

Background note

Activities of the European Affairs Committee on monitoring the process of withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union

Since the beginning of the process of withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (*Brexit*), the European Affairs Committee has sought to monitor the several stages of negotiation, as well as to understand the scope of the measures to be implemented, and it is mainly concerned with the rights of Portuguese citizens in the United Kingdom and with the implications of this withdrawal to the Member States as a whole, but also with the implementation of a thoughtful and transparent process.

Therefore, the European Affairs Committee, which scrutinises the varied topics on the European agenda by creating monitoring dossiers per topic, has designated two permanent rapporteurs for each of the 8 dossiers set to date.

Regarding the dossier on the *Process of withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (BREXIT)*, had as permanent rapporteurs during the XIII Legislature, the MP Rubina Berardo (PSD) and MP Carla Tavares (PS), who monitored the work of the Committee on this matter.

In addition, the European Affairs Committee held several hearings on this issue, namely with the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Portugal, Kirsty Hayes, always focusing on topics related to the rights of citizens, issues linked to the relationship with Ireland and the Union's borders, as well as maintaining the bilateral relations between Portugal and the United Kingdom. Was also held a hearing on February 6, 2019 with the Ambassador Christopher Sainty, who took office after the former Ambassador.

The European Affairs Committee held two public hearing sessions on Brexit, inviting several entities proposed by the different Parliamentary Groups, representing various areas of activity.

The European Affairs Committee held hearings with various members of the Government, namely the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education, the Minister of Home Affairs, the Minister of Economy and the Secretary of State for Tourism, as well as the Secretary of State for Agriculture and Food, in order to better understand Brexit's sectoral impacts.

Other hearings were held by the European Affairs Committee, namely with Dr. Luís Araújo, President of Turismo de Portugal, in order to better inform about the impacts of Brexit on Portuguese tourism and economy, as well as the measures taken to address them, and with Eng. António Saraiva, President of the Portuguese Business Confederation (CIP), accompanied by Dr. Pedro Capucho - Economic Affairs Department and Dr. João Almeida - CIP Vice President, to present the study "The economic consequences of Brexit for the economy and the Portuguese companies".

The Committee also heard the EU Chief Negotiator for this process, Michel Barnier, and the transparency of the negotiation, the required solidarity between Member States, the protection of the rights of citizens living in the United Kingdom and of UK citizens living in other Member States, the financial agreement, and the border issue with Ireland were highlighted.

The presence of Lord Boswell, Chairman of the European Union Select Committee of the House of Lords in the UK Parliament, in the European Affairs Committee to debate topics related to the process of withdrawal of the United Kingdom should also be mentioned, pointing to the relevance of the issues raised by this process, namely in what concerns the citizens, advocating for the protection of the terms of parliamentary scrutiny on this matter and the need to avoid an abrupt exit by the

United Kingdom, additionally mentioning the importance of the bilateral relations between Portugal and the United Kingdom.

Regarding concerns with the issues facing Ireland in this process and other related topics, a hearing was promoted with Ireland's Minister for European Affairs, Helen McEntee.

Invitations for a hearing in the European Affairs Committee were also addressed to Ambassador João de Vallera, as coordinator of the task-force for Brexit, and Bernardo Trindade, as President of the *Portugal IN* Mission Structure Executive Committee, and the hearings were consecutively held on 11 July 2017.

Several requests presented by parliamentary groups were approved by the Committee in relation to *Brexit* and for scheduling hearings with the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Portugal in order to get an update on the situation, whenever necessary, as well as with Bernardo Trindade and Sofia Alves, Head of the European Commission Representation in Portugal.

Therefore, the European Affairs Committee also heard, whenever relevant, if requested or imposed by the Law on Monitoring, assessment and pronouncement by the *Assembleia da República* within the scope of the process of constructing the European Union, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and/or the Secretary of State for European Affairs, mainly after European Council meetings to debate its conclusions.

