Press release | 29.03.2017

Brexit must not undermine the EU's binding principles

Article 50 triggered by UK

British Prime Minister Theresa May has today given formal notice of the UK's intention to leave the European Union, triggering Article 50 in a letter to European Council President, Donald Tusk. Co-president of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, **Philippe Lamberts**, says negotiations must accommodate the range of views towards Brexit:

"We deeply regret that the UK will be leaving us. With such a rich shared history, the UK will always have a special relationship with the EU. We want, as far as it is possible, to accommodate the wishes of all UK citizens, not just those who voted to leave. This makes the close involvement of the devolved powers of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales essential to successful negotiations. We also want to reflect the wishes of young people, so many of whom voted to remain part of the European family.

"On trade, we have a clear shared interest. However, while we are not looking to punish the UK or settle scores, it must be clear that they cannot hope to get a better deal outside the EU than in it."

Greens/EFA co-president **Ska Keller** adds:

"We will be sorry to see the UK go. However, the decision of one member to leave should not put all of Europe's shared achievements at risk. We will not allow Brexit to undermine the basic principles that bind the EU. Prime Minister May must once again be reminded that any privileged access to the single market must go hand in hand with freedom of movement.

"We will not accept anything that degrades the existing rights of European citizens. The status of British citizens living in the EU, and people from across Europe living in the UK, must be an urgent priority for the negotiations. They must be able to continue to live and work in the countries in which they have made their homes. Even if the UK is now leaving the Union, the close ties between the British and EU citizens will persist. It is of key importance that programmes like Erasmus can continue to bring young people together."

EFA President **Josep-Maria Terricabras**:

"Today is a sad day for the European project but it reflects a democratic decision that we have to accept. We have to negotiate without any spirit of revenge but also without naivety. One of our main concerns is the situation of British citizens who live in the EU and those of the EU that live in the United Kingdom. We must protect their rights."

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