

COSLA BREXIT BULLETIN

COSLA Mandates for Brexit focus on four main areas: - Constitutional Matters, Community Cohesion & Citizens Rights, New Trade Agreements, Procurement & State Aid, and Economy.

On 29 March the UK Government sent the [letter which invoked EU Article 50](#) signalling the desire to leave the EU. The EU27 are now expected to discuss this on 29 April and agree guidelines for their negotiating mandate - the EU's Brexit red lines. This will be incorporated into a detailed negotiation strategy to be signed off at another European Council meeting in June.

The COSLA Brexit Strategic Stakeholder Group comprising representatives from across civic Scotland met on 23 February. Chaired by Sally Loudon, the meeting resulted in positive outcomes, including the identification of a number of common concerns and priorities, and agreement to work together and focus on several key themes at future meetings. These are likely to include: -

- * Capacity, quality and welfare of our workforce.
- * Financial support for different sectors.
- * Trading with EU and non-EU countries.
- * Tourism and travel in Scotland.
- * Local democracy and empowerment.
- * Procurement of goods and services

Further work is being done with civil servants in Scotland on establishing channels to share and specify the information we need to plan for Brexit. Information needs are likely to include statistics and quantitative, qualitative analysis for areas including funding, workforce, tourism, business etc.

At a meeting of the four UK local government associations agreement was made to separately work up thoughts around the future of EU funding and the powers that local government want repatriated to their communities. This work will be used to identify areas of common interest for future joint and separate lobby-

29 April - EU summit of the 27 leaders (without the UK) to agree to give the European Commission a mandate to negotiate with the UK

May - European Commission to publish negotiating guidelines based on the mandate the EU leaders give it. The EU might say something about possible parallel negotiation on a future EU-UK trade deal

May/June 2017 - Negotiations begin

23 April and 7 May - French presidential elections

24 September - German parliamentary elections

Autumn 2017 - The UK government is expected to introduce legislation to leave the EU and put all existing EU laws into British law - the Great Repeal Bill

October 2018 - Aim to complete negotiations

Between **October 2018 and March 2019** - The Houses of Parliament, European Council and European Parliament vote on any deal

March 2019 - UK formally withdraws from the European Union (The Article 50 negotiations could be extended, but this is subject to the approval of the other 27 EU member states)

ing. In addition information will be gathered on existing trade links to see how best to apply this knowledge to future negotiations.

We recently asked councils for further information on the local impact of Brexit on workforce/employment, funding, procurement and trade, the local economy, and local powers & governance. The response has been strong and we will summarise, share and feed the findings into our on-going work.

The UK Department for International Trade are investigating the possibility of a 10-year interim arrangement with the European Union in case a trade deal is not reached during Britain's exit negotiations. Article 24 of the WTO's [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade](#) might allow tariffs between Britain and the EU to be kept at zero as part of an interim arrangement which would allow more time for a full trade deal to be negotiated after Britain has left the bloc. This would allay fears about an impending cliff edge in March 2019, when Britain is set to leave the single market and face the EU's steep external tariffs on goods.



On 22 March, Scottish [Councillor Tony Buchanan](#) represented Scotland in the first ever public discussion on Brexit consequences for local communities with EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier. He outlined the following key negotiation priorities for Councils across Scotland and the rest of the UK.

- ◆ Citizens' rights and local community cohesion
- ◆ Mobility of people, goods and services
- ◆ Transferable rights (e.g. pensions or healthcare)
- ◆ Continuity of environmental or climate policies and alignment with EU targets.

In relation to EU funding Cllr Buchanan pointed out that although countries like Norway and Iceland are not part of the EU, their national governments pay for their local authorities to take part in cooperation with their EU counterparts in a wide range of economic, social, governance and environmental projects. A 'no deal' scenario is not our scenario". In response Mr Barnier stated that: "We do want an agreement, we want to succeed, not against but together with the UK"

We will be examining the Great Repeal Bill to ensure that there are checks and balances to guard against the potential for Scottish local government interests being undermined by the so called 'Henry VIII powers'. There will be a bulletin with further detail on the GRB soon.

Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive of [Comhairle nan Eilean Siar](#), has been appointed to the [Standing Council on Europe](#) and COSLA will help provide support for that role. This group comprises specialists in legal, financial, business and diplomatic matters. Chaired by Professor Anton Muscatelli it advises Scottish Government on Scotland's relationship with the EU.



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