
Brexit: Britain Will Leave EU Single Market, May Says

17/01/2017



May said the final exit deal would be put to parliament for a vote and that plans to launch the two-year exit negotiation process by the end of March.

Britain will leave the EU's single market when it exits the European Union, Prime Minister Theresa May said on Tuesday, putting an end to speculation that London might try to seek a "soft Brexit."

In a long-awaited speech in which she sought to define the country's future as a global player that aims to trade freely far beyond Europe, May said the final exit deal would be put to parliament for a vote.

May said she would seek an equal partnership with the EU but that she would not adopt models already used by other countries that have free trade agreements with the bloc.

Her statement that Britain would leave the single market was by far the clearest indication she has ever given of her plans for the future, after months of criticism that she was not being sufficiently transparent.

"I want to be clear: What I am proposing cannot mean membership of the single market," May told an audience of foreign diplomats and Britain's own Brexit negotiating team at a mansion house in London.

"Instead we seek the greatest possible access to it though a new comprehensive, bold and ambitious free trade agreement. That agreement may take in elements of current single market arrangements in certain areas," May said.

Her announcement that she will put the final Brexit deal to a vote in both houses of parliament comes ahead of a court decision on whether she has the power to start the process of withdrawing without parliamentary approval.

She has said she plans to launch the two-year exit negotiation process by the end of March.

