



Statement by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with UK Prime Minister Sunak

Berkshire, 27 February 2023

Good afternoon Prime Minister, dear Rishi,

It is an honour and a pleasure to be here in Windsor with you. And it is with a great sense of satisfaction that we stand here together. We are about to deliver on an important commitment we made to each other a few months ago. I remember our first discussions, when we saw eye-to-eye on how to support our Ukrainian friends. And I was encouraged by our trustful and strong cooperation on this crucial geostrategic issue. But I also remember how the two of us were honest with each other about the difficulties in our bilateral relationship. It was vital to put that on the right footing too.

We committed to working hard together to do so. We knew that for us to be able to make the most of the potential of our partnership, solutions were needed for the issues around the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland. We knew it was not going to be easy. We knew we needed to listen to each other's concerns very carefully. Above all, we had to listen to the concerns of the people of Northern Ireland. We knew we had to work hard, with clear minds and determination. But we also both knew, dear Rishi, that we could do it. Because we were both genuinely committed to finding a practical solution for people and for all communities in Northern Ireland.

Today, we can take pride in the fact that we have delivered on that commitment. Because today, we have reached an agreement in principle on the Windsor Framework. The Windsor Framework lays down new arrangements for the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland. This new Framework will allow us to begin a new chapter. It provides for long-lasting solutions that both of us are confident will work for all people and businesses in Northern Ireland. Solutions that respond directly to the concerns they have raised.

Prime Minister,

We worked hard across a wide range of areas. The new arrangements are delivering a comprehensive package so that we can address in a definitive way the issues faced in everyday lives. I will only mention two examples that I find most telling.

Indeed, the new Windsor Framework will ensure that the same food will be available on supermarket shelves in Northern Ireland as in the rest of the UK. Furthermore, the new Windsor Framework will permanently enable all medicines, including novel ones, to be available in Northern Ireland at the same time, under the same conditions as in the rest of the UK. For this to work, we have agreed on safeguards like IT access, labels and enforcement procedures that will protect the integrity of the European Union's Single Market. The new Windsor Framework respects and protects our respective markets and our respective legitimate interests. And most importantly, it protects the very hard-earned peace gains of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement for the people of Northern Ireland and across the island of Ireland. Violence has no place in our society. I condemn wholeheartedly the shooting of the PSNI officer in Northern Ireland last week. My thoughts are with the officer and his family and friends.

This year will mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. An important milestone of the historic peace process. The new Windsor Framework is here to benefit people in Northern Ireland and support all communities celebrating peace on the island of Ireland. This is why I believe we can now open a new chapter in our partnership. A stronger EU-UK relationship standing as close partners shoulder to shoulder now and in the future.

Many thanks.



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