



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

## Statement of the COMECE Presidency on Brexit

For more than four years, Brexit has been a source of concern for the future, an element of instability for many people, families and communities on both sides of the English Channel.

From today onwards, the United Kingdom is no longer part of the European Union. We are saddened, but as defender of freedom of expression and democracy, the Catholic Church in Europe respects the will expressed by the British citizens during the 2016 Referendum.

As stated by the Bishops of the United Kingdom, we welcome the Brexit Deal recently achieved between the UK and the EU. It can be seen as a victory of common sense and good neighbourly relations. A No-Deal scenario would have had negative effects on both the United Kingdom and the European Union, but, overall, it would have been harmful for the most vulnerable people.

Even if the United Kingdom is no longer part of the EU, it will continue being part of Europe. We are all destined to live and work together in the full respect of everyone else's choices and diversities. It is crucial, therefore, to maintain good relations with each other.

We invite all people of good will to pray and work for the common good and make sure that Brexit will not succeed in shattering the fraternal relations between brothers and sisters on both shores of the sea.

It might be a long and challenging process, but it could also be an opportunity to trigger new dynamics between European peoples and rebuild a sense of community in Europe.

Despite Brexit, the Bishops' Conferences of the United Kingdom will remain an integral part of the Church in Europe. Their Bishop Delegates will even continue to be participating at COMECE, at the political level as observer members, and at the technical level within the framework of the COMECE Commissions and Working Groups.

**COMECE Standing Committee**