



Jean-Claude JUNCKER
President of the European Commission

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Dear President Tusk, 

In 18 days' time, the United Kingdom will leave the European Union.

This was the will of the majority in the United Kingdom, as expressed in the referendum of 23 June 2016. I continue to deeply regret this decision. But it is something that we must respect. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom notified the European Council on 29 March 2017 of the United Kingdom's intention to leave the European Union. This triggered the two-year negotiating period set out in Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union.

105 days ago, the European Union and the Government of the United Kingdom agreed on the Withdrawal Agreement and the Political Declaration on our future relationship. These documents are the result of 18 months of firm but fair negotiations.

The EU is committed to ratifying the Agreement in the interest of the United Kingdom's orderly and amicable withdrawal from the European Union.

However, the ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement has proven difficult in the United Kingdom. Despite our joint letter of 14 January, in which we provided meaningful clarifications, Prime Minister May so far did not succeed in securing the necessary majority in the House of Commons.

I believe that our hand must remain outstretched. We should continue to support the efforts of Prime Minister May to ensure an orderly withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, respecting the result of the referendum of 23 June 2016.

*Mr Donald Tusk
President of the European Council*



While fully respecting the principles defined unanimously by the European Council, we should – following the request of Prime Minister May – now give one last push to get the Withdrawal Agreement over the finishing line. It is in this spirit that the European Commission and its Chief Negotiator, Michel Barnier, have worked on a set of further legal reassurances, as discussed several times between Prime Minister May and me.

As a result, I am sending you an Instrument relating to the Withdrawal Agreement of the United Kingdom from the European Union and a Joint Statement supplementing the Political Declaration. These texts have been agreed at negotiators' level, agreed between Prime Minister May and me, and have been endorsed by the European Commission today. I have spoken to the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, this evening who would be prepared to accept this solution in the interest of securing an overall deal.

I recommend that the European Council endorses these documents at its meeting of 21-22 March, subject to a prior positive vote in the House of Commons on the Withdrawal Agreement.

I believe it is now high time to complete the withdrawal process in line with the wishes expressed by the Government of the United Kingdom and to move on, as swiftly as possible, to the negotiation of our future partnership. The Commission has taken all necessary measures in order to start preparatory talks with the United Kingdom immediately after the Withdrawal Agreement is signed. We hope that the United Kingdom is as ready and prepared for these important negotiations as we are.

Finally, I would like to stress that the United Kingdom's withdrawal should be complete before the European elections that will take place between 23-26 May this year. If the United Kingdom has not left the European Union by then, it will be legally required to hold these elections, in line with the rights and obligations of all Member States as set out in the Treaties.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' or 'L' shape followed by a horizontal line.