Twitter Thread by Tony Connelly



Tony Connelly
@tconnellyRTE

NEW: European Commission president @vonderleyen: As things stand I cannot tell you whether there will be a deal or not, but I can tell you there is a path to an agreement now. The path may be very narrow but it is there.

2/ VDL - it is therefore our responsibility to continue trying.

3/ Commission president says the "good news" is we have found a way forward on most issues, but this is now a case of being "so close and yet being so far away from each other."

4/ VDL - level playing field: our aim is simply fair competition on our own market.

Says the "architecture" of a level playing field provision rests on two pillars: state aid and standards

5/ On state aid we have made progress based on common princples, guarantees of domestic enforcement, the possibility to autonomously remedy the situation where needed [ie, either side can take action if distortions of trade etc]

6/ On standards: "we have agreed a strong mechanism of non-regression, that's a big step forward, this to ensure our common, high labour, social and environmental standards will not be undercut."

7/ Diffulties remain on how to really future proof fair competition, but I'm glad to report that issues linked to governance are largely being resolved.

8/ VDL says discussion on fisheries "very difficult"

"We do not question the UK's sovereignty in its own waters, but we ask for predictability and stability for our fishermen and our fisherwomen."

9/ "In all honesty it sometimes feels that we will not be able to resolve this question, but we must continue to try and find a solution, and it is the only responsible and right course of action"

10/ VDL: the next days are going to be decisive. I know I have said this before and I know deadlines have been missed time and again. The clock puts us all in a very difficult situation, not least this parliament and its right to exercise democratic scrutiny and ratification.

11/ "That is why I want to sincerely thank you for your support and your understanding and I know that if we do get there I can count on you to ensure a good outcome."

12/ [VDL here clearly appealing to the EP to show flexibility in the coming days, ie if time runs out for the normal ratification procedures. She is in an awkward position having made a political commitment to MEPs that they wd not be asked to accept provisional application]