



Department
for Exiting the
European Union

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

+44 (0)20 7004 1234
psdaviddavis@dexeu.gov.uk
www.gov.uk

Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
Chair, Exiting the European Union Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0PW

26 February 2018

Dear Hilary,

Thank you for your letter of 21 February, informing me of the Committee's intention to publish the preliminary economic analysis provided to you on 6 February. As you will appreciate it is still the government's firm position that the contents of this analysis are negotiation sensitive and as such it would not be in the national or public interest to publish. However, if you are still minded to do so, I would ask that you take into account a number of issues and redact certain elements.

As I and my Ministerial colleagues have said on a number of occasions, this analysis does not reflect government policy. It is preliminary, draft modelling of off-the-shelf scenarios that do not reflect the deal that we are seeking to agree with the EU. Let me be clear, this is a work in progress and as such is not appropriate for assessing options. Although there have been a number of unverified reports of the contents of the analysis, full publication of the work nevertheless gives unfinished, draft work an unwarranted, implicit, formal status which could weaken our negotiating position and risks giving a highly misleading impression to citizens, businesses and investors. The government has a duty to inform parliament, but no less of a duty to act in the national interest. I can not let the actions we take to honour the first of these duties excessively imperil the latter.

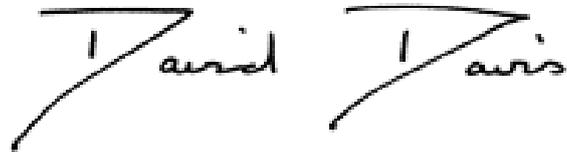
We have complied with this motion fully and as of today, 54 members of the Commons and Lords have visited the Westminster reading room and another 19 are booked to do so. As you know from your own time in Government, it is vitally important that officials are afforded the space to develop policy securely. We have to acknowledge that full publication will have a material impact on officials' ability to do so. Furthermore, through the publication of this analysis, the Committee's actions could set a significant new precedent on effectively rewarding leaks within government of information shared in confidence. I am sure that you can appreciate that the working environment that this would create would not be in the national interest.

We committed in the House on the 30th of January to provide parliament with appropriate analysis ahead of its vote on the final deal. This will be the right time for the government to present its work. It will allow parliament to scrutinise a complete analysis of the actual options based on the most accurate assessment we can make.

If, after considering these issues, the Committee is still minded to publish, there are indeed elements of the paper that I would like you to consider redacting on the basis of their particular sensitivity to the negotiations. I am grateful for your continued appreciation of this sensitivity. I would ask that my officials take forward the details and reasoning for this

request for redacting elements of the paper with the Clerk of the Committee at the earliest opportunity, prior to any publication of the analysis.

I am copying this letter to the Speaker.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D" for both the first and last names.

RT HON DAVID DAVIS MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION