



## Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

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### **Brexit**

Thank you for contacting me about the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The British people voted in a free and fair referendum to leave the EU. Turnout was larger than at any election since 1992 and no Prime Minister or party in British history has ever received as many votes as the vote to leave did. The Government has a duty to deliver the referendum result and it will do so in the national interest.

The UK's vote to leave the EU was in no way a rejection of European values. The UK's dedication to ensuring the continued prosperity of the European people remains resolute and it is unconditionally committed to maintaining the security of the continent. The UK may be leaving the EU but it is not leaving Europe. The Government will always work with our international partners to defend democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The UK and the EU have reached agreement on the first phase of negotiations on citizens' rights, Northern Ireland and the financial settlement. Agreement has also been reached on the implementation period, which means that talks are now focusing on the UK and the EU's future relationship.

I want a long-term partnership with the EU that will be of mutual benefit to all our people but a future trade agreement will take time to agree and ratify. It can also only be concluded after the UK has left the EU. This is why an implementation period is necessary. It would create instability and uncertainty if there were one set of changes after the UK left the EU and another set after a trade agreement was reached. People and businesses should only need to adjust once to the new situation.

During the implementation period access to one another's markets will continue on current terms. EU citizens will continue to come to the UK to live and work but will need to register.

I want to emphasise that the implementation period will be strictly time-limited. The UK will regain its sovereignty over laws, immigration and trade. This creates a double lock guarantee by providing certainty for voters that the implementation period is time-limited and stability for businesses in that they will only have to adjust once to the changes.

The Prime Minister has said that she is certain that a positive withdrawal agreement can be reached with the EU. A good deal for Britain and a good deal for Europe are not competing alternatives and they are not mutually exclusive. Not reaching a deal would be a damaging blow for the future security and prosperity of the UK and Europe. For that reason, I do not want or expect an outcome with no deal but the Government is preparing for all eventualities as a responsible government ought to do.

Article 50 has been invoked and the Prime Minister has been clear that there must be no attempts to remain inside the EU, no attempts to rejoin it through the back door, and no second referendum. The UK will leave the EU in March next year and its membership of the single market and customs union will end at this point. An implementation period will allow businesses time to adjust but it will be strictly time-limited. There should be no doubt that the UK is leaving the EU.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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