THE HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS OF BREXIT

I write further to your letter of 27 November to the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union in relation to the Committee’s 5th Report of last session, 'The Human Rights Implications of Brexit'. The Committee has requested the Government’s position on the issues of residence rights and human rights clauses in trade agreements.

Residence Rights

From the very beginning of this process, the Prime Minister has been clear that safeguarding the rights of EU citizens living in the UK and giving reciprocal protections for UK nationals living in the EU was her first priority for the negotiations.

EU citizens who have made their lives in the UK have made a huge contribution to our country and we have put all our efforts into protecting their rights as soon as possible, with reciprocal guarantees for UK nationals living in the EU.

It is a commitment we have delivered. We have now reached an agreement with the European Commission on citizens’ rights that will respect the rights that individuals are exercising based on life choices they made before the UK’s withdrawal. It will provide them certainty about their rights going forward. And it means those living here before the UK’s withdrawal can stay and carry on living their lives broadly as now in the country they live.

More information can be found in the joint report from the negotiators of the European Union and the UK: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665869/Joint_report_on_progress_during_phase_1_of_negotiations_under_Article_50_TEU_on_the_United_Kingdom_s_orderly_withdrawal_from_the_European_Union.pdf

Trade Agreements

The UK has long supported the promotion of our values globally and this will continue as we leave the EU. We are committed to upholding the UK’s high standards. We are exploring all options in the design of future trade agreements, including possible human rights provisions within these.
The UK has a strong history of protecting human rights. We will continue to encourage all states to uphold international human rights obligations. It is important to remember that the UK was the first country to produce a National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

I hope the statements provided above on the issues raised in your letter satisfactorily conclude the matter of the Government’s response to the Committee’s 5th Report of the last session.

Finally, we would like to thank the Committee for the work it does and look forward to engaging with you further going forward.

DR PHILLIP LEE MP