

No breakthrough in Brexit talks as new deadline approaches

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Brussels: British Prime Minister Theresa May failed on Friday to make any breakthrough in Brexit talks with the European Union, as time runs out to move the negotiations into a critical second phase before the end of the year.

Britain PM Theresa May met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel at a summit in Brussels.

At a summit in Brussels, May met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the leaders of Belgium, Denmark, Lithuania and European Council President Donald Tusk, seeking to move the talks onto future relations between Britain and the EU, especially their trade ties.

She said that the talks had been progressing in a positive atmosphere, but was short on details about what, if anything, had been resolved.

Britain is set to leave the bloc on March 29, 2019, but the negotiations must be wrapped up in less than a year to leave parliaments time to ratify the agreement.

EU leaders are set to decide in three weeks if the negotiations have made "sufficient progress" - on Britain's financial settlement, the status of Irish borders and the rights of citizens hit by Brexit - for the talks to be expanded.

Currently, it seems unlikely that will happen.

After his meeting with May, Tusk tweeted that "sufficient progress" by the December 14-15 EU summit could yet be made, "but still a huge challenge. We need to see progress from UK within 10 days on all issues, including on Ireland."

May refused to say how much progress was made on the future of the border between EU member state Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK, or on the size of the divorce bill.

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