**David Frost’s Statement at the end of 9th round of negotiations with the EU**

*2nd October 2020*

“We have just completed the ninth Round of our negotiations with the EU about our future relationship.

“These were constructive discussions conducted in a good spirit.

“In many areas of our talks, although differences remain, the outlines of an agreement are visible.  This is true of most of the core areas of a trade and economic agreement – notably trade in goods and services, transport, energy, social security, and participation in EU programmes.  This has however been true for some time.

“I am also encouraged that progress has been possible on a law enforcement agreement and that there has been convergence on the structure of the overall partnership.

“In other areas familiar differences remain. On the level playing field, including subsidy policy, we continue to seek an agreement that ensures our ability to set our own laws in the UK without constraints that go beyond those appropriate to a free trade agreement.  There has been some limited progress here but the EU need to move further before an understanding can be reached.  On fisheries the gap between us is unfortunately very large and, without further realism and flexibility from the EU, risks being impossible to bridge.  These issues are fundamental to our future status as an independent country.

“I am concerned that there is very little time now to resolve these issues ahead of the European Council on 15 October.

“For our part, we continue to be fully committed to working hard to find solutions, if they are there to be found.”