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**European Parliament**

***Plenary speech on “Future Relations between the EU and UK. Council and  
Commission statements”***

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Vicepresidentes, Colleagues,

A big European economy is voluntarily leaving a preferential economic and trade area and the world biggest most influential standard setting and regulatory power.

Last Sunday another negotiation deadline passed with no final outcome and today we have just heard from Michel Barnier that on the negotiation table at least one big and a number of little pieces remain without solution.

We continue to be in the no deal territory and a failure is still possible. We must be also aware that even if a skinny agreement is better than no deal it will bring higher level of distortions than a more ambitious deal.

And even the most effective preparedness measures will not protect us fully against distortions. The good news here is the agreement in principle reached on the full and timely implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement and my appreciation goes to the Commission Vicepresident Maros Sevcovic and his team. Still we will have to understand better how and to what extent it is warranted that there are no risks there.

I support the Commission's attempts to keep negotiations alive as long as there is a chance for agreement.

No deal has never been our option. Especially in the midst of the current crisis. But negotiating under tremendous time pressure cannot lead to an agreement at any cost.

I also expect from the British government that sovereignty argument will not become a pretext for a no deal calamity. As most of us here, I am concerned about the consent process.

So far we have stayed calm and carried on. But the proposed new deadline stretches beyond what normally we would be ready to accept.

We will be deprived of our basic rights related to international agreements. Paradoxically the pandemic helps us organize a last minute remote plenary meeting, but evidently there is no time for any responsible scrutiny of the text.

So let me finish by saying that in opening ourselves - at the cost of our democratic prerogatives - to this unprecedented flexibility, the Parliament shows its willingness to pay this price because achieving agreement on future partnership will allow us to keep conversation over the channel in the long term.

And this is a price worth paying.