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Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
Chair, Exiting the European Union Committee
House of Commons
London
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Dear Hilary,

Thank you for your prompt letter regarding the motion approved by the House on Wednesday.

As I told the House on Thursday, we are putting in place arrangements to respond to and adhere with the motion - i.e. that we provide the Committee with the sectoral analysis we have conducted with regards to the list of 58 sectors referred to in the answer of the 26th June 2017 to Question 239.

However, I think it is important to clarify a point which seems to have been misunderstood when it comes to the motion. You say in your letter that "the Government already has the material" requested in the motion. As we have made clear, it is not the case that 58 sectoral impact assessments exist. We have been at pains to stress this point, as I did during our call on Wednesday evening. During the debate on Wednesday the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Robin Walker told the House very clearly, "there has been some misunderstanding about what this sectoral analysis actually is. It is not a series of 58 impact assessments." I made the same point during my appearance before the Lords EU Committee on Tuesday and to the House during oral questions on Thursday.

Let me clarify exactly what this sectoral analysis is. It is a wide mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis, contained in a range of documents developed at different times since the referendum. It examines the nature of activity in the sectors, how trade is conducted with the EU currently in these sectors and, in many cases, considers the alternatives after we leave as well as looking at existing precedents. This analysis ranges from the very high level overarching analysis to sometimes much more granular level analysis of certain product lines in specific sectors. Our analysis in this area is constantly evolving and being updated based on our regular discussions with industry and our negotiations with the EU. But it is not, nor has it ever been, a series



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of discrete impact assessments examining the quantitative impact of Brexit on these sectors. It is important that this is understood from the start.

Given the above, it will take my department - and other departments, since this work draws on inputs from across Government - time to collate and bring together this information in a way that is accessible and informative for the Committee. We will, of course, provide the information to the Committee as soon as is possible.

As we also made clear during the debate, there are a number of reasons why we believe that it would not be in the public interest for elements of the analysis, at least, to find their way into the public domain. The House of Commons has itself recognised that while ministers should be as open as possible with Parliament, we also have an obligation to consider where it would not be in the public interest for material to be published. Furthermore, it is important to recognise in some cases there may be confidential or commercially sensitive information in this analysis and that in many cases this analysis has been developed to underpin advice to ministers of the negotiation options in various scenarios. I think you would agree that such advice to Ministers must remain private. As such, I believe it is still important for us to meet and discuss how that consideration of the public interest might be handled by the Committee.

I will be travelling next week for the negotiations - I understand you will also be away from Parliament - but I would be happy to meet you to discuss these issues on Monday 13th November. I understand that my officials have been in touch with your office and have arranged a meeting.

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