

Antony Higginbotham MP
Member of Parliament for Burnley



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

25th July 2020

Dear Constituent,

Re: Extending the Transition Period

Thank you for contacting me about your wish for the UK to request an extension to the transitional period as we leave the EU. I am afraid I cannot support such a request.

Burnley overwhelmingly voted to leave the European Union in the referendum of 2016 and when I stood for election in December 2019 I made a promise to “Get Brexit Done” and, explicitly, not to support any extension. This was not meant simply as an election slogan but as a commitment to deliver the will of the people who live within our Borough.

But it is more than that. For four years businesses across the UK and the EU have had a cloud of uncertainty hanging over them, unsure when the relationship might change and what it might look like. Having voted to put into law that no extension could be requested, I was pleased to see Michael Gove formally give notice to the EU earlier this month that no request would be made. With that, the uncertainty over our end date has gone.

A free trade agreement with the EU is perfectly sensible; for both the UK and the EU. However, in order to reach that position we need to see good will on both sides and a recognition that the UK is a sovereign nation seeking free trade, not political union.

As a Member of the Future Relationship with the European Union Select Committee I have had the benefit of questioning witnesses on the progress of negotiations, including both Michel Barnier on the EU side and David Frost and Michael Gove on the UK side. You may be interested in the report we published just last week on progress that has been made in negotiations which you can view at the website below.

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/366/committee-on-the-future-relationship-with-the-european-union/>

The new partnership with the EU, and the rest of the world, presents our local businesses with a huge opportunity to capitalise on the opportunities that an independent trade policy provides. Realising those benefits by getting the hundreds of thousands of businesses across the UK, including many here in Burnley and Padiham, that don't currently export, exporting is something I am personally committed to. It will generate the economic growth of the future.

An extension to the transition period would only create more uncertainty for businesses and prolong negotiations for no reason. If there is a deal to be done, it can be done in the time remaining.

An extension to the transition period could also have significant economic and political consequences for the UK. Our contribution to the EU budget would continue and we would remain under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice. The UK left the EU in January this year and the EU's control over our affairs must come to an end.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me and wish you well.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Higginbotham'.

Antony Higginbotham MP
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