

Brexit Withdrawal Agreement: deferral of UK Parliament vote heightens unease among EU businesses

During a two-day mission to London on Monday and Tuesday, EUROCHAMBRES members have expressed their growing concern of a disorderly Brexit as a result of the deferral of the Withdrawal Agreement by the UK Parliament. Chambers across the EU have been preparing businesses for a no deal Brexit for some time and those efforts are now being redoubled.

EUROCHAMBRES Deputy President, **Ian Talbot**, who is heading the London delegation of chamber representatives from 12 EU Member States, said: *“Our meetings with British Members of Parliament and Government officials further underline the incredible complexity of the Westminster discussions in the UK on the Withdrawal Agreement. Nonetheless, this new round of political brinkmanship increases the strain on the European economy, EU27 and UK alike. Businesses need clarity. The Article 50 deadline is only a few weeks away now and it's extremely worrying that the UK is by default heading towards a no-deal Brexit.”*

EUROCHAMBRES President, **Christoph Leiti**, reiterated the Chamber network's call for a pragmatic, trade-oriented approach: *“EU leaders took responsibility by signing off the Withdrawal Agreement and political declaration, and now the UK Parliament must do the same. It's important that all the discussions about Norway, Canada or other long-term arrangements are put to one side over the coming weeks. Businesses' revenue and people's jobs in the UK and across the EU are at stake in the short-term, so we urge the UK Government and British MPs not to play with fire and ensure firstly that we don't have a chaotic and hugely damaging no-deal scenario on 29 March.”*

Meanwhile, Chambers across the EU27 will be increasing their Brexit preparedness support to businesses and advising them to prepare for the worst from 29 March.

Additional information:

The EUROCHAMBRES Brexit Working Group delegation to London of 10 and 11 December is meeting the Chair of the House of Commons Exiting the EU Committee, Hilary Benn, Stephen Kinnock MP, Vicky Ford MP and Lord Andrew Lansley, various UK business representatives, as well as officials from the Department for Exiting the EU and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

EUROCHAMBRES also remains in regular contact with the EU's Article 50 Taskforce. Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier spoke at the association's European Parliament of Enterprises event in the Brussels hemicycle in October and his Deputy, Sabine Weyand, met members of the EUROCHAMBRES Presidency on 6 December.

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