

# THE RT HON. ANDREA LEADSOM MP



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

28th November 2018

Dear Resident,

On 20th February 2016, you were the first to know my views on David Cameron's reform negotiations with the European Union. After years of work with Parliamentary colleagues researching the possibilities for reform whilst remaining a member of the EU, the reality of the renegotiation was so poor that I concluded that our sights should be set firmly on the global stage and that we should therefore leave the EU.

I believe with absolute conviction that the vote to leave was in the UK's best interests. We have a superb future as a global leader, advocating for free trade and human rights, rebuilding old relationships and forging new ones with other sovereign nations around the world, many of whom are rapidly growing and expanding their own horizons.

From debates on the doorstep and village halls in South Northamptonshire, to the televised stage at Wembley, I made an informed and passionate case for the world of opportunity that lay ahead if we reclaimed our position as an independent trading nation with partners in every part of the globe.

Now, as in 2016, I want my constituents to be the first to know my views on the Brexit deal that has been negotiated by the Prime Minister.

Since that historic decision in 2016, I have played my part in seeking to deliver on the referendum result as a member of the Government. As Environment Secretary this included working on a new system of agricultural support to replace the Common Agricultural Policy, new policies for the UK to become an independent coastal state, as well as developing the very best environmental protections in the world.

Since June 2017, I have served as Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons. My role includes taking legislation, including all Brexit legislation, through Parliament as well as working closely with Government departments to plan for Day One after we leave the EU, including 'no deal'.

I pay tribute to the Prime Minister for her determination to seek the best deal for the UK, in the run up to our departure on 29th March 2019. She has clearly set out her intention to protect the integrity of the UK, whilst protecting the rights of citizens and the jobs that we all rely on. She deserves our support at this time.

There's no doubt that this has been a very tough negotiation, and I share the concern about the potential for the UK to become stuck in a customs backstop once the planned implementation period comes to an end in December 2020. This is a worry of many of my colleagues in Parliament and this risk is clearly evident in the Withdrawal Agreement that will form a legally binding treaty between the UK and the EU.

*Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire*





The Political Declaration that accompanies the Withdrawal Agreement has also been agreed between the UK and the 27 remaining EU Member States. This sets out the shared intentions for our future relationship, and whilst not legally binding it will form the basis for those negotiations which can begin once we are a 'third country' next April. Crucially, as I myself pressed for, the Political Declaration sets out alternatives to the issue of the 'backstop', including technological solutions or any other solution agreed by the UK and the EU. It's important to note that, like the UK, the EU will also not want the backstop arrangements. In their view, it would give the UK full access to EU markets without the huge payments we have had to make as a Member State, and also, vitally, without free movement.

This has been a challenging journey for many of us, and compromises had to be made on both sides. However, two things are certain - first, that this is the only deal on the table, and second, that it means we will leave on 29th March 2019. I believe that the Political Declaration offers the route to a good future relationship, and therefore my conclusion is that I must support the deal, and our Prime Minister, and continue my efforts to make sure we get the Brexit so many of us voted for.

It is important to note that the Prime Minister's negotiation delivers on the Brexit priorities that this country voted for:

- We will regain control of our borders, putting an end to free movement and replacing it with an immigration policy based on merit and entirely at the UK's discretion.
- The supremacy of the European Court of Justice over UK laws will cease after the implementation period.
- We will be outside of the Common Agricultural Policy and able to decide for ourselves how best to support our agriculture sector and rural communities.
- The Common Fisheries Policy will no longer apply to UK waters and by regaining full control over our territorial waters we will be able to decide who we will allow to access them.
- Our contributions to the EU's budget, the Multiannual Financial Framework, will end, allowing us to spend more on your priorities and be accountable for those decisions.
- We can negotiate our own free trade deals as an independent trading nation beyond our partnership with the EU.
- The rights of both EU citizens currently living in the UK and those of UK nationals living in the EU will be protected after the end of the implementation period, maintaining their access to healthcare, pensions and more.

We have just four months to go until we leave the EU and we have to make sure that nothing happens that can stop Brexit. Whilst I have every confidence that the UK would survive and thrive with a managed 'no deal' exit, there is no other deal on the table.



I am determined that although some seek to frustrate the process, we will be leaving the EU in March as planned. Any change to this would be a betrayal of how the people voted in 2016, and I will not stand by to watch that happen. I intend to support the meaningful vote to take us into the negotiations on our future relationship with the EU. As a Leave-supporting Cabinet Member with many years of experience of the EU's priorities, I have been assured I will have a central role in deciding the future relationship, and I will personally work to ensure that we never find ourselves in the backstop.

I believe in the bright future that awaits us when we leave the EU, and I am determined to deliver on the referendum result.

With very best wishes,

*Andrea*

The Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom MP.