The Chairwoman of the European Affairs Committee also granted several audiences on this issue, namely with the Ambassador of the Republic of Ireland to Portugal, Orla Tunney, for a courtesy visit prior to the meeting with Ireland's Minister for European Affairs, Helen McEntee (June 2018). This audience mainly focused on the impact of *Brexit* on Ireland, the progress in the negotiations and the difficult situation in the United Kingdom, as well as the challenges regarding

Northern Ireland, and other items on the European agenda such as migration and the multiannual financial framework.

Other audiences with Kirsty Hayes, Ambassador of the United Kingdom, on the speech given by the Prime Minister, Theresa May, in Florence (October 2017) about the negotiations for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, and with Antoine Comte-Bellot, Diplomatic Advisor to the Embassy of France and Isabelle de Frayssinet, Advisor for European Affairs to the Embassy of France on *Brexit* (April 2017) are worth mentioning.

Within the scope of the legislative initiative, the PSD Parliamentary Group submitted a Draft Resolution on – Recommendation to the Government for the urgent execution of a study on the implications of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union to the Portuguese economy – which was debated in the European Affairs Committee and approved in plenary sitting in December 2017.

Also in the framework of the legislative initiative, the Government introduced the Bill No. 187 - *Aprova medidas de contingência a aplicar na eventualidade de uma saída do Reino Unido da União Europeia sem acordo*¹ - discussed in the European Affairs Committee. This Bill was approved in a plenary session of Assembleia da República, on the 27 March 2019, with the Committee proposing a replacement text.

Despite the monitoring by the *Assembleia da República*, the European Affairs Committee carried out, on 5-7 February 2018, a working visit to the British Parliament and on 16-17 April 2019, a working visit to the Irish Parliament and border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, as part of the ongoing *Brexit* process, one of the priority items on the Committee's agenda.

¹ Approves contingency measures to be applied in the event of an exit from the United Kingdom without agreement maintaining equal citizens' rights either Portuguese or English, living in United Kingdom or Portugal.

At the working visit to the British Parliament, the delegation was composed of the Chairwoman of the Committee, MP Regina Bastos, MP Inês Domingos (PSD), MP Carla Tavares (PS), MP Isabel Pires (BE), MP Miguel Tiago (PCP) and MP Pedro Mota Soares (CDS-PP).

The visit to the British Parliament foreseen in the activity plan of this Committee involved meetings with two House of Commons Committees, and their Chairs: Hilary Benn, Chair of the Committee on Exiting the EU e William Cash, Chair of the European Scrutiny Committee. The meeting with the European Union Select Committee of the House of Lords was also accompanied by its Chair, Lord Boswell of Aynho.

These meetings, which focused on deepening the inter-parliamentary political debate and in particular *Brexit*, were also attended by the Ambassador of Portugal to the United Kingdom, Manuel Lobo Antunes, and the two main concerns in this process in connection with the protection of the rights of Portuguese citizens in the United Kingdom and maintaining the bilateral relations between both States were addressed.

At the working visit to the Irish Parliament and the border, the delegation was composed of the Chairwoman of the Committee, MP Regina Bastos, MP Maria Luís Albuquerque (PSD), MP Vitalino Canas (PS), MP Isabel Pires (BE) and MP Paula Santos (PCP).

The working visit to the Irish Parliament, foreseen in the activity plan of this Committee, involved the visit to the Killeen border and meetings with the Newry Chamber of Commerce, represented by its CEO Colm Shannon and other individuals. The meeting with the Department of Foreign Affairs was accompanied by the Directors Ruth Parkin and Conleth Brady. The delegation also met with Seanad Special Select Committee, President Senator Neale Richmond, Dáil Éireann President, Oireachtas lower house, Seán Ó Fearghaíl TD and Seanad

Éireann President Senator Denis O'Donovan. The delegation was received at the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs by its Chairman, Mr Michael Healy-Rae TD and present members.

