

Germany ‘ditches plan for EU Brexit talks’ amid concern over lack of progress



German Chancellor Angela Merkel. (PA)

Germany has reportedly scrapped plans to discuss Brexit at a high-level meeting next week because Britain and the EU have made no “tangible progress” over the summer.

According to The Guardian, Germany — which holds the rotating presidency of the EU council — had intended to discuss Britain’s departure at a September 2 meeting of ambassadors.

But the issue is said to have been removed from the agenda after weeks of talks in which the two sides remained deadlocked on a host of issues.

An EU diplomat told the title: “Since there hasn’t been any tangible progress in EU-UK negotiations, the Brexit item was taken off the agenda.”

The move follows downbeat statements last Friday from both the EU and UK chief negotiators after the latest round of negotiations.

Michel Barnier, the bloc's Brexit lead, said a post-Brexit trade deal "seems unlikely", and said he was "disappointed" at the state of the talks.

On the UK side, David Frost said the EU had made it "unnecessarily difficult" to make progress and called for movement on a host of issues before "substantive work can be done in any other area of the negotiation, including on legal texts".

The UK is pushing for any agreement to respect its regulatory autonomy and status as an independent coastal state now it has left the EU.

But Brussels has been adamant that any deal cannot see Britain undercut its environmental and worker standards or state aid rules.

Failure to strike a deal, which the EU wants done by October, would leave the two sides trading on World Trade Organization terms, imposing a host of tariffs and quotas once the current transition period covering their relationship expires at the end of this year.

Source:

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