European Parliament president satisfied new Brexit deal will 'fully protect' rights of citizens

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European Parliament president David Sassoli believes deal offers sufficient legal protection to the five million EU and UK citizens affected by Brexit.

David Sassoli - Photo credit: European Parliament Audiovisual

European Parliament president David Sassoli says he is “satisfied” the new Brexit deal being voted on by UK MPs on Saturday will “fully protect” the rights of citizens.

Speaking at a news conference, he was asked by this website if the deal offered sufficient legal protection to the 3.5 million EU citizens in the UK and the 1.5 million Britons in Europe.

Sassoli admitted he had yet to see the details of the deal but replied, “I think we have to put our trust
in the EU negotiators who have done excellent work on this and say the deal satisfies our concerns and prerogatives on citizens’ rights.”

The Italian deputy said that he was “glad” the UK and EU’s “positions had moved closer together” since his meeting with UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson in London last week.

“The UK has revisited some of the issues which it had not paid as much attention to as it might have done in recent weeks and months.”

Addressing a packed news conference at the council in Brussels, he said, “I welcome that a deal is now on the table that respects citizens’ rights and the single market. The European Parliament is now ready to look at the legal text in close detail. I also hope UK MPs will now accept the deal.”

The MEP also said he hopes the European parliament will have enough time to vote and possibly debate on the deal within the “required timeframe.” Referring to the UK’s proposed EU exit on 31 October, he said, “I hope the timetable that has been set out will be respected.”

On Friday, a spokesman for the Socialists in the parliament told this website that group leaders are due to meet on Monday to discuss the deal.

“Obviously, we’re sad the UK might leave but respect the decision taken in 2016. Our priority is to avoid a damaging no-deal scenario, protect the peace process and guarantee citizens’ rights. A deal is the best way to achieve all this and at the same time reduce uncertainty.”

“I welcome that a deal is now on the table that respects citizens’ rights and the single market. The European Parliament is now ready to look at the legal text in close detail” I also hope UK MPs will now accept the deal” European Parliament president David Sassoli

He said, “The group is studying the details of the proposed deal to cross check that our red lines have been respected. The ball is now in the UK Parliament's camp. The European Parliament will exercise its prerogative in full.”

He added, “The timeline is for the Conference of Presidents to decide and the next meeting is Monday evening (6pm).Let's see what the vote in the House of Commons brings tomorrow( Saturday 19th).”

Meanwhile, there has been more reaction to the deal, with Richard Tice, a UK Brexit party MEP, saying, “This is Brexit in name only. We will be trapped for years and years and years. I hope it fails in the Commons vote.”

On Friday, the co-leaders of the Green Party of England and Wales Siân Berry and Jonathan Bartley
also said, “This so-called ‘agreement’ is not a deal in the interests of the people but a cynical power grab by a self-serving elite.

“It agrees to placing an internal border within the UK, which Boris Johnson previously claimed no British PM would ever do and moves references to a level playing field from the withdrawal agreement to the non-binding political declaration. It is dishonest and shows contempt for the interests of the people it claims to defend.

“We still believe that the single best deal is the one we currently enjoy as members of the EU. We now only have two weeks until the Brexit deadline on 31 October. This is not enough time to give this deal the democratic scrutiny it requires both in parliament and among the public, which is why we need more time to allow for a democratic People’s Vote with an option to remain.”

European Green Party co-chair Monica Frassoni, a former MEP, added, “We stand by our Green colleagues in the UK and give our full support to their call for a People’s Vote on this Brexit deal which would be the fairest and most democratic way to decide the best way forward.”

“We still believe the best option would be for the UK to remain in the EU.”

About the author

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