

27th June 2018

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about remaining in the EU's customs union, the EEA and holding a 'meaningful' vote.

I did not support any of these amendments. Leaving the EU means leaving the single market and the customs union. These are the main and essential elements of the Union. The UK will be free to make its own trade deals after its withdrawal from the EU but it will also need to put in place new customs arrangements. Remaining a full member of the customs union would mean we could not make our own trade deals. The Government and the EU have said explicitly that there must not be a hard border on the island of Ireland.

I did not support the amendment on the EEA because it would have meant automatic membership of the single market. Freedom of movement would still have applied and it would have prevented us from having any more control over the number of people coming to this country. It would also have meant continuing to accept all EU rules with little influence over them and no vote on the final legislation. I believe that to remain in the EEA would have given us a worse deal than we have at the moment.

Parliament will have three opportunities to have its say on the final deal in a motion, a resolution on ratification of a new treaty and in an Act of Parliament implementing the deal. Government's amendments to the Act on a 'meaningful' vote also now means that a minister will be required to make a statement to Parliament if MPs reject the deal, if no deal is reached with the EU by 21 January 2019 or if the Prime Minister announces by that date that no deal can be reached. There will also be a vote on a motion on the Government's proposed next steps in each instance so that Parliament can have its say.

I hope that this explains my position and thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP