
JUNCKER WARNS BREXIT DEAL WILL TAKE LONGER THAN TWO YEARS TO NEGOTIATE

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European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker believes it will probably take longer than two years to agree on all the arrangements for Britain to leave the European Union, he said on Thursday (16 February).

I do not think .. we will succeed within 24 months to clear up the arrangements for Britains exit from the EU and to (forge) the whole relationship between Britain and the European continent, he said in a speech on the sidelines of the international Munich Security Conference.

British Prime Minister Theresa May has said she will trigger Article 50 of the EUs Lisbon Treaty in March, launching divorce talks that are expected to conclude within two years.

Unless the deadline is extended or alternative arrangements are agreed by then, Britain will leave all EU institutions and the blocs single market at once – a process often referred to as hard Brexit.

Junckers warning about the length of the Brexit negotiation echoes similar declarations by the UKs former ambassador to Brussels. Sir Ivan Rogers was forced to quit in January after a memo was leaked in the British press suggesting a comprehensive Brexit trade deal would take much longer than the two years set down in the Lisbon Treaty.

UK AMBASSADORS DAMNING FINAL EMAIL: SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

The resigning UK ambassador to the EU warned colleagues to speak truth to power and challenge muddled thinking, in an unprecedentedly blunt departing email, it emerged on Tuesday (3 January).

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20,000 laws

In his Munich speech, Juncker gave an indication of the huge task ahead, saying at least 20,000 laws had to be changed in Britain before the country could leave the European Union.

The Commission President also stressed that Britain had no right to complete bilateral trade deals while that process was ongoing.

Trade deals are the remit of the EU * Britain cannot complete trade deals with half the world although it is doing the opposite, he said. □

Former EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson also warned eurosceptics that a British renegotiation of its relationship with Europe after a Brexit would take up to a decade.

MANDELSON: BREXIT RENEGOTIATIONS WOULD TAKE UP TO 10 YEARS

Former EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson has warned eurosceptics that a British renegotiation of its relationship with Europe after a Brexit would take up to a decade.

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The UK government seems to have realised the scale of the task and has spoken about the need to agree a transitional agreement to smooth its EU exit after the two-year deadline expires.

British Prime Minister Theresa May said in December she was planning to negotiate both Brexit and Britains future relationship with the EU by 2019. However, she admitted that a transition period may be required after that.

I would expect us to be able to negotiate a deal in the two-year period. But it may be the case that there may be some practical aspects that require a period of implementation thereafter, she said.

British businesses have been calling for a transitional deal in order to avoid a cliff-edge scenario with a sudden and overnight transformation in trading conditions.

MAY RAISES POSSIBILITY OF BREXIT TRANSITION DEAL

British Prime Minister Theresa May on Tuesday (20 December) said she was planning to negotiate both Brexit and Britains future relationship with the EU by 2019 but a transition period may be required after that.

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Brexit tab

The length of Brexit talks might also be complicated by ongoing financial commitments made by the UK as part of its EU membership.

Commission officials say its impossible to fix a precise sum at this stage but insist on agreeing first with Britain a formula for calculating how much it will owe the bloc after it leaves.

It is like going to the pub with 27 friends, said Commission Chief Spokesman Margaritis Schinas, on 7 February. You order a round of beer but then you cannot leave while the party continues. You still need to pay for the round you ordered.

Estimates put the UKs Brexit tab at anything between and billion, according to The Economist.

THE BRIEF: BRUSSELS' BREXIT BAR BILL

Ever since the vote for Brexit, Brussels has murmured the words no negotiation without notification like a votive prayer to ward off evil spirits.

Kaynak/Source: