



Committee on Exiting the European Union

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon David Davis MP
Secretary of State for Exiting the EU
9 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AG

17 April 2018

Dear David,

I am writing to you in relation to the joint mapping exercise that has been undertaken by the Article 50 negotiators on the areas of north-south cooperation on the island of Ireland.

This mapping exercise was mentioned in paragraph 47 of the December Joint Report on the Phase 1 Agreement and in the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland in the draft Withdrawal Agreement. When the Committee visited Dublin in January, we heard that 142 areas of north-south cooperation had been identified. Furthermore, in November Robin Walker MP told the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee that these related to:

existing areas of co-operation; these are areas that are either covered under the six principles of the Belfast agreement and the six co-ordination bodies there, or they are areas where the Northern Ireland Executive has signed off on cooperation that exists between the north and the south under the auspices of the North-South Ministerial Council.

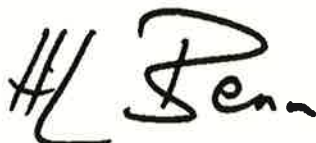
In the Committee's last report on the progress of the negotiations, we called for the results of the mapping exercise to be published. Given that you are appearing before the Committee next week, where I am sure this will be one of the issues that members will wish to raise, I am writing to ask you to provide this information before next Wednesday.

The Committee has previously welcomed your commitment to be as transparent as possible with Parliament and the public and I am sure that you recognise the particularly strong public interest in the results of this exercise. The Government has previously resisted publishing some material on the grounds that it could undermine its negotiating hand. This clearly does not apply in this case. The mapping exercise was conducted jointly by the EU and the UK and therefore both sides are aware of the results. As such, its

publication could not reveal anything that the EU does not already know. Furthermore, the results describe only the current cross-border arrangements. Publication would therefore reveal nothing of the Government's internal policy deliberations on options for end-state arrangements at the border.

I look forward to seeing you next week and to receiving this information before then.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H/ Benn'. The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Hilary Benn
Chair