary to prevent a hard border, while preserving the integrity of the Single Market.

As David and I told you last time, the unique situation on the island of Ireland requires specific solutions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On the financial settlement, we must now work on the precise translation of the commitments made by Prime Minister May in her Florence speech.

I repeat that this is an essential condition to reach sufficient progress in December.

Once again, I repeat that this – as in any separation – is about settling the accounts.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The United Kingdom decided to leave the European Union over 500 days ago. And it will leave the Union on 29 March 2019 at midnight, Brussels time.

And to reach our common goal – that of organising an orderly withdrawal with an agreement – we are going to have to work intensively over the coming weeks, before the next European Council.

Thank you.

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Mesdames et Messieurs,

Merci pour votre attention à cette négociation.

N'attendez pas de nous aujourd'hui, au moment où nous sommes, d'annonces ou de grandes décisions.

Les discussions de ces derniers jours sont, dans le moment où nous sommes, entre deux Conseils européens, un moment d'approfondissement, de clarification, de travail technique.

Nous sommes dans ce moment, je suis dans un état d'esprit volontariste. Pour trouver un accord sur cette séquence du retrait ordonné du Royaume-Uni comme il l'a décidé de l'Union européenne.

C'est la priorité absolue qui est la nôtre, qui est la mienne, celle de mon équipe dans la perspective du Conseil européen des 14 et 15 décembre.

Les décisions et les orientations du Conseil européen, notamment le mois dernier et les résolutions du Parlement européen me guident chaque jour dans ce travail.

Quand vous lisez ces résolutions et ces conclusions, vous voyez à nouveau que seuls des progrès suffisants, c'est-à-dire des progrès sincères et réels sur les trois sujets clés de cette négociation, permettront d'enclencher la deuxième phase de notre négociation. Ces trois sujets sont, je le redis, indissociables.

Je veux redire, dans cette négociation extraordinaire, et extraordinairement complexe, que nous ne demandons pas de concessions au Royaume-Uni et que nous ne sommes pas dans l'idée de faire des concessions.

Nous travaillons sur des faits, sur des bases légales, sur des engagements réciproques et précis.

Et nous devons, nous voulons, remettre de la sécurité, notamment juridique, là où le Brexit crée de l'incertitude et beaucoup d'inquiétudes.

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Mesdames et Messieurs,

Sur le règlement financier, nous devons travailler maintenant sur la traduction précise des engagements pris dans son discours à Florence par le Premier ministre britannique.

C'est une condition, je le redis, impérative pour atteindre des progrès suffisants en décembre.

Sur ce sujet, je répète qu'il s'agit seulement, comme dans toute séparation, de solder les comptes.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Le Royaume-Uni a décidé de quitter l'Union il y a plus de 500 jours. Et il quittera effectivement l'Union le 29 mars 2019 à minuit, heure de Bruxelles.

Et pour atteindre notre objectif commun, qui est d'organiser ce retrait ordonné, à travers un accord, nous allons travailler aussi intensément que nécessaire dans les toutes prochaines semaines avant le prochain Conseil européen.

Je vous remercie.

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