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August 2017

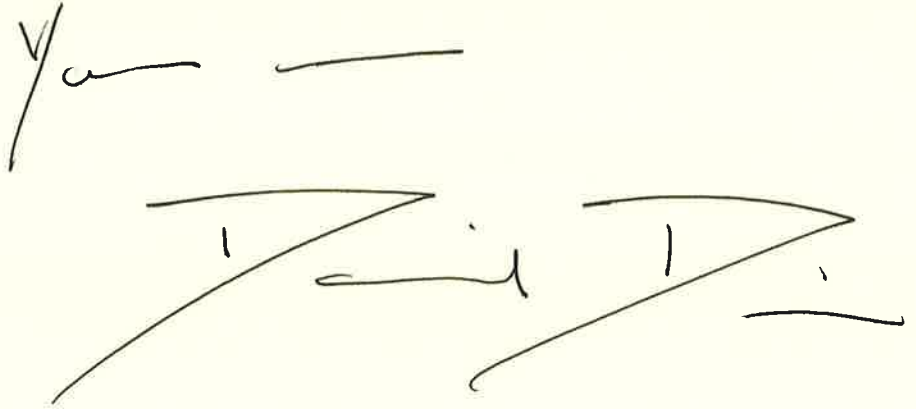
Thank you for your letter of 10 August. I am glad that the Committee found my update on the second round of negotiations helpful.

I note what you have said about the pace of negotiations and agree that Government needs to support committees in playing their scrutiny role. You will be aware that the Government is in the midst of publishing a series of papers which lay out our vision on the separation issues that will shape our future partnership with the European Union. I am sure that these will be of interest to the Committee, and one of the benefits of our transparent approach to the negotiations is the opportunity we are able to provide to committees to give the necessary scrutiny to the Government's approach. I hope therefore that the Committee will welcome these publications and the opportunity they provide.

Concerning Michel Barnier's engagement with the European Parliament, you will know the European Parliament has a distinct constitutional relationship with the Commission. The informal Brexit Steering Group, to which you refer, conducts meetings with Mr Barnier in private with no publicly available record of what was said. It is therefore not appropriate to compare such meetings with select committee public evidence sessions which take place in the UK Parliament.

It is also worth noting that Mr Barnier, as European chief negotiator, has delivered two speeches to the European Parliament, whereas I have made seven oral statements to the House of Commons. Of course, when making such statements my ministerial colleagues and I also routinely take questions and interventions from parliamentarians, something which is not customary in the European Parliament.

As you are aware I will be making a statement on the July and August rounds when the House returns in early September, and I will make further such statements after each negotiation round. Each of my statements has been repeated in the House of Lords; this will continue to be our practice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Davis', written in a cursive style.

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