



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Task Force for the Preparation and Conduct of the Negotiations with the United Kingdom under Article 50 of the TEU

Deputy Chief Negotiator

Brussels, **22 08 17**
TF50(2017) save 4613176

Dear Mr Bird,

EU Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier thanks you for sharing "The people's Declaration" related to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU. He asked me to reply on his behalf.

We read the declaration and the legal argument with great interest. We appreciate citizens' engagement in favour of democratic rights.

The referendum vote on EU membership was a matter for the UK and laying down the arrangements for and organising referendum falls within the powers of each EU Member State.

According to the Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements. While the Commission regrets the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union, it respects the outcome of the referendum.

Once Article 50 of TEU has been triggered, it cannot be unilaterally reversed. The UK Government formally notified the European Council of its intention to withdraw from the European Union by its letter of 29 March 2017, which means that the process is no longer unilateral, but a matter of all EU Member States.

The Treaty does not provide a mechanism for a unilateral withdrawal of a notification under Article 50 of TEU.

The negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU must be completed within a period of two years, which means by 29 March 2019, unless the European Council, in agreement with the Member State concerned, unanimously decides to extend this period.

EU Chief Negotiator Barnier stressed on several occasions that he negotiates with the UK Government in order to reach an orderly withdrawal. He also underlined that "no deal" would worsen the 'lose-lose' situation which is bound to result from Brexit".¹

Mr Richard Bird
Action for Europe
Email: actionforeurope.contact@gmail.com

¹ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-17-1922_en.htm

The European Commission shares your concerns related to citizens' rights, which are priority issues in the first phase of the negotiations.

The EU-side works in full transparency and publishes all the negotiations texts on its webpage.²

In these unprecedented times, the Commission hopes to have the United Kingdom as a close partner of the European Union in the future.

Yours sincerely,



Sabine Weyand