

**Professor Danuta Hübner**  
**“A new chapter in EU-UK relations based on trust”**  
**Plenary Session, Joint Debate on EU-UK relations**  
**Strasbourg, 14 March 2023**

Vice-President Šefčovič,

Colleagues,

I agree with you Vice-President, we are at the beginning of a new chapter in EU-UK relations, hopefully based on trust.

We have an agreement in principle on the Windsor Framework, a set of practical solutions to the implementation of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol.

The deal will lower the costs of doing business and settle the flow of goods from Great Britain into Northern Ireland without breaching EU Single Market rules.

It strikes a careful balance between facilitations for the UK and effective safeguards for the EU Single Market. It brings the Northern Irish economic, political, and civil society stakeholders into the Framework.

Now, we must set in stone this agreement in principle as soon as possible. The Commission urgently needs the mandate to adopt the Framework at the next EU-UK Joint Committee meeting.

I hope that the agreement will open the path to solving other pending issues and that the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill will be promptly and fully withdrawn as promised by the UK government.

It is noteworthy that the Windsor Framework does not address citizens' rights, which are subject to the Withdrawal Agreement and are covered by Mr Pedro Silva Pereira's implementation report.

As of December 2022, under the “Settlement Scheme”, 181 000 EU citizens were still waiting on a decision on their pre-settled status, most of them for more than six

months, uncertain about their immigration status and the reunification of their families.

It is positive to hear that the UK Home Office will not appeal the UK High Court's December 2022 ruling according to which the Home Office had wrongly interpreted the Withdrawal Agreement.

I hope the Home Office will take all the necessary steps to swiftly apply the ruling, communicate it effectively to EU citizens, and not deprive EU citizens of their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement.

Finally, I hope that the implementation of the UK's EU Retained Law Bill will not undermine the UK's obligations under the Withdrawal Agreement, including the Protocol, and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, nor damage their enforcement mechanisms.