

Professor Danuta Hübner
Member of the Brexit Steering Group, European Parliament

***"European Council and Commission statements - Conclusions of the
European Council meeting of 12 and 13 December 2019"***

18th December 2019, European Parliament, Strasbourg, France

Presidents, cher Michel Barnier, colleagues

Since Thursday night we have clarity with regard to the withdrawal of the UK - our British friends will leave the EU in an orderly manner at the end of January and the UK will become a third country.

This is once again a moment to repeat the phrase that "we respect but we regret". Existing friendships will last.

The European Parliament is prepared to finalise its part of the withdrawal procedure in time for the deadline.

As much as I am sad to see our friends leave, we must now look to the future.

We take note of the strategic choice of the UK's Prime Minister to limit the transition period by domestic legislation. We take this choice seriously.

But of course we regret that through this act a provision in the agreement we negotiated and agreed jointly will be blocked. So much for negotiation in good faith.

The EU has prepared extensively for the task ahead and we are looking forward to constructive negotiations, as we want to conclude an ambitious agreement.

Our mandate for the negotiations will be based on the political declaration, jointly agreed between the EU and the UK.

I hope that the declaration will lead us to an unprecedentedly deep and diversified agreement we have ever had with a third country, hopefully allowing us to tackle global challenges together, while respecting European level-playing field measures and interests of the Union.

Let me finish by saying that we must not forget that in parallel to the negotiations, this House will spare no effort to ensure correct and full implementation of the withdrawal agreement, and will monitor closely the enforcement of citizen's rights.