

## UK Government Brexit White Paper: time running out for a trade-oriented Brexit

EUROCHAMBRES Brexit Working Group discussions yesterday with officials from the Commission's Article 50 Taskforce emphasised how important it is that the UK's forthcoming white paper sets a constructive tone to negotiate a realistic and workable solution for withdrawal from the EU. With less than nine months until the deadline of March 2019, there is growing concern among businesses across the EU27 that time is running out to ensure an orderly, trade-oriented Brexit. *"Given the lack of progress since March and the last few days of political upheaval in the UK, it is understandable that businesses across the EU27 are again readying themselves for the possibility of a hard Brexit, stated EUROCHAMBRES President, Christoph Leitl. "Our members are hoping for the best, but at the same time preparing for the worst".*

Chambers were also unequivocal in their support of the EU negotiator's firm stance on preserving the integrity of the single market. *"Friday's confusing UK Government statement did not provide much cause for optimism, but we must hope that the forthcoming white paper will contribute to realistic solutions that respect not only the UK's red lines, but also the EU's", added Leitl.*

### Resignations #leave a silver lining

While there is concern in some quarters that Monday's UK ministerial resignations will further disrupt Brexit negotiations, President Leitl argues that, depending on the content of the White Paper, it could prove positive: *"We're more concerned about the jobs of thousands of staff in Europe's private sector than the careers of a handful of politicians. The departure from the scene of two firmly 'hard Brexit' supporting UK ministers might now open the door for more productive discussions and a more trade-oriented outcome. It is essential that the focus shifts from short-term political expediency to long-term economic and commercial reality", President Leitl said.*

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Additional material:

- EUROCHAMBRES Position Paper 'EU-UK future relations: A trade-oriented Brexit': <http://bit.ly/2p9onfO>

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