

First Minister calls for flexibility from EU27 to avoid 'catastrophic no deal'

In his second meeting with the European Chief Negotiator, the First Minister will reiterate that while the Welsh Government supports continued participation in the Single Market and customs union, the UK government's white paper should open the door for the start of serious negotiations.

The First Minister will also meet Sir Tim Barrow in Brussels, the UK Permanent Representative to the EU, and deliver a keynote speech at the European Policy Centre. During his address, the First Minister will restate the Welsh Government's Brexit priorities, consider the UK government's negotiating position and reflect on how the UK and the EU 27 can work together to secure a mutually beneficial Brexit deal.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, the First Minister said:

"While the Prime Minister refuses to admit that her ill-judged red lines are a thing of the past, she has – at long last – set out a vaguely credible negotiating position.

"The UKG White Paper advocates partial participation in the Single Market and continued participation in a Customs Union by any other name. There are many flaws in the proposals and far too many questions remain unanswered. However, I believe it is a basis on which more serious negotiations can now start.

"I urge the EU27 to show an element of flexibility to avoid the catastrophic 'no deal' scenario. The need for such co-operation is brought into sharp focus by the US administration's protectionist attacks on the UK and EU steel industry. A clear demonstration that the UK and the EU share core values and core interests.

"By stepping over the red lines and working together I believe we can reach an agreement that provides the basis for a long-term economic relationship."