

Tell us whether you accept cookies

We use [cookies to collect information](#) about how you use GOV.UK. We use this information to make the website work as well as possible and improve government services.

Accept all cookies

Set cookie preferences

 **GOV.UK**

Search



[Departments](#) [Worldwide](#) [How government works](#) [Get involved](#)
[Consultations](#) [Statistics](#) [News and communications](#)

The UK has left the EU

[Find out what this means for you](#)

[Hide message](#)

[Home](#) > [Government](#)

Speech

PM address to the nation: 31 January 2020

Prime Minister Boris Johnson addressed the nation.

Published 31 January 2020

From: [Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street](#) and [The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP](#)

Delivered on: **31 January 2020** (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)

Related content

[PM speech in Greenwich: 3 February 2020](#)

[Letters from the Prime Minister to Department for Exiting the European Union Ministers](#)

[The Future Relationship between the UK and the EU](#)

[PM speech at COP 26 Launch: 4 February 2020](#)



Tonight we are leaving the European Union

For many people this is an astonishing moment of hope, a moment they thought would never come

And there are many of course who feel a sense of anxiety and loss

And then of course there is a third group – perhaps the biggest – who had started to worry that the whole political wrangle would never come to an end

I understand all those feelings, and our job as the government – my job – is to bring this country together now and take us forward

And the most important thing to say tonight is that this is not an end but a beginning

This is the moment when the dawn breaks and the curtain goes up on a new act in our great national drama

And yes it is partly about using these new powers – this recaptured sovereignty – to deliver the changes people voted for

Whether that is by controlling immigration or creating freeports or liberating our fishing industry or doing free trade deals

Or simply making our laws and rules for the benefit of the people of this country

And of course I think that is the right and healthy and democratic thing to do

Because for all its strengths and for all its admirable qualities, the EU has evolved over 50 years in a direction that no longer suits this country

And that is a judgment that you, the people, have now confirmed at the polls

Not once but twice

And yet this moment is far bigger than that

It is not just about some legal extrication

It is potentially a moment of real national renewal and change

This is the dawn of a new era in which we no longer accept that your life chances – your family's life chances - should depend on which part of the country you grow up in

This is the moment when we really begin to unite and level up

Defeating crime, transforming our NHS, and with better education, with superb technology

And with the biggest revival of our infrastructure since the Victorians

We will spread hope and opportunity to every part of the UK

And if we can get this right I believe that with every month that goes by we will grow in confidence not just at home but abroad

And in our diplomacy, in our fight against climate change,

In our campaigns for human rights or female education or free trade we will rediscover muscles that we have not used for decades

The power of independent thought and action

Not because we want to detract from anything done by our EU friends – of course not

We want this to be the beginning of a new era of friendly cooperation

Between the EU and an energetic Britain.

A Britain that is simultaneously a great European power

And truly global in our range and ambitions

And when I look at this country's incredible assets

Our scientists, our engineers, our world-leading universities, our armed forces

When I look at the potential of this country waiting to be unleashed

I know that we can turn this opportunity into a stunning success

And whatever the bumps in the road ahead

I know that we will succeed

We have obeyed the people

We have taken back the tools of self-government

Now is the time to use those tools to unleash the full potential of this brilliant country and to make better the lives of everyone in every corner of our United Kingdom.

Published 31 January 2020

Explore the topic

[Government](#)

Is this page useful? [Yes](#) [No](#)

[Is there anything wrong with this page?](#)

Transition period

[Find out what it means for you](#)

Services and information

[Benefits](#)

[Births, deaths, marriages and care](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

[Money and tax](#)

[Passports, travel and living abroad](#)

[Visas and immigration](#)

[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

Departments and policy

[How government works](#)

[Departments](#)

[Worldwide](#)

[Services](#)

[Guidance and regulation](#)

[News and communications](#)

[Research and statistics](#)

[Policy papers and consultations](#)

[Transparency and freedom of information releases](#)

[Help](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookies](#) [Contact](#) [Accessibility statement](#) [Terms and conditions](#)
[Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg](#) Built by the [Government Digital Service](#)

OGL All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright