



# European Scrutiny Committee

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From: Sir William Cash MP

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Rt Hon. Philip Dunne MP  
Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee

**The EU's mandate for negotiating a new partnership with the United Kingdom**  
**(Council document 5721/20 + ADD 1) (41058)**

I am writing on behalf of the European Scrutiny Committee to invite you to share your initial views on the EU mandate for negotiations with the UK on the future relationship.

Section 13A of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 empowers the European Scrutiny Committee, after consulting other interested Departmental Select Committees, to put forward a motion for debate on the floor of the House if it considers that EU legislation "raises a matter of vital national interest to the United Kingdom". As the negotiations will involve a significant number of complex, cross-cutting policy areas and establish the framework for future economic and security cooperation between the EU and the UK, we consider that your insights and expertise will be invaluable in helping us to discharge our statutory function under the 2018 Act.

We appreciate that there will be many demands on your time at this early stage in the new Parliamentary session. As you will also be aware, the Prime Minister is seeking to negotiate "the broad outline of an agreement" with the EU by June so that it can be finalised by September. This leaves little time for Parliament to scrutinise the EU's negotiating mandate and, in so doing, feed into and inform the Government's approach. For this reason, we would welcome your initial thoughts on the EU negotiating mandate (agreed by the Council on 25 February 2020) in the policy areas for which your Committee is responsible **by the end of March** so that a debate can take place before the Prime Minister meets with

EU leaders in June. To assist in your deliberations, we suggest that you focus on the scope of the mandate, highlighting any key omissions or areas of concern for the UK, and the potential impact on a vital UK interest. ESC staff stand ready to provide further advice, support and expertise should you or your Committee require it.

I enclose the text of the mandate agreed by the Council of the EU in February as well as the Government's Command Paper setting out its approach to the negotiations.

I am writing in similar terms to the Chairs and Clerks of the following Committees: Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy; Defence; Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; Education; Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Foreign Affairs; Future Relationship with the European Union; Health and Social Care; Home Affairs; Human Rights (Joint Committee); Housing, Communities and Local Government; International Development; International Trade; Justice; Northern Ireland Affairs; Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs; Science and Technology; Scottish Affairs; Transport; Treasury; Welsh Affairs; Women and Equalities; Work and Pensions.

*Yours,  
Bill*

**CHAIR**