These meetings, which focused on deepening the inter-parliamentary political debate and in particular Brexit, were also attended by the Ambassador of Portugal in Dublin, Dr. Miguel Almeida e Sousa and the Head of Mission, Dr. Rogério Alves, and the three main concerns in this process in connection with the protection of the rights of Portuguese citizens in the United Kingdom and Ireland, the backstop and possibility of physical border and maintaining the bilateral relations between Portugal and the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

There were several interventions by Members of the European Affairs Committee in inter-parliamentary meetings related to the challenges in this process, specifically mentioned by the Chairwoman of the European Affairs Committee in COSAC Chairs meetings and in the COSAC plenary meeting.

Appendices

Permanent Dossiers

VIII	Process of withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (BREXIT)	Carla Tavares (PS) Rubina Berardo (PSD)
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Hearings

2019-07-04	Minister of Foreign Affairs	Hearing after the European Council of 20/21 and 30 June and 1 and 2 July 2019
2019-03-26	Confederação Empresarial de Portugal - Dr. Óscar Gaspar; British in Europe - Tig James	Public Hearing - Brexit
2019-03-26	Minister of Foreign Affairs	Public Hearing - Brexit
2019-03-26	Minister of Foreign Affairs; Secretary of State for European Affairs	Regimental Hearing under RAR Article 104 (2) and hearing after the European Council of 21 and 22 March 2019
2019-03-21	Minister of Economy and the Secretary of State for Tourism	Public Hearing - Brexit
2019-03-20	Minister of Home Affairs	Public Hearing - Brexit
2019-03-20	Minister of Finance	Public Hearing - Brexit
2019-03-19	Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education	Public Hearing - Brexit
2019-03-19	Luís Araújo - President of Turismo de Portugal	Public Hearing - Brexit
2019-03-14	Secretary of State for Agriculture and Food	Public Hearing - Brexit
2019-02-26	CGTP-IN - Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses - Inter-Sindical; Sindicato dos Funcionários do Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras - SCIFSEF; Conselho das Comunidades Portuguesas CCP; Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Consulares e das Missões Diplomáticas STCDE; Ordem dos Advogados; AFIP - Associação FinTech e InsurTech em Portugal; AEM - Associação de Empresas Emitentes de Valores Cotados em	Public Hearing - Brexit



ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA

European Affairs Committee

	Mercado;APFIPP - Associação Portuguesa de Fundos de Investimento, Pensões e Patrimónios;CTP - Confederação do Turismo Português;CONFAGRI - Confederação Nacional das Cooperativas Agrícolas de Portugal;CPPME - Confederação Portuguesa das Micro, Pequenas e Médias Empresas	
2019-02-06	Chris Sainty - United Kingdom Ambassador to Portugal	BREXIT
2019-01-17	Michel Barnier	Hearing with Brexit Chief Negotiator – Michel Barnier
2018-12-18	Secretary of State for European Affairs	Heating after the European Council of 13 and 14 December 2018
2018-12-04	Antonio Saraiva - President of CIP; Pedro Capucho - Department of Economic Affairs; João Almeida - Vice President of CIP	Presentation of the study “The economic consequences of Brexit for the Portuguese economy and business”
2018-10-23	Secretary of State for European Affairs	Hearing on the conclusions of the European Council of 17 and 18 October.
2018-10-10	Secretary of State for European Affairs	Hearing with the Secretary of State for European Affairs within the scope of the Leaders' Agenda of 18 and 19 September in Salzburg by request of the CDS-PP Parliamentary Group
2018-07-10	Secretary of State for European Affairs	Hearing after the European Council of 28 June 2018
2018-06-20	Deputy Head of Mission to the Embassy – Tom Redmond Ambassador of the Republic of Ireland to	Irish Minister for European Affairs – Helen McEntee



ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA

European Affairs Committee

	Portugal – Orla Tunney Director for European Affairs – Paul McGarry Chief of Cabinet – David Lea	
2018-06-06	Kirsty Hayes, Ambassador of the United Kingdom Bernardo Trindade, President of the “Portugal IN” Mission Structure Executive Committee	Update on Brexit Negotiations
2018-05-24	Michel Barnier	Hearing with Brexit Chief Negotiator – Michel Barnier
2018-05-15	Representative of the European Commission in Portugal, Sofia Alves	Presentation of the activities of the European Commission Representation in Portugal; Debate on European current affairs, namely the United Kingdom exit from the European Union; Multiannual Financial Framework
2018-03-08	Minister for Foreign Affairs	HEARING WITH THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS – After the informal European Council of 23 February and Regulatory pursuant to Article 104(2) of the Rules of Procedure
2017-12-20	Secretary of State for European Affairs	Hearing with the Secretary of State for European Affairs, Ana Paula Zacarias, after the European Council of 14 December 2017 (Article 4(f) of Law no. 43/2006, of 25 August 2006, as amended by Law no. 21/2012, of 17 May 2012).
2018-12-13	Kirsty Hayes, Ambassador of the United Kingdom	Hearing with the Ambassador of the United Kingdom in Portugal, Kirsty Hayes, on the development of Brexit negotiations.
2017-10-24	Secretary of State for European Affairs Secretary of State for Internationalisation	Hearing with the Secretary of State for European Affairs, Ana Paula Zacarias, after the European Council of 19 and 20 October 2017 (Article 4(f) of Law no. 43/2006, of 25 August 2006, as amended by Law no. 21/2012, of 17 May 2012).
2017-07-11	Bernardo Trindade, President of the “Portugal IN” Mission Structure Executive Committee	Hearing with Bernardo Trindade, President of the “Portugal IN” Mission Structure Executive Committee.



ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA

European Affairs Committee

2017-07-11	Ambassador João de Vallera	Hearing with Ambassador João de Vallera on Brexit.
2017-05-16	Representative of the European Commission in Portugal, Sofia Alves	Hearing with the Representative of the European Commission in Portugal, Sofia Alves, on Brexit and the White Paper on the Future of Europe.
2017-06-27	Secretary of State for European Affairs	Hearing with the Secretary of State for European Affairs, Margarida Marques, after the European Council of 22 and 23 June 2017 (Article 4(f) of Law no. 43/2006, of 25 August 2006, as amended by Law no. 21/2012, of 17 May 2012).
2017-05-04	Secretary of State for European Affairs	Hearing with the Secretary of State for European Affairs, Margarida Marques, after the European Council of 29 April 2017, (Article 4(f) of Law no. 43/2006, of 25 August 2006, as amended by Law no. 21/2012, of 17 May 2012).
2017-04-18	Secretary of State for European Affairs Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Kirsty Isobel Hayes	Hearing with the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Portugal, Kirsty Hayes
2017-04-05	Lord Tim Boswell	Hearing with Lord Boswell, Chairman of European Union Select Committee of the House of Lords in the UK.

Audiences

Ambassador of the Republic of Ireland to Portugal, Orla Tunney	Courtesy visit prior to the meeting with Ireland's Minister for European Affairs, Helen McEntee	2018-06-15
Kirsty Hayes, Ambassador of the United Kingdom	Speech on the negotiations for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, by the Prime Minister, Theresa May, in Florence	2017-10-03
Antoine Comte-Bellot, Diplomatic Advisor to the	Brexit	2017-04-20



ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA

European Affairs Committee

Embassy of France Isabelle de Frayssinet, Advisor for European Affairs to the Embassy of France		
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Draft Resolution

XIII/2 – Draft Resolution

875	Recommendation to the Government for the urgent execution of a study on the implications to the economy (...)	2017-05-17	PSD	[DAR II series A 112 XIII/2 18/05/2017 p. 21-22]
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