



### **Joint statement by European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič and the UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove**

Brussels, 24 February 2021

The European Union and the United Kingdom today held the first meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee following the end of the transition period.

The parties welcomed the progress made on citizens' rights in recent weeks in implementing the rights of UK nationals in the EU and EU citizens in the UK under the Withdrawal Agreement, and reiterated the importance of communication and support to the most vulnerable.

Further to the meeting of the Joint Committee co-chairs on 11 February 2021, the EU and the UK also took stock of the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland and of work to find pragmatic solutions. The parties acknowledged the importance of joint action to make the Protocol work for the benefit of everyone in Northern Ireland. In that spirit, the EU and UK reiterated their full commitment to the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement in all its dimensions, and to the proper implementation of the Protocol. Building on the recent outreach by the Joint Committee co-chairs, there would be further joint engagement with business groups and other stakeholders in Northern Ireland. The UK and the EU underlined their shared commitment to giving effect to those solutions agreed through the Joint Committee on 17 December 2020, without delay. The UK noted that it would provide a new operational plan with respect to supermarkets and their suppliers, alongside additional investment in digital solutions for traders in accordance with the Protocol.

Noting the need for ongoing engagement and the shared desire to act at pace, the UK and EU agreed that a further Joint Committee would be held to provide further steers and where appropriate approvals, and would liaise on timings.

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