

# Davidson and Sturgeon speak out over Brexit talks

MSP for Edinburgh Central and Leader of the Scottish Conservatives, Ruth Davidson MSP has spoken out against the proposed deal on Brexit which hinged on a special deal for Northern Ireland. Talks between the UK government and the EU Commission ended with no agreement in evidence yesterday afternoon.



It appears that the DUP which supports the government at Westminster would not allow the government to agree to something which would leave Northern Ireland in a situation which is separate and different from the rest of the UK.

In a statement earlier Ms Davidson said : “The question on the Brexit ballot paper asked voters whether the UK should stay or leave the European Union – it did not ask if the country should be divided by different deals for different home nations.

“While I recognise the complexity of the current negotiations, no government of the Conservative and Unionist Party should countenance any deal that compromises the political, economic or constitutional integrity of the United Kingdom.

“All sides agree there should be no return to the borders of the past between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

“Similarly, jeopardising the UK’s own internal market is in no-one’s interest.

“If regulatory alignment in a number of specific areas is the requirement for a frictionless border, then the Prime Minister should conclude this must be on a UK-wide basis.”

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon issued a statement yesterday afternoon in which she also rejected any idea of a deal which allowed Northern Ireland to be treated differently from Scotland.

She said : “Despite the fact that no deal on the Irish border issue has been reached today, and while full details of any such deal are still to become clear, I welcome the fact that there now appears to be the outline of an agreement which would ensure that there is no return to a hard border on the island of Ireland.

“The potential for a hard border has been one of the most concerning aspects of Brexit, and the UK Government’s position to date on protecting the terms of the Good Friday Agreement has left much to be desired.

“While I welcome the proposed commitment for Ireland and Northern Ireland – and while the particular circumstances in Scotland are distinct and separate from those in Ireland – today’s developments show very clearly that if one part of UK can retain regulatory alignment with the EU and effectively stay in the single market, there is no good practical reason why others cannot do the same.

“Indeed, any special status for Northern Ireland would make a similar solution for Scotland even more vital. For Scotland to find itself outside the single market, while Northern Ireland effectively stays in would place us at a double disadvantage when it comes to jobs and investment.

“While the simplest answer to the Brexit problem is for the whole UK to stay in the single market, the Scottish Government has already put forward very detailed compromise proposals for how Scotland’s place in the single market could be maintained if the rest of the UK insists on leaving – proposals which were previously rejected by the UK Government as unworkable. Indeed, if Northern Ireland is effectively kept in the single

market it makes it all the more vital for Scotland's national and economic interests that we are too.

"Today's developments also demonstrate in the clearest possible way, through the role played by the Irish Government at the top table in Europe, the importance of being independent when it comes to defending your vital national interests.

"Scotland voted overwhelmingly to remain in the EU, and the Scottish Government will continue to make the case, as strongly as ever, for that democratic choice by the people of Scotland to be respected and for our place in Europe to be protected."