

Speech: PM statement to the House of Commons: 29 January 2019

On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

A fortnight ago, this House clearly rejected the proposed Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration with just 202 Members voting in favour.

Tonight a majority of Honourable Members have said they would support a deal with changes to the backstop. Combined with measures to address concerns over Parliament's role in the negotiation of the future relationship and commitments on workers' rights, in law where need be, it is now clear that there is a route that can secure a substantial and sustainable majority in this House for leaving the EU with a deal.

We will now take this mandate forward and seek to obtain legally binding changes to the Withdrawal Agreement that deal with concerns on the backstop while guaranteeing no return to a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland. My colleagues and I will talk to the EU about how we address the House's views.

As I said this afternoon, there is limited appetite for such a change in the EU and negotiating it will not be easy. But in contrast to a fortnight ago, this House has made it clear what it needs to approve a Withdrawal Agreement.

Many Honourable Members have said that the continuing protection of workers' rights after Brexit is something that needs to be strengthened, and my Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Business will intensify our work with Honourable Members from across the House and the trade unions this week.

And my Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union will do the same on how we engage this House further in our approach to negotiating our future partnership with the EU.

As well as making clear what changes it needs to approve the Withdrawal agreement, the House has also reconfirmed its view that it does not want to leave the EU without a Withdrawal Agreement and Future Framework.

I agree that we should not leave without a deal. However, simply opposing no deal is not enough to stop it.

The Government will now redouble its efforts to get a deal that this House can support and to that end I want to invite my Right Honourable Friend the Member for Meriden, the Honourable Member for Birmingham Erdington, and all those that tabled amendments in opposition to No Deal to discuss how we can deliver that by securing a deal.

In light of the defeat of the Right Honourable Member the Leader of the Opposition's amendment I again invite him to take up my offer of the meeting to see if we can find a way forward.

Mr Speaker, if this House can come together we can deliver the decision the British people took in June 2016, restore faith in our democracy and get on with building a country that works for everyone.

And as Prime Minister I will work with Members across this House to do just that.