



*from Hamish Sandison,
Chair of Labour Business*



8 March 2019

Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP
Leader of the Opposition,
House of Commons SW1A 1AA

Dear Jeremy

by eMail

Brexit and the Business Community

Our Labour Business delegate and I were active participants in the framing of the Composite Resolution on Brexit at last year's Annual Conference, which included an option for a public vote. So we want to thank you for bringing this option into play.

Now that the Conservatives have abandoned any claim to be the party of business, we would like to encourage you to seize the opportunity in the run-up to 29 March 2019 to make good on Labour's claim to be the natural party of business. Labour Party members in businesses - small, medium and large, up and down the country - have direct experience of jobs and investment being lost ever since the Conservatives triggered Article 50 and mishandled the ensuing negotiations. We should be broadcasting that very loudly.

We are aware of your continuing interest in possible alternative Brexit proposals, such as those put forward by the proponents of "Common Market 2.0". We understand that to secure a majority against the so-called "May Deal" in the vote next Tuesday, we must look for support from as many MPs as possible across the Chamber. What we would ask is that the damaging uncertainties for business of May's Deal and No Deal are factored into all your considerations.

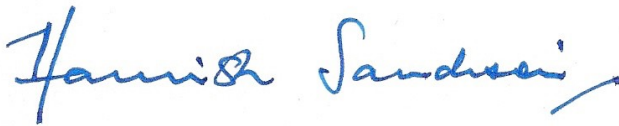
As matters stand, that period of uncertainty is shortest if Parliament votes for the people to have a final say on the May Deal, or any credible alternative to the May Deal, ruling out No Deal, with Remain as the default position. The members of Labour Business – the Party's only affiliated business membership organisation - would support such an approach. In a survey conducted in early January 2019 in which 49% of our members participated, an overwhelming majority voted to Remain. At the same time, revoking Article 50 immediately was preferred by twice as many of our members (8/10) as Common Market 2.0 (4/10). In the event of any more shenanigans on the part of the Prime Minister, that revocation option may be the only way to bring this deeply shameful episode in the country's political history to an end.

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We make no apology for supporting an EU Remain/Transform agenda. That transformation agenda for business starts here inside the Labour Party, and we are working closely with your Shadow Front Bench colleagues to take it forward. For example, we are in touch with your Shadow Business Secretary, Rebecca Long-Bailey, to establish criteria for what a “Responsible Business” looks like for inclusion in our next election manifesto. It is another example of work we need to be doing with sister parties across the EU. We see that as part of a painful process of rebuilding the UK’s credibility as a platform for your ambitions to put international socialist values into practice across Europe.

We know that you have faced a challenging task in balancing the interests of different party stakeholders. We support your efforts and wish you every success.

Yours in solidarity



HAMISH SANDISON

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