

# Reply from the Brexit Secretary and my response

I have received a reply from the Brexit Secretary following to my recent letter to the Attorney General. The letter is available to view [here](#).

Here is my further response to the Secretary of State:

Dear Stephen

Thank you for your letter.

You say the Withdrawal Agreement takes us out of the EU, yet you also agree with me that we may well stay fully in without vote or voice under it until December 2022, and you cannot of course tell me what our eventual departure would be like given how much would need to be negotiated over the so called future partnership. There would also need to be resolution of the alleged Irish border difficulties which so far have proved impossible to resolve despite lengthy talks.

I am glad we agree we could be fully under the control of the EU until December 2022 and would have to accept all new rules and laws. I do not accept that these will be few in number and limited by our possible departure. The EU is a very active legislature, generating a large proportion of our laws over everything from the environment to trade and from migration to transport.

I am intrigued that you think £35-39 bn a small sum, and that the Treasury forecasts of our gross contributions now amount to an annual £16.7bn. One of the main advantages of leaving as was clear in the referendum is the ability to spend our own money on our priorities, which we should be able to do from now, 3 years after our decision to leave.

In a number of areas you point out that the continuing powers of the ECJ and the EU relate to events or commitments made during the transition period. I and many others object to this. Leaving means ending the authority of the EU, not allowing it to interpret past events and impose continuing obligations upon us.

You confirm we will not take control of our fishing grounds during the transition period of the Agreement, nor can you promise that the independence of our fishing industry thereafter might not be compromised in subsequent negotiations to get out of the EU in due course.

The splitting of the Withdrawal issues from the future partnership issues is against our Manifesto and full of negotiating danger. Why should we sign up to so many things they want, before we have agreed some of the things we might want? Why have we dropped the mantra of "Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed?". What exactly do we get for our £39bn (and the higher sums likely to result from the loose and general commitments of the

Treaty) in this so called deal?

The Agreement is a very expensive invitation to talks about our possible exit. It does not give us either a clear date for leaving or the terms on which we might eventually be allowed out. It locks us into a binding Treaty to behave as a continuing member of the EU without vote or voice over what we have to obey whilst we try to negotiate our way out of the Irish backstop and the other restraints on us.

Yours ever

John