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Today is a sad day for the European project

EFA press release Josep-Maria Terricabras MEP

Following the triggering of Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union today, which begins the Brexit process, Josep-Maria Terricabras, President of the EFA Group in the European Parliament said that an inevitably difficult and complicated negotiation now lies ahead in order to try and reach an agreement.

Josep-Maria Terricabras said:

"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."

He went to highlight the major concern of the rights of the estimated 1.2 million UK citizens living in other EU states, and of the 3.2 million EU citizens resident in the UK, commenting:

"One of our main concerns is the situation of British citizens who live in the EU and those EU citizens living in the United Kingdom. We must protect their rights. Many of these people have acquired rights and that must be respected. We are talking about workers, possibly neighbours. For us, this point is crucial. "

Responding to the Article 50 letter from UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, and the EU's response, Josep-Maria Terricabras said it was likely that the UK would be treated as a third country by the end of the process, something he found difficult and painful.

Josep-Maria Terricabras said:

"It pains me greatly that a major state like the United Kingdom, which has played an important role over the years, and contributed to the construction of Europe is now leaving, ending the relationship as we know it."

The Catalan MEP, a member of the group in the European parliament dealing with the Brexit process, predicted difficult and complex negotiations, mainly due to the UK Prime Minister's rejection of the European courts and the difficulties around settling the UK's contribution to the EU budget.

Comparing it to a divorce settlement, **Terricabras** said:

"When people get divorced, and there are shared outstanding debts to be settled, you cannot have a situation where one spouse decides to ignore joint commitments. The bank simply wouldn't accept that. And Brexit is a divorce on a very grand scale."

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Josep Maria Terricabras

EFA President and first Vice President of the Greens/EFA Group

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