



Committee on Exiting the European Union

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union
9 Downing Street
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Dear Dominic

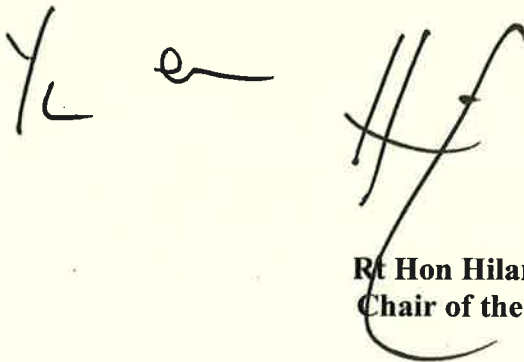
30 October 2018

Thank you for your letter of 24 October. I am writing to confirm the evidence session on 21 November at which we will expect to hear from Oliver Robbins and yourself, whether a deal has been finalised by that date or not.

As I said in my last letter, we had planned to take evidence from you after the October European Council as part of an established pattern of regular updates that we had received, both from you and your predecessor, on the progress of the negotiations following European Council meetings. I am disappointed that you decided not to continue this pattern, despite having made a commitment to do so in writing to me on 23 August. It is not sufficient or effective for the Committee to ask questions of you through correspondence until a deal has been concluded, as you suggest in your letter. Having been a member of this Committee, you will know that this is not how committees undertake inquiries and is not conducive to scrutiny.

I note as well the concern of the House of Lords' European Union Committee following your decision not to give evidence to them until after a deal has been finalised. As they point out, your predecessor made a commitment to the House to "certainly match and, hopefully, improve on what the European Parliament sees" during these negotiations. However, with Michel Barnier meeting "almost daily" with the European Parliament's Brexit Coordinator, that commitment is not being met. In fact, having taken evidence from Michel Barnier in September, my Committee has heard more recently from the EU negotiator than from those leading the negotiations for the UK.

I would therefore urge you to confirm as soon as possible that both you and Oliver Robbins will give evidence on 21 November regardless of the state of negotiations at that point.



Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
Chair of the Committee

cc. Oliver Robbins