



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

18th February 2020

Dear Constituent,

A Response to the Withdrawal Agreement Bill Amendments Campaign

While I appreciate your strength of feeling on child refugees and Erasmus +, the focus of the legislation was on implementing the deal as agreed with the EU so that the Withdrawal Agreement could have effect in UK law. I did not believe that it was right to add substantial new amendments.

ERASMUS+

The UK will continue to participate in the Erasmus+ programme during the implementation period. Participation in the scheme after this time will be a matter for the negotiations and the Government has been clear that it values international exchanges and is open to maintaining and expanding cooperation in education in the future.

CHILD REFUGEES

I have been assured that the Government's policy has not changed and it was supportive of the purpose of the Dubs amendment. The UK received 15 per cent of all asylum claims from unaccompanied children in 2018 and had the third-highest intake of claims in the EU. A statutory obligation to negotiate with the EU on family reunification does not necessarily lead to an agreement. The Home Secretary has already written to the European Commission to commence negotiations on a future agreement and the Government will lay a statement before Parliament on its policy.

CITIZENS' RIGHTS

The current digital application scheme for settled status is simple, easy to use and free of charge. Over 2.8 million people have already applied and nearly 2.5 million have been granted settled status.

Proposals to introduce an automatic or declaratory system could have made it more difficult for employers and service providers to distinguish between EU citizens with settled status and those without in the future. Other amendments requiring physical documentation and removing the application deadline could have undermined the Government's ability to give EU citizens the certainty that they have been promised. Appeal rights will apply to all cases under the new Settlement Scheme.

Please respond to:

Constituency office: 20 Academy Street, Dumfries DG1 1BY

Phone: 01387 216109 Westminster: 020 7219 2994

Email: alister.jack.mp@parliament.uk www.alisterjack.co.uk

WORKERS' RIGHTS

The UK has been consistently clear that it will protect and enhance workers' rights as the country leaves the EU. An Employment Bill will create a new enforcement body, encourage flexible working and promote fairness in the workplace. New measures will also protect those in low-paid work and those working in the gig economy. Future changes will be for Parliament to decide and dynamic alignment will not be necessary. I know there is no intention of lowering rights below current EU standards.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINCIPLES

The Government has been clear about the importance of protecting and improving the environment and a new Environment Bill will help to achieve this. It will put environmental principles into law, establish a new Office for Environmental Protection and introduce legally binding targets on air quality. Further measures will address plastic waste, water management and biodiversity.

The EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Act was also about implementing the Withdrawal Agreement and I did not believe that it was the right place to legislate on this issue. Removing the statutory requirement restores the traditional division between the Government and Parliament in international negotiations.

The Act ensures that the UK leaves the EU on 31 January in an orderly way. It protects citizens' rights, honours our financial obligations to the EU and ensures that there is no hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in any circumstance. I fully support it.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alister Jack', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Rt. Hon. Alister Jack MP
Dumfries and Galloway constituency.