



[Check Against Delivery]

Joint press statement by President von der Leyen with President Sassoli and President Michel on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union

Brussels, 31 January 2020

Indeed, yesterday, when we were at Bazoches, there was a very nice quote from Jean Monnet, who has said: 'I am not pessimistic, I am not optimistic, I am determined.'

I think it goes very nicely with the three of us joining forces. We are not optimistic, we are not pessimistic, we are determined. It was a very good retreat yesterday at Bazoches. We discussed indeed the matters that have been named, mainly also the digitalisation and the European Green Deal.

We know that digitalisation is happening anyways, so we must harness it and we must shape it. We are convinced that technology sovereignty is consistent with an open market. And it means to build competitiveness with our values embedded in it.

The same goes for the European Green Deal. We have been discussing the European Green Deal as our new growth strategy towards competitive sustainability. Europe is frontrunner in this topic, and it is not only our European mobilising project, but it also requires that Europe leads in this topic as a global authority.

Therefore, we thought that we know very well that as the sun rises tomorrow, a new chapter for our Union of 27 will start. And with it comes a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure that Europe leads the way on these two twin ecological and digital transformations.

Indeed, tomorrow, almost half a century of the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union is over. When the UK joined – I was still at school –, we were 6 Member States. Tomorrow we will be 27 Member States.

During all these years – 47 plus years –, our Union has gained political impetus and has become a global economic powerhouse. Our experience has taught us that strength does not lie in splendid isolation but in our unique Union.

Nowhere else in the world can you find 27 nations of 440 million people, speaking 24 different languages, relying on each other, working together, living together. This is not by accident or by chance. This is grounded in centuries of shared history, decades of shared experience and a determination and confidence to shape our common future together.

Let there be no doubt: The challenges that Europe faces, and the opportunities that it can grasp, have not changed because of Brexit.

- It is the climate change and the European Green Deal.
- It is being at the forefront of the digital revolution.
- It is managing migration in an effective and humane way.
- It is building strong partnerships across the globe.

And as part of this, we want to have the best possible relationship with the United Kingdom. But it will never be as good as membership.

Et oui, lundi, nous ouvrirons une nouvelle page de notre histoire. La Commission présentera sa proposition pour les négociations. Nous voulons le meilleur partenariat possible avec le Royaume-Uni. Mais il est clair qu'il y aura toujours une différence. Appartenir à l'Union européenne compte. L'Union fait la force.

Und deshalb ist der Tag morgen kein Ende, sondern er ist ein Anfang. Die nächsten Monate sind entscheidend für das künftige Verhältnis zwischen der Europäischen Union und dem Vereinigten Königreich. Wir wollen mit unseren britischen Freunden die engstmögliche Partnerschaft. Und gleichzeitig ist natürlich auch klar, dass Europa ganz entschlossen seine Interessen verteidigen wird. Großbritannien wird jetzt ein Drittstaat sein.

Und für alle Drittstaaten gilt: Nur wer die Regeln des Binnenmarktes anerkennt, kann auch den vollen

Nutzen des gemeinsamen Marktes ziehen. Wir wollen gute Nachbarn sein, wir wollen gute Freunde sein. Und als gute Freunde können wir auch hart und fair verhandeln, weil wir ja eben einen ganz großen Fundus an Gemeinsamkeiten haben.

Wir gehen in die Verhandlungen in dem Geist, dass wir Fairness und Berechenbarkeit für unsere Wirtschaft möchten. Wir wollen Sicherheit für unsere Menschen. Und wir wollen, dass für die jungen Menschen auf beiden Seiten des Kanals so viel Studienaustausch und gemeinsame Forschungsprojekte wie irgend möglich machbar sind. Und in anderen Worten: Wir gehen in diese Verhandlungen in einem Geist, dass alte Freunde einen neuen Anfang suchen.

SPEECH/20/169

Related media

 [LIVE Statements on the Future of Europe by David SASSOLI, President of the European Parliament, Charles MICHEL, President of the European Council and Ursula von der LEYEN, President of the European Commission](#)