

EU outlines plans for 'no deal' Brexit

Written by Martin Banks on 20 July 2018 in News
News

The European Commission has published a key briefing on preparations for a possible 'no deal', what some fear is an ever-likely scenario in the Brexit talks between the EU and UK.



Photo credit: Fotolia

The document was formally published on Thursday when the two sides' main Brexit negotiators, Michel Barnier and Dominic Raab, met in Brussels for talks for the first time since Raab replaced his predecessor, David Davis.

Raab said he looked forward to Barnier offering his "full support" for the Chequers white paper that led to several Tory resignations, including Davis and former foreign minister Boris Johnson.

The Commission document states that in the absence of an agreement on a withdrawal agreement, "there will be no transition period and EU law will cease to apply to and in the United Kingdom as of

30 March 2019.”

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The document, details of which had been leaked beforehand to the media, warns that under this scenario, “There would be no specific arrangement in place for EU citizens in the United Kingdom, or for UK citizens in the European Union.”

It also notes that regulatory checks and tariffs would need to be applied “at borders with the UK,” warning that “transport between the United Kingdom and the European Union would be severely impacted.”

However, it suggests, “Depending on the circumstances leading to the withdrawal without an agreement, the EU may wish to enter into negotiations with the United Kingdom as a third country.”

The European Commission’s document reiterates that Brexit means the UK will “become a third country.”

It goes on, “This will have repercussions for citizens, businesses and administrations in both the United Kingdom and the EU. These repercussions range from new controls at the EU’s outer border with the UK, to the validity of UK-issued licences, certificates and authorisations and to different rules for data transfers.”

The text calls on member states and business to step up preparations and follows a request by the council last month to intensify preparedness at all levels and for all outcomes.

The document says, “While the EU is working day and night for a deal ensuring an orderly withdrawal, the UK’s withdrawal will undoubtedly cause disruption - for example in business supply chains - whether or not there is a deal.”

It says that “as there is still no certainty that there will be a ratified withdrawal agreement in place on that date, or what it will entail”, preparations have been ongoing to try to ensure that the EU institutions, member states and private parties are prepared for the UK’s withdrawal.

“And in any event, even if an agreement is reached, the UK will no longer be a member state after withdrawal and will no longer enjoy the same benefits as a member.

“Therefore, preparing for the UK becoming a third country is of paramount importance, even in the case of a deal between the EU and the UK.”

Preparing for the UK’s withdrawal is not only the responsibility of the EU institutions, it says, adding, “It is a joint effort at EU, national and regional levels, and also includes in particular economic operators and other private parties - everyone must now step up preparations for all scenarios and

take responsibility for their specific situation.”

About the author

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