



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 10.3.2020
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Dear Presidents,

The Commission would like to thank you for transmitting the resolution adopted on 11 December 2019 by the Flemish Parliament, which is, as indicated in Declaration 51 to the Treaty of Lisbon, a component of the Belgian parliamentary system.

The Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union entered into force on 1 February 2020 and ensures an orderly withdrawal, providing for on-going actions, including the actions committed under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, to be completed without disruption. The EU and the UK have jointly agreed on a transition period, which ends on 31 December 2020. Until then, while the United Kingdom is already a third country, it will be business as usual for citizens, consumers, businesses, investors, students and researchers in both the EU and the UK. EU law still applies to the United Kingdom until the end of the transition period.

The Joint Committee established by the Withdrawal Agreement and composed of representatives from both the EU and the UK has the crucial role of overseeing the implementation and application of the Withdrawal Agreement. President Ursula von der Leyen has appointed me, being the Vice-President responsible for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight, as the EU's representative and Co-Chair of this Committee. The various tasks of the Joint Committee include resolving possible disputes over the interpretation and application of the Agreement. The Commission will pay very close attention to this work on implementing what the two parties agreed.

As regards the Flemish Parliament's requests related to the European Union budget, the Commission would like to recall that its proposals for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 already provide the necessary flexibility to assist Member States, regions, businesses and citizens who may be negatively affected by the United Kingdom's withdrawal. As a result of these flexibilities, no specific fund to deal with the consequences of Brexit has been proposed by the Commission. These proposals are currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council.

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The Commission fully shares the Flemish Parliament's wish to reach an ambitious and comprehensive future partnership between the European Union and the United Kingdom based on the political declaration agreed between the two parties and the European Council's guidelines, including all the issues mentioned in the opinion. Market access and strong level playing field commitments are very much two sides of the same coin. Given the UK's intention to leave the Single Market and the Customs Union, such a future relationship will never generate the same benefits as EU membership.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Flemish Parliament and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

Maros Šefčovič

Vice-President