Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community

2018/0427(NLE) - 20/03/2019 - Document attached to the procedure

Subject: Instrument relating to the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community.

The instrument was approved at negotiator level, agreed between Prime Minister May and European Commission President Juncker on 11 March 2019 in Strasbourg, and approved by the European Commission on the same day.

The instrument sets out what the two parties to the withdrawal agreement have agreed on in a number of provisions of the withdrawal agreement, including the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland. It constitutes a document of reference that will have to be made use of if any issue arises in the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement. To this effect, it has legal force and a binding character.

In this instrument, the Parties:

- reiterated the parties' wish to establish a future partnership that is as close and strong as possible, given the global challenges they share, and underline their commitment to embark on preparations immediately after the signature of the Withdrawal Agreement to ensure that negotiations on the future relationship can start as soon as possible after the United Kingdom's withdrawal;

- recalled that the parties do not wish the backstop solution in the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to become applicable, that were it to do so it would represent a suboptimal trading arrangement for both sides, and that both parties are therefore determined to replace the backstop solution for Northern Ireland by a subsequent agreement that would ensure, on a permanent footing, the absence of a hard border on the island of Ireland, in full respect of the integrity of the Union's internal market and of the territorial integrity of the United Kingdom;

- stressed that the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland will be subject to regular reviews in order for the Parties to consider whether that Protocol is still necessary or could cease to apply in whole or in part.