

Brexit

About Article 50

Why is this happening?

On 23 June 2016, the UK electorate went to the polls and voted to leave the European Union. Article 50 is the process whereby a country leaves the EU.

When does this all start?

Following the triggering of Article 50, the aim is to agree the required steps as soon as possible, with the objective of starting formal negotiations with the United Kingdom in May/June.

29 March 2017	UK hands over letter to the EU (specifically to the European Council) triggering Article 50 and the exit process. EU27 will have an initial response ahead of agreeing the framework for the negotiations
By end of April/early May	The EU27 leaders will meet to agree and adopt guidelines defining the framework for the negotiations.
By mid May	The EU General Affairs Council (made up of EU Foreign Ministers or European Affairs Ministers) will adopt more detailed negotiating directives (the 'mandate') for the Commission and authorize the opening of the negotiations.
By end of May/early June	Likely start of the negotiations between the EU and the UK.

What is going to be negotiated?

There are two deals that are set to be negotiated

The Exit Deal

The first set of negotiations will be for the UK to exit from the EU. These negotiations are called 'the Article 50' negotiations, sometimes referred to as 'the Exit' or 'the Divorce'.

The EU has stated that the first items to be negotiated in this deal are:

1. Outstanding financial commitments that the UK may have from exiting the EU
2. Rights of EU citizens in the UK and UK citizens in the EU
3. Border matters, notably Northern Ireland.

Possible transitional arrangements?

The need for some kind of transitional arrangements between the two sets of negotiations has been raised. The agreement of such arrangements will be the subject of negotiations.

The Future Relationship Deal

Fundamentally, this negotiation will deal with the future relationship between the EU and the UK. It will cover a wide range of areas including possible tariffs on goods entering or exiting the EU into the UK, regulatory standards dispute settlement mechanisms and other sectoral areas such as Fisheries, Energy and Transport.

It has not been yet agreed when these negotiations will start. Much will depend on progress in the first phase of the Article 50 negotiations.

Who is involved?

Name	Composition	Role
European Council	<p>Meetings of the Heads of State or Government of the EU countries. President is Donald Tusk. Usually happen quarterly, but are often convened more regularly.</p> <p>Ireland is represented by the Taoiseach.</p> <p>PM May will not attend the European Council when it is considering the Article 50 negotiations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receives the letter from PM May. • Agrees and adopts the guidelines that form the overall framework for the negotiations, setting out overall positions and principles from the EU perspective. • Nominates the European Commission as the chief negotiator. • Receives regular reports from the negotiation team; reviews progress of negotiations, updates guidelines as necessary, and provides overall political guidance for the negotiating team. • Representatives of the European Council and of the rotating EU Presidency will attend the negotiations.
General Affairs Council	<p>Meetings of the EU Foreign Ministers or European Affairs Ministers. Usually happen monthly but can be convened whenever needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the guidelines from the European Council and provide more detail for the negotiation directives or mandate, including some of the nitty gritty details of the process. • Formally appoints the Commission as the EU's chief negotiator and authorizes the opening of the negotiations. • Adapt some of the technical details on the process, including how the relationships will be managed between the different parties involved on the EU side. • Amend the negotiation details to reflect the European Council guidelines as they evolve. • The Presidency of the Council will inform and exchange views with the European Parliament before and after each meeting of the General Affairs Council.
Council Preparatory Bodies	<p>There are three:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Usual meetings of Ambassadors (COREPER) that manage the normal work of the EU (Ireland is represented by our Permanent Representative to the EU) 2. Brexit Working Party or Special Committee that is being set up for the negotiations 3. Usual Sherpa meetings that prepare the European Council (Sherpas are the Heads of State and Government's lead EU advisors or officials. Ireland is represented here by a senior official from the Department of the Taoiseach). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the negotiations remain on track between meetings of the European Council. • Specifically, COREPER and the Brexit Working Party will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure that the negotiations are conducted in line with the European Council guidelines and the Council negotiating directives. – Ensure that Member States' views are adequately represented. – Provide guidance to the Union negotiator. • Preparations for the European Council meetings will continue to be done by the 'Sherpa' meetings that are already in place. Representatives of the European Parliament will be invited to these Sherpa meetings.
European Commission	<p>Michel Barnier & the Barnier Task Force</p> <p>Team is made up of European, including Irish, officials appointed in accordance with European Commission staffing rules, so there is no 'individual country' representation.</p> <p>To ensure good integration between the Council and the Commission, also on this negotiation team will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A representative of the rotating Presidency of the Council (currently this is Malta) • Representatives of the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the European Council Guidelines, will propose a negotiation mandate or Directives to the GAC for its consideration (see above). • Main Union negotiator, leading the technical negotiations with the UK. • Will report regularly on progress to the European Council. • Will be invited to keep the European Parliament closely and regularly informed throughout the negotiation.
European Parliament	<p>Antonio Tajani is the European President of the European Parliament.</p> <p>Guy Verhofstadt is the European Parliament Representative on Brexit matters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The European Parliament will adopt a resolution on the Article 50 negotiations and will debate the negotiations on a regular basis. • It must approve the final exit deal. • The President of the European Parliament will be invited to speak at the beginning of meetings of the European Council.

