

# Statement of the industriAll Europe Executive Committee on the EU/UK future relationship

## IndustriAll Europe Executive Committee meeting

Document adopted by the 17<sup>th</sup> industriAll Europe Executive Committee  
Online meeting, 1 July 2020 | 106/2020

### Update to Position Paper 2017/81: “For a Brexit that protects jobs, rights and a social Europe for All.”<sup>1</sup>

The United Kingdom (UK) left the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020 following the adoption of the Withdrawal Agreement<sup>2</sup> and is now in a “transition period” until **31 December 2020**. The UK and EU’s respective negotiating teams have released their negotiating positions<sup>3</sup> and official negotiations began on 2 March 2020 in Brussels.

### A future EU/UK relationship that protects jobs, rights and a social Europe for All

The UK voted to leave the European Union in June 2016, but no worker voted to lose their job, their employment rights or their social protection. Now that the UK has left the EU, and official negotiations have begun, European trade unions must stand together in solidarity to fight for good working conditions and standards for **all** workers. We must prevent a race to the bottom in workers’ rights and industriAll Europe continues to call for a future EU/UK deal that puts workers, in both the EU and the UK, first.

### EU and UK Government’s Positions<sup>4</sup>

**The EU** has stated that they are aiming for a highly ambitious trade deal that **includes “zero tariffs and zero quotas on all goods entering the single market”**. However, they have stressed that this is on the condition of maintaining a level-playing field. IndustriAll Europe supports the EU’s strengthened position that “the envisaged agreement should **uphold** common high standards, and corresponding high standards over time”. We oppose the creation of an unlevel playing field in employment, social, or environmental standards and do not accept lower conditions for UK workers.

The EU has stressed that any deal must respect the autonomy of the Union’s decision-making and its legal order, the integrity of its single market and the Customs Union and the four freedoms, and furthermore that the UK cannot have the same rights and benefits as if it were a Member State.

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<sup>1</sup> IndustriAll Europe Position Paper: “[For a Brexit that protects jobs, rights and a social Europe for All.](#)”

<sup>2</sup> [Withdrawal Agreement](#) - establishes the terms of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU.

<sup>3</sup> [EU negotiating position](#) (25/02/2020) and [UK negotiating position](#) (27/02/2020).

<sup>4</sup> At time of writing: **28 May 2020**.

**The UK Government** has made it clear that the UK will leave the single market and the Customs Union and that they will not agree to any obligations for UK laws to be aligned with the EU's. The UK are aiming for a Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) but **will accept a “no deal” scenario based on WTO rules** should it prove to be impossible to reach an agreement. The UK Government has also insisted that it will **not extend the transition period** (31 December 2020) and that it will decide by the end of June 2020 whether to **focus solely on domestic preparations for a “no deal”** should negotiations not be progressing appropriately.

Considering these two opposing positions, it is likely that agreeing on level playing field provisions and the dispute settlement mechanism (and oversight of the Court of Justice of the European Union) will prove to be the main challenges.

However, **industriAll Europe** calls for both Parties to work together effectively to find the best deal for **all** workers and to avoid a “no deal” which would have hugely damaging and unpredictable consequences for industry and its workers on both side of the Channel. We oppose any use of citizens as pawns in the negotiations and insist that high employment, social and environmental standards must be adhered to. IndustriAll Europe demands strong ‘anti-dumping’ protections and measures to prevent any levelling down of workers’ rights, environmental protections or standards on either side.

## Our demands

IndustriAll Europe will continue to call for the best deal for all workers and calls for solidarity between European trade unions to make the following demands on the UK and EU Governments:

1. A deal that puts workers, in both the EU and the UK, first.
2. **Tariff-free trade which is as frictionless as possible** outside of the EU single market and the Custom Union<sup>5</sup>.
3. Full compatibility of (safety, environmental and other) **requirements placed on products and processes** to ensure fair competition, as well as a coordinated approach regarding carbon pricing schemes applied to industry.
4. Protection of **health and safety legislation, of social legislation and of information and consultation rights**, for all European workers, in the EU and the UK.
5. Both Parties to ensure **close cooperation** in relevant fields of mutual interest (e.g. research, energy and cross channel industrial supply chains).
6. The strengthening of the likelihood of a **level playing field** by ensuring that:
  - a. The **non-regression clause** is extended to the **whole** EU social acquis.
  - b. The UK keeps pace with the EU in any **future improvements** in employment or social standards.
  - c. The **CJEU remains the sole arbitrator of union law** and its rulings should be referred to in cases of social and employment standards.
  - d. The **place of work principle**<sup>6</sup> is applied.

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<sup>5</sup> IndustriAll Europe does not support the UK Government’s decision to leave the single market and the Customs Union and we continue to believe that tariff-free, barrier-free, frictionless trade is best for European industry and its workers.

<sup>6</sup> Place of work principle: guarantee of the same pay for the same work in the same place.

7. A commitment from the UK and the EU to **counteract any harmful impact** on jobs and local communities.
8. Social Partners have a genuine role in both the monitoring and the enforcement of the Withdrawal Agreement including the **power to submit official complaints**.
9. Full **transparency of the negotiation process** including the **involvement of Social Partners** from the beginning of the negotiations.