



THIS WEEK IN PARLIAMENT– 10-14 October, 2016

Welcome to my *This Week in Parliament*, my weekly newsletter on events and developments in Parliament. **Let me know what you think of the new layout!**

House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
Westminster: 020 7219 0814
Bridgend: 01656 750 002
madeleine.moon.mp@parliament.uk

I also produce regular email updates on:
- **Welfare and Benefit Reforms**
- **Environment and International Development**
- **Policing and Criminal Justice**
- **Defence**
To subscribe to any of these, simply email me

Parliament returned following the conference recess with a busy week; the key issues under the spotlight were Brexit (which will almost certainly every week), the humanitarian disaster in Syria and the linked issue of the Calais Jungle. I was able to make a number of contributions including on Brexit. Outside of the chamber, I lent my support to a campaign on care for people with Secondary Breast Cancer and met with a charity providing welfare services to the armed forces.

Monday

The new Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, David Davis MP came to the House to give a statement on the process of Brexit. The debate which followed illustrated the vast array of opinion in the Commons on what Brexit means and the role of Parliament, how the Government will conduct negotiations, concerns about the drastic fall in the value of the pound, access to the single market and the status of EU nationals in the UK. It took place in the context of the drastic collapse in the value of the pound against the dollar over the weekend and a leaked Cabinet Office report (reported in The Times) prepared before the referendum which warned of the economic consequences of Brexit. The report warned that a hard Brexit could lose the Treasury £66bn in tax revenues. I was able to raise the concerns of one constituent who has lived in the UK for decades and now fears for the future.



***David Davis:** We will start by bringing forward a great repeal Bill that will mean the European Communities Act 1972 ceases to apply on the day we leave the EU. It was this Act that put EU law above UK law, so it is right, given the clear instruction for exit given to us by the people in the referendum, that we end the authority of European Union law. We will return sovereignty to the institutions of this United Kingdom. That is what people voted for on 23 June: for Britain to take control of its own destiny, and for all decisions about taxpayers' money, borders and laws to be taken here in Britain.*

The referendum was backed by six to one in this House. On all sides of the argument—leave and remain—we have a duty to respect and carry out the people's instruction. As I have said, the man-

date is clear, and we will reject any attempt to undo the referendum result, any attempt to hold up the process unduly or any attempt to keep Britain in the EU by the back door by those who did not like the answer they were given on 23 June.

Let me be absolutely clear: this Bill is a separate issue from when article 50 will be triggered. The great repeal Bill is not what will take us out of the EU, but what will ensure the UK statute book is fit for purpose after we have left. It will put the elected politicians in this country fully in control of determining the laws that affect its people's lives—something that does not apply today.

Keir Starmer MP, recently appointed as Shadow Minister on Existing the EU raised access to the single market;

We need clarity, and we need answers. Can the Secretary of State assure the House today that the Government will seek continued access to the single market on the best possible terms? Will he also assure us that they will end the divisive and hostile tone of Brexit discussions in recent weeks? This is the defining issue of this Parliament and, quite probably, Parliaments to come. The job of any responsible Government is now to bring the country together, not to drive it apart. I hope that he will take that approach.



Concerns about access to the single market were raised on the Government benches too, illustrating the range of opinions in the House;

Anna Soubry (Broxtowe, Con): *May I make it very clear that, like everybody on the Government Benches, I was elected on a clear manifesto promise to respect and honour the referendum result? We know that we will leave the European Union, but the comments of the director general of the CBI should cause us all much concern. She has confirmed the fears of many on these Benches that there is a danger that this Government appear to be turning their back on the single market and not valuing the real benefit of migrant workers. Can my right hon. Friend now give assurances to British business that we have not turned our back on the single market and that we welcome migrant workers to this country?*

The question of what happens at the end of negotiations was also the subject of a question from the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee highlighting one of the many unknowns about this process;



Crispin Blunt (Reigate, Con): *My right hon. Friend will understand and probably appreciate the irony that the more successful he is in delivering a negotiation that meets the mutual interests of ourselves and the 27, the greater the political challenge for the 27, as it will be seen as rewarding the United Kingdom for Brexit. That opens the rather obvious possibility that at the end of the negotiations they may be blocked, either by a qualified minority on the Council or by the European Parliament. I welcome his undertaking to deliver certainty and clarity where he can, but what plans does he have to enumerate publicly the implications of having no deal at the end of two years of negotiations?*

Several MPs raised the issue of the status of EU nationals in the UK and the parallel issue of UK nationals living in the EU. I was able to make the following contribution which received a welcome reassurance from the Minister;

The Secretary of State has said that he will provide some certainty and clarity. I have had an email from a general practitioner in my constituency saying that a lady who has lived there for over 40 years is having mental health problems as she is concerned about being deported. Parents have contacted me saying that their children are awake at night worried that they are about to lose their mother or their father who is an EU citizen. It is absolutely

imperative that we have some clarity. A glib individual on the Government Benches claims I should reassure them. I have done that, but they need reassurance from the Government, because I do not have such a power. May we at least have clarification that those who have lived in this country for over five years will have an automatic right to remain? They need it, and it is only right that citizens should have such clarity.

