

06. July 2017

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## Brexit begins: how to avoid disaster & make the most of it for both sides

### KAS UK & Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies

**On 27 June 2017 KAS UK hosted a series of expert workshops and a public panel discussion with the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (WMCES) to discuss the challenges facing the UK and the EU27 as the Brexit negotiations begin. This particular topic could not have been more relevant or better timed considering that the event was initially set out months before the UK election was first called.**



The public debate brought together an expert panel featuring Mikuláš Dzurinda, President of the WMCES and Former Prime Minister of Slovakia; Lord Jonathan Hill, Former European Commissioner; Dara Murphy, Vice-President of the European People's Party; Paulo Portas, Former Deputy Prime Minister of Portugal; and Quentin Peel of Chatham House.

Mikuláš Dzurinda started the proceedings with a rather positive outlook by stating "I am an optimist, because I have never met a

pessimist able to meet his or her goal," but called for the upcoming Brexit negotiations to be more "strategic than tactical." Lord Jonathan Hill highlighted how both sides are accentuating differences between them, driving each other to take a more extreme position, when instead they should actually "emphasise shared history and shared values," a position felt by many. Dara Murphy added to the debate by discussing the resulting situation in Ireland and expressed how it is currently a lose-lose situation for both the UK and Irish Republic. Finally, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Portugal, Paulo Portas, shared his personal insight on the lack of clarity involved with Brexit which he described as a "U.P.O – unidentified political object".

The lively panel discussion brought to light a number of issues facing both sides in the upcoming negotiations. As a British participant, Lord Hill even thanked his panelists for a "more grown up debate than usually takes place in London or Brussels."



*Left to right: Paulo Portas, Dara Murphy, Jonathan Hill, Mikulas Dzurinda, Quentin Peel.*