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As we discussed on Friday, getting a Brexit deal that is acceptable to both the UK and the EU is of paramount importance. A deal remains our primary objective and with compromise, flexibility and creativity on both sides I believe this is possible.

I also touched on our no deal preparations when we met. It is the responsibility of both sides as far as possible to protect our citizens and to prepare our businesses for the possibility that, despite all our efforts, agreement cannot be reached on the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration. Nevertheless there are many areas where we need either to improve our mutual readiness or put in place practical mitigations that work for us both. Given the short time remaining until 31 October, I hope that EU and UK officials can now exchange information, and discuss and understand our respective plans to ensure we meet our objectives, because there will be insufficient time to complete such work if left until the last days of October.

There are a number of areas that would benefit from structured engagement and exchange of information: for example, how we maintain the flow of trade in goods and passengers at points of entry/exit (in the interests of EU exporters and UK consumers), or the exchange of data (where we both need to ensure small and medium sized businesses are properly prepared). As with citizens' rights, in some such areas we have passed legislation to make domestic provisions, as has the EU, but there are nonetheless operational matters that we would like to explore jointly.

I would also be grateful if the Commission would signal to Member States that it does not object to prudent bilateral discussions in areas in which the Commission does not wish or need to act, but where individual Member States wish to address risks pertaining to their own arrangements.

I would like to be clear that this respects your objection to "mini-deals" outside of our endeavours to get a deal. It is about ensuring that we both understand what each is doing in

the event we cannot get a deal, and ensuring that our decisions and practical work help our businesses and citizens prepare.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yours sincerely" followed by a stylized signature.

RT HON STEVE BARCLAY MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION