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European Parliament approves Brexit agreement

abridged

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Tears, hugs ¹ and Auld Lang Syne ² in EU Parliament

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BBC abridged article and vocab notes

Members of the European Parliament have overwhelmingly backed ³ the terms of the UK's departure from the EU. MEPs ratified the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement ⁴ by 621 votes to 49 following an emotional debate in Brussels. [...]

The UK is due to leave the bloc ⁵ at 23:00 GMT on Friday. Ratification of the withdrawal agreement, agreed by the UK and EU in October, was not in doubt after it easily cleared its committee stage last week.

Signing the letter confirming the EU's consent, the Parliament's president, David Sassoli, said the two sides must heed ⁶ the words of the late Labour MP Jo Cox ⁷ when approaching their future relationship and recognise *"there is more that unites us than divides us. You are leaving the EU but you will always be part of Europe. It is very hard to say goodbye. That is why, like my colleagues, I will say arrivederci."* [...]

After the UK leaves, there will be an 11-month transition period in which the two sides hope to negotiate their future economic relationship. Trade talks ⁸ are expected to begin in earnest ⁹ in early March. The European Parliament will also get a say ¹⁰ in ratifying any future trade deal ¹¹.

The UK has insisted talks should not extend beyond ¹² 31 December 2020 when a transition period - which will see the UK follow EU rules - comes to an end.

President Sassoli told CNN on Tuesday that the timetable for a deal was tight ¹³. He said the UK's exit would be "painful" for the bloc but building a new partnership based upon friendly co-operation and mutual interests was now essential.

1. hugs: des embrassades ↵

2. Auld Lang Syne: a traditional farewell song. See separate document ↵

3. have overwhelmingly backed: ont accepté à une majorité écrasante ↵

4. the withdrawal agreement : l'accord de retrait ↵

5. (the UK) is due to leave the bloc : il est prévu que le Royaume Uni quitte le bloc européen... ↵

6. heed the words: listen to, pay attention to. ↵

7. Jo Cox, a British MP, was assassinated on June 16 2016 by a far-right activist ↵

8. trade talks : négociations commerciales ↵

9. are expected to begin in earnest : on s'attend à ce que [les négociations] commencent sérieusement ↵

10. get a say, have a say : avoir son mot à dire ↵

11. a trade deal: un accord commercial ↵

12. beyond: au delà ↵

13. a tight timetable: un calendrier serré ↵