

State of play of Brexit negotiations

The Commission's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier, will inform the EU27 ministers of the state of play in the negotiations with the UK.

Ministers will discuss the state of play of the work on **withdrawal issues** so as to finalise the draft withdrawal agreement, and the discussions on the framework for **future EU-UK relations**.

All the withdrawal issues need to be covered in the **withdrawal agreement**, which should be agreed **well in time to be ratified** before the withdrawal date of 29 March 2019. Some parts of the draft Withdrawal Agreement have already been agreed in principle by the UK and the EU negotiators, although nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.

An agreement on a **future relationship** can only be negotiated and concluded once the UK has become a third country. However, an overall understanding on the framework for the future relationship will be set out in a political declaration accompanying and referred to in the withdrawal agreement.

Draft withdrawal agreement

On 19 March 2018, EU and UK negotiators presented an agreement on some parts of the draft withdrawal agreement. A coloured version of the legal text identified those parts of the withdrawal agreement on which both sides had already agreed. These agreed parts of the legal text included **citizens' rights, the financial settlement, the transition period and other separation issues**.

[Partial agreement between the EU and the UK negotiators on text for the withdrawal agreement](#)

On 19 June 2018 the negotiators presented a joint statement reflecting the **latest progress made**. The joint statement lists new parts of the withdrawal agreement already agreed with the UK, including articles on **Euratom, goods placed on the market, customs, intellectual property, ongoing judicial cooperation and public procurement**.

[Joint statement from the negotiators of the EU and the UK on the progress of the negotiations](#)

There are still **parts of the withdrawal agreement that require further negotiation**. One of them is the issue of avoiding a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. Other standing issues are related to the overall governance and dispute settlement of the withdrawal agreement, the protection of data and geographical indications, among others.

On the issue of the border between **Ireland and Northern Ireland**, the UK and the EU negotiators agree that a legally operative 'backstop' solution should be agreed as part of the legal text of the withdrawal agreement, in line with the joint report of December 2017. This 'backstop' will apply unless and until another solution is found. Negotiators also agree that the issues related to avoiding a hard border that feature in the draft as it stands are those that need to be addressed. However, there is no agreement yet on the right operational approach.

Framework for the future relationship: political declaration

The negotiators from the UK and the EU have also started to discuss the **framework for future EU-UK relations** with the aim of reaching a common understanding. This understanding will be reflected in a **political declaration** accompanying the withdrawal agreement and referred to in it.

The EU position for discussions on the framework for future EU-UK relations was formalised in the European Council (Article 50) **guidelines** adopted by the EU27 leaders on 23 March 2018.

[European Council \(Art. 50\) guidelines on framework for future EU-UK relationship, 23 March 2018](#)

The UK government published a **white paper** on 12 July 2018 setting out its position on the future EU-UK relationship.

European Council (Art. 50) of October 2018

The Council will also begin preparations for the next meeting of the EU27 heads of state or government at the **European Council (Article 50) of October 2018**. Ministers will look at the annotated draft agenda for the summit.

EU27 leaders will hold a discussion on Brexit during their **summit in Salzburg on 19-20 September 2018**. This will be an opportunity to discuss the state of play of the Brexit negotiations.

[Informal meeting of heads of state or government, 19-20/09/2018](#)

At their **latest summit on 29 June 2018**, the EU27 leaders adopted conclusions on the state of play of Brexit negotiations. In their conclusions, the heads of state or government:

- welcome the progress made on parts of the legal text of the withdrawal agreement, while recognising that further work is still needed on important issues
- express concern that no substantial progress has yet been achieved on agreeing a backstop solution for the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland and recall earlier commitments in this regard
- reconfirm and recall the relevant principles of the negotiations, and the need for intensified efforts to conclude the withdrawal agreement as soon as possible
- point out that work on a political declaration on the framework for the future relationship must be accelerated
- reconfirm the guidelines of March 2018
- call for work on preparedness at all levels and for all outcomes to be stepped up

[European Council \(Art. 50\) conclusions, 29 June 2018](#)

Key dates and documents

23 June 2016	UK referendum: UK citizens vote to leave the EU
29 June 2016	Informal meeting of EU27 heads of state or government Statement
15 December 2016	Informal meeting of EU27 heads of state or government Statement (including institutional set-up for negotiations)
29 March 2017	UK formally notifies the European Council of its intention to leave the EU
29 April 2017	Special European Council (Article 50) European Council (Article 50) guidelines for Brexit negotiations
22 May 2017	General Affairs Council (Article 50) Council decision authorising the opening of negotiations with the UK Negotiating directives – 22 May
22 June 2017	European Council (Article 50)
20 October 2017	European Council (Article 50) European Council (Article 50) conclusions
8 December 2017	Joint report from the negotiators of the EU and the UK government Commission communication on the state of progress of the negotiations
15 December 2017	European Council (Article 50) European Council (Article 50) guidelines
29 January 2018	General Affairs Council (Article 50) Negotiating directives on the transition period – 29 January
19 March 2018	Partial agreement between the EU and the UK negotiators on text for the Withdrawal Agreement
23 March 2018	European Council (Article 50) European Council (Art. 50) guidelines on the framework for the future EU-UK relationship, 23 March 2018
19 June 2018	Joint statement from the negotiators of the EU and the UK on the progress of the negotiations
29 June 2018	European Council (Article 50) European Council (Article 50) conclusions
18 September 2018	General Affairs Council (Article 50)
16 October 2018	General Affairs Council (Article 50)
18 October 2018	European Council (Article 50)

[Brexit – background information and full timeline](#)

[Negotiation documents for the Article 50 negotiations \(European Commission\)](#)