



Statement by Michel Barnier following Round 8 of negotiations for a new partnership between the European Union and the United Kingdom

London, 10 September 2020

The eighth round of negotiations on the future EU-UK partnership took place in London this week.

The EU remains committed to an ambitious future partnership with the UK. This would clearly be to the benefit of both sides. Nobody should underestimate the practical, economic and social consequences of a “no deal” scenario.

In order to maximise the chances of a deal, the EU has shown flexibility to work around the UK's red lines and find solutions that fully respect the UK's sovereignty. In particular with regard to the role of the European Court of Justice, the future legislative autonomy of the UK, and fisheries.

However, on its side, the UK has not engaged in a reciprocal way on fundamental EU principles and interests.

Significant differences remain in areas of essential interest for the EU.

The UK is refusing to include indispensable guarantees of fair competition in our future agreement, while requesting free access to our market. We have taken note of the UK government's statement on “A new approach to subsidy control”. But this falls significantly short of the commitments made in the Political Declaration.

Similarly, we are still missing important guarantees on non-regression from social, environmental, labour and climate standards.

Modern trade agreements are about ensuring sustainable and fair partnerships with high standards in areas like the environment, climate, employment, health and safety, and taxation.

These principles are now at the heart of EU trade policy: with the UK, and with other partners around the world.

And they are at the heart of the EU's negotiating mandate. For the EU, its Member States and the European Parliament, any future economic partnership, regardless of its level of ambition, must ensure that competition is both free and fair.

The UK has moreover not engaged on other major issues, such as credible horizontal dispute settlement mechanisms, essential safeguards for judicial cooperation and law enforcement, fisheries, or level playing field requirements in the areas of transport and energy.

There are also many uncertainties about Great Britain's sanitary and phyto-sanitary regime as from 1 January 2021. More clarity is needed for the EU to do the assessment for the third-country listing of the UK.

To conclude a future partnership, mutual trust and confidence are and will be necessary. The Chief Negotiators and their teams will remain in contact over the coming days.

At the same time, the EU is intensifying its preparedness work to be ready for all scenarios on 1 January 2021.

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