

Joint statement by European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič and the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Affairs, the Rt Hon James Cleverly MP, 24 March 2023

The European Union and the United Kingdom today held the tenth meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee and second meeting of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement Partnership Council in London. The meetings took place in a constructive atmosphere building on the excellent cooperation between the Foreign Secretary and the Vice-President over recent months.

The Joint Committee welcomed the positive approach of both sides and adopted the new arrangements set out in the Windsor Framework. These arrangements address, in a definitive manner, the challenges in the operation of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland over the last two years and the everyday issues faced by people and businesses in Northern Ireland, while supporting and protecting the Good Friday or Belfast Agreement in all its parts, and protecting the integrity of the European Union's Single Market, and Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom's internal market. Both sides agreed to work together intensively and faithfully to implement all elements of the Windsor Framework. The United Kingdom and European Union also reaffirmed their intent to use all available mechanisms in the Framework to address and jointly resolve any relevant future issues that may emerge.

The Joint Committee also covered other important issues under the Withdrawal Agreement, in particular their joint work to protect the rights of EU citizens and UK nationals, addressing all relevant issues. Both sides agreed on the importance of continuing to support these citizens, and welcomed the efforts made over the past year to do so, including additional funding provided by both sides to external organisations.

The co-chairs also adopted the Withdrawal Agreement Annual Report for the year 2021 pursuant to Article 164(6) of the Withdrawal Agreement.

At the Partnership Council, the parties discussed implementation of the TCA and cooperation in a range of crucial areas including energy, trade and security and agreed on next steps.

Energy: They underlined the importance of collaboration over the past year as Europe decouples from Russian fossil fuels and highlighted the importance of dialogue on security of supply. They confirmed their commitment to progress work on the electricity trading arrangements envisaged in the TCA. They also discussed the EU Green Deal Industrial Plan.

Trade: They looked forward to the signing of Memoranda of Understanding on financial services and on intellectual property soon. They agreed to finalise preparation for the Working Groups in the areas of Technical Barriers to Trade as a matter of priority. They also discussed the UK Retained EU Law Bill and Bill of Rights Bill.

Security: They noted the close collaboration in support of Ukraine, and looked forward to dialogue provided for under the TCA in the areas of cybersecurity and counterterrorism. They also discussed the implementation of data protection safeguards for Passenger Name Records.

Union Programmes: They noted the openness of both sides to take forward discussions on association in the coming weeks.

The European Commission and the Government of the United Kingdom reaffirmed their desire to exploit fully the potential of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and maximise the potential of the relationship between the EU and the UK in ways that benefit both parties.

They agreed to remain in regular contact and looked forward to meeting again to take stock of the work of the Committees under the TCA.