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Statement by Michel Barnier following the restricted round of negotiations for a new partnership between the European Union and the United Kingdom

Brussels, 2 July 2020

This week, David Frost and I continued our discussions, together with a restricted number of experts on each side.

As agreed two weeks ago at the High-Level Meeting between Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Presidents Ursula von der Leyen, David Sassoli and Charles Michel, the EU sought to inject new dynamics in the talks.

Our goal was to get negotiations successfully and quickly on a trajectory to reach an agreement. However, after four days of discussions, serious divergences remain.

The EU side had listened carefully to UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's statements in recent weeks, in particular, his request to reach a political agreement quickly, and his red lines: no role for the European Court of Justice in the UK; no obligation for the UK to continue to be bound by EU law; and an agreement on fisheries that shows Brexit makes a real difference.

The EU engaged constructively, as we had already done during the fourth round of negotiations in June. We did so in line with the mandate entrusted to the European Commission by the Council, with the support of the European Parliament.

The EU's position remains, based on the Political Declaration, that there will be no economic partnership without:

1. robust guarantees for a level playing field – including on state aid – to ensure open and fair competition among our businesses;
2. a balanced, sustainable and long-term solution for our European fishermen and women;
3. an overarching institutional framework and effective dispute settlement mechanisms.

And we will continue to insist on parallel progress on all areas.

The EU expects, in turn, its positions to be better understood and respected in order to reach an agreement. We need an equivalent engagement by the United Kingdom.

We continue to believe that an agreement is possible and in everyone's interest.

We look forward to the next round of negotiations in the week of 20 July.

In the meantime, and as agreed, we will continue our discussions in London next week.

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