European Council

Brussels, 13 December 2018
(OR. en)

EUCO XT 20022/18

BXT 131
CO EUR 32
CONCL 9

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Special meeting of the European Council (Art. 50) (13 December 2018) - Conclusions

Delegations[1] will find attached the conclusions adopted by the European Council (Art. 50) at the above meeting.

---

1 Following a notification under Article 50 TEU, the member of the European Council representing the withdrawing Member State shall not participate in the discussions of the European Council or in decisions concerning it.

1. The European Council reconfirms its conclusions of 25 November 2018, in which it endorsed the Withdrawal Agreement and approved the Political Declaration. The Union stands by this agreement and intends to proceed with its ratification. It is not open for renegotiation.

2. The European Council reiterates that it wishes to establish as close as possible a partnership with the United Kingdom in the future. It stands ready to embark on preparations immediately after signature of the Withdrawal Agreement to ensure that negotiations can start as soon as possible after the UK's withdrawal.

3. The European Council underlines that the backstop is intended as an insurance policy to prevent a hard border on the island of Ireland and ensure the integrity of the Single Market. It is the Union's firm determination to work speedily on a subsequent agreement that establishes by 31 December 2020 alternative arrangements, so that the backstop will not need to be triggered.

4. The European Council also underlines that, if the backstop were nevertheless to be triggered, it would apply temporarily, unless and until it is superseded by a subsequent agreement that ensures that a hard border is avoided. In such a case, the Union would use its best endeavours to negotiate and conclude expeditiously a subsequent agreement that would replace the backstop, and would expect the same of the United Kingdom, so that the backstop would only be in place for as long as strictly necessary.

5. The European Council calls for work on preparedness at all levels for the consequences of the United Kingdom's withdrawal to be intensified, taking into account all possible outcomes.