
EU NAMES FIRST POST-BREXIT UK AMBASSADOR

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Portuguese diplomat Joao Vale de Almeida is set to serve as the EU's top envoy in London after the UK leaves the bloc, EU authorities have said. The diplomat has represented the EU in Washington and at the UN.

With the UK expected to leave the EU next week, the EU officials named veteran diplomat Joao Vale de Almeida as the "first Head of the future EU Delegation" in London on Friday.

Vale de Almeida is set to take office on February 1, the day after the latest Brexit date.

"As of that date, the United Kingdom will be a third country and as a consequence, the representation of the Union will be ensured by an EU Delegation," the EU's diplomatic service said in a press release.

The appointment "has been duly notified to the United Kingdom," the officials said.

Working on TTIP in Washington

Vale de Almeida was born in Lisbon in 1957 and has studied history in his native Portugal. He also worked as a journalist before joining the European Commission in 1982. According to his biography, the diplomat worked as the chief of staff and main adviser to Jose Manuel Barroso between 2004 and 2009, while Barroso was serving as the head of the EU Commission.

In 2010, Vale de Almeida became the EU's first ambassador to the US, where he helped launch the talks on TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership). He then served as the bloc's ambassador to the UN between 2015 and 2019.

Following the announcement on Friday, Vale de Almeida said he was honored by his latest appointment. He added he was "[l]ooking forward to... promoting EU interests" and preparing the future relationship between Brussels and London.

The EU has already signed off on the UK's divorce papers, which are expected to finalize the yearslong divorce procedure from the bloc, which started with the narrow victory of the "Leave" option in the 2016 UK referendum. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson also signed the withdrawal agreement, saying that the signature heralds a "new chapter" in the UK's history.

<https://www.dw.com/en/eu-names-first-post-brexit-uk-ambassador/a-52141497>

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