

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

20th November 2020

Dear Constituent,

RE: ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EU.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about leaving the European Union (EU) without reaching a further agreement on our future relationship before the end of the transition period. I have read your comments on this issue with great interest and fully appreciate the sincere place from which your concerns come.

The UK left the EU with a deal in January. Since that time, UK negotiators have sought a Canada-style free trade agreement with the EU that is based on the types of agreement that the EU has already agreed with friendly third countries in the past.

Over the past few weeks, the UK negotiating team has been working tirelessly with the EU to secure the best possible outcome for the United Kingdom in any future trading relationship. It takes two, however, to reach an agreement and it remains entirely possible that negotiations will not succeed. As the Prime Minister has previously explained, this means that we will have to prepare to trade with the bloc with arrangements similar to Australia's from the 1st January 2021.

The UK is due to leave the Single Market and the Customs Union at the end of the year regardless of whether further agreement is reached. Businesses must therefore prepare now for these changes. HMRC has written to 200,000 traders who trade with the EU to set out the new customs and tax rules that will be coming into force and how to respond to them. A Brexit Business Taskforce has also been established to provide a forum for dialogue with different business sectors. A significant investment in ports and border infrastructure was announced earlier this year and a nationwide advertising campaign on the steps we must all take at the end of the year is underway. Further information is available at www.gov.uk/transition.

Personally, I think if we can get a free trade deal, that is the optimum outcome at these times of great broader challenge owing to COVID-19, and given it is mutually-beneficial, but if that cannot be achieved, we will leave the transition period without one - and recent developments demonstrate the Government's serious willingness to pursue that option, should it be required. Ultimately, however, the clock is ticking and we need to know where we stand and move forward accordingly - but I remain confident that a good, mutually-beneficial agreement is still within the grasp of both sides.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE