

## **A Step Forward in Negotiations between UK and EU**

On 08.12.2017 the European Commission was able to recommend to the European Council that they were satisfied with the progress made in the first stage of negotiations and that they felt able to move on with the Brexit Talks. Following this recommendation it was up to the European Council on 15.12.2017 to decide if they agreed that sufficient progress had been made following the reaching of an initial agreement on Ireland, Citizenship Rights and the 'Divorce Bill' to allow talks to move on to the second stage.

Michel Barnier, the European Commission's Chief Negotiator, has referred to the first stage of negotiations in the following context: *"The Commission's assessment is based on the real, genuine progress made in each of our three priority areas. By agreeing on these issues, and settling the past, we can now move forward and discuss our future relationship on the basis of trust and confidence."* Source: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-17-5173\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-5173_en.htm). Looking at this it would appear that both the EU and the UK have come out of the first stage of negotiations feeling positive, however the EU has asked the UK negotiators to provide more clarity on the future relationship that the UK is looking to secure.

This next stage of negotiations between the two sides will focus on the future relationship between us on the areas of Trade, Defence and Security. This has been highly anticipated by the industry as in the coming months we are hoping to gain further clarity on how our Industry will be impacted by Brexit. Based on this Neptune Shipping Agency Ltd hope to be able to provide more updates that are related to our industry and advise how they could impact up on our clients.

## **VAT Accounting**

Neptune Shipping Agency Ltd are currently pursuing updates from HMRC and the Department for Exiting the European Union for updates on how VAT Accounting will be impacted following our departure from the EU and the Customs Union. We have recently been advised that HMRC are currently unable to provide us with updates as there is no published guidance or official advice for businesses in this area. We will continue to look into this matter and work closely with BIFA to ensure we are abreast of the situation at all times. Once we have been advised of any progress that has been made on this front Neptune will ensure you are updated.