



Statement following the second meeting of the Specialised Committee on the Implementation of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland

Brussels, 16 July 2020

Today, the European Union and the United Kingdom held the second meeting of the Specialised Committee on the implementation and application of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland.

The EU and the UK took stock of the implementation work on both sides. They also continued their discussions on the decisions the Joint Committee is tasked with taking before the end of the transition period.

The proper and timely implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement remains a key priority for the EU, in particular for maintaining peace and stability on the island of Ireland in the context of the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement, while ensuring the integrity of the Single Market. The objectives of the Protocol can only be achieved through its full implementation, and a new partnership can only be built on the faithful and effective implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement.

The Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland, which sets out the legal obligations of both parties, will apply from 1 January 2021.

The Commission welcomes that the United Kingdom has now engaged in technical discussions covering the full array of issues under the Protocol, and recognises the efforts made by the United Kingdom to set out its plans with regard to the implementation of the Protocol. Nevertheless, important questions remain open at this stage, and the Commission remains concerned as to the progress of practical and time-consuming preparations needed for the full application of the Protocol. Given that the Protocol will become fully applicable in just over five months' time, it is of paramount importance for the United Kingdom to further intensify the technical engagement to resolve all outstanding questions, and to take the necessary practical actions, without any delay.

The Commission underlines its continued availability to work with the United Kingdom at all levels.

The parties committed to organise a third Specialised Committee meeting in the early autumn.

Background:

The Specialised Committee on the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland is one of the six Specialised Committees established under Article 165 of the Withdrawal Agreement and its role is to facilitate the implementation and application of this Protocol and make recommendations to the Joint Committee as regards the functioning of this Protocol.

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