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**Presentation of the report on 'Assessment of Implementation of Article 50
TEU'**

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Brexit has been an unprecedented process, with undeniable political, legal, economic and social consequences. All European Institutions, including the European Parliament, had expressed regrets regarding the UK decision. Nevertheless, we respected it. We were strongly convinced that the withdrawal of the UK without an agreement would have dramatic negative consequences. We felt responsible for ensuring the accomplishment of this process in the best interest of the Union and its citizens. The cross cutting legal dimension of the whole process with the Article 50 as its core was fundamental.

This is an implementation report that specifically looks at one article and assesses its operation from constitutional and institutional perspective informing the Plenary how Article 50 TEU was implemented in the framework of the EU law as a whole.

First and foremost, I would like to thank everybody who in the course of the work on this report helped preserve the institutional memory of the process of implementing Article 50 of the TEU: the shadows and opinion givers, but also all colleagues of AFCO, both in the previous and current legislatures, the AFCO Secretariat, all those who provided scholarly input and the parliamentary legal service.

The report assesses the way the provisions of Article 50 were interpreted and applied, and the way procedures of the withdrawal were organised and conducted under those provisions. The implementation of the Article 50 allowed to draw lessons

for and reflect on constitutional order and institutional organization of the EU. As an exit clause the Article 50 provides rules allowing the withdrawal to take place within the EU legal order, protects fundamentals of the integration process and preserves the interest of the Union. This test the Article has passed successfully. Its implementation allowed setting out the terms for orderly withdrawal and for disentangling the UK from rights and obligations undertaken as a member state. The implementation of the Article required, however, additional tools to be deployed, going beyond the letter of the Article leading to an active role played by politics.

Indeed, Article 50 copes with a confluence of the constitutional and institutional aspects of the process and the role of political constraints. This political component played important role in protecting the rights of millions of EU citizens in UK and UK nationals in EU and taking into account the special circumstances confronting the Island of Ireland. Main guiding political documents were an outcome of high quality and responsible cooperation between European institutions. Acting in the interest of the Union, they identified core constitutional principles for the process, enriching the EU constitutional identity. During the implementation of the Article 50 those principles played the role the Copenhagen criteria play in case of enlargement, which is protecting EU interest. In short, the core principles ensured that while changing its membership, the Union could preserve constitutional integrity and autonomy of decision-making. Article 50, supported by the Article 218, proved to be an empowering legal provision.

Let me conclude pointing to the fact that Article 50 involves as well the preparation of the post exit relationship. It implies that negotiated orderly withdrawal gives a chance for a post exit voluntary partnership. Article 50 in combination with Article 8 TEU can provide an integration friendly outcome.