David Davis: I can give such people absolute clarity: that is the law. Being in Britain for more than five years means that they have indefinite leave to remain. Being in Britain for more than six years gives them the right to citizenship.

Calais

An urgent question on the closure of the so-called Jungle in Calais was debated on Monday afternoon, followed on Tuesday by a debate on the disastrous humanitarian situation in Syria. The focus of the exchanges on Calais were on arrangements being made to resettle unaccompanied children, but also what is being done to prevent trafficking and what is being done to prevent the emergence of another camp.

Two contributions summarised these concerns.

Sammy Wilson (East Antrim, DUP): I recognise the genuine efforts that the Secretary of State has made to deal with this very difficult issue—an issue that has captured the hearts of many people across the United Kingdom. However, does she not recognise that as long as the criminal gangs who bring these people to our shores are free to operate, the problems we are dealing with today will re-emerge tomorrow? What action is she taking to ensure stiffer prison sentences, the seizing of assets, and co-operation with other Governments to cut down the international network that these gangs have, and to cut off the routes by which they bring people to the United Kingdom?

Amber Rudd (Home Secretary): The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right: the people really profiting from this are the criminal gangs who deal in this terrible crime of trafficking children and people. We are working internationally, and primarily across the EU, to ensure that we stop these gangs and, where we can, disrupt them, so they stop this heinous crime.



Rob Marris (Wolverhampton South West) ended the debate with what will happen further down the line once the camp has been closed;

What recent discussions has the Home Secretary had with the French Government on the future steps to be taken to avoid another Calais camp acting as a magnet next year, to the detriment of another generation of vulnerable children?

Amber Rudd (Home Secretary): The hon. Gentleman raises an absolutely critical point. This camp will be cleared by the French, but what will be done to make sure that another one does not grow up, given that although the clearance of Sangatte in 2002 was supposed to be the end, we now have the jungle in Calais? The French are taking that point very seriously: they have plans to ensure that another camp does not grow up.

Tuesday

Proceedings were largely dominated by an emergency debate on Aleppo and Syria. Backbench MPs can apply to Mr. Speaker for permission for such debates. The debate saw many MPs express their frustration at the apparent failure of the international community to find a solution to the Syrian civil war, anger at

I was able to make a [contribution](#) about the work of the White Helmets in an exchange with my Labour colleague Alison McGovern;

Alison McGovern (Wirral South) (Lab): *I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his intervention. He anticipates the very point I am about to make.*

We can also get more support to the heroic White Helmets, the Syrian volunteers who risk their lives to save as many people as they can from the death raining down on them. Many people will have seen the White Helmets in the news in recent weeks because of their nomination for the Nobel peace prize. These heroes risk it all every day to save lives, often running towards the sound of the shelling and risking being caught in second strikes. They need our support. Even if the only result of this debate is that all those people watching make a donation, it will have been worth it.

Mrs Madeleine Moon (Bridgend) (Lab)

Will my hon. Friend be clear about what support she is seeking for the White Helmets? Are we talking about greater access to technical help and advice from doctors over the internet during surgery, increased donations or sending medical equipment—I am unclear?

Alison McGovern: *All of the above.*

The full debate is available through this [link](#).

St John and Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service

On Tuesday afternoon, I was able to call into a meeting with the [St John and Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service](#). The charity provides specialist medical welfare support to members of the Armed Forces, Reservists, Veterans and their families when they are in hospital. They support over 30,000 patients each year helping to reduce lengths of stay in hospital and improving the experience for patients and their families



Wednesday



On Wednesday, away from the Chamber I was happy to lend my support to two very worthwhile campaigns. The first is a campaign '[Secondary. Not Second Rate](#)' led by Breast Cancer Care seeking to highlight the problems faced by sufferers of secondary breast cancer and the poorer quality of care they report receiving. The second is an annual campaign led by the shop workers union USDAW called [Freedom from Fear](#). The aim is to protect shopworkers from violence, threats and abuse, which becomes particularly acute in the run up to Christmas.

Brexit Part Two

A second debate on Brexit followed hot on the heels of Monday's; the focus this time was on what role there will be for Parliament in scrutinizing the Government's negotiation plans and strategy. Government Ministers have stuck to the position that to openly comment on negotiations as they go on would be unhelpful to our position, while there is a concern that Parliament is not being given a defined role in ensuring the deal agreed is the best one for the UK. The debate was a long one, covering a wide range of issues. One [speech](#) highlights the breadth of outstanding questions that will need answering and underscores the complexity of the work ahead;

Hilary Benn MP (Leeds Central Lab): Now, in all this, there must be transparency. I accept the argument that it would be unreasonable for the Government to reveal their detailed negotiating plan and their tactics before advancing their case in those negotiations, but that is not the same as being unwilling to answer questions about what our negotiating objectives are, and it is not the same as being unwilling to share the assessments that the Government have made about the possible consequences of leaving the EU.

On the first, the questions are very simple. Do the Government intend to remain in the Euratom treaty? Do they wish to continue to be part of the European Medicines Agency—which, by the way, is based in London—Europol and the European arrest warrant? What about the European Aviation Safety Authority, the European Patent Office and the European Banking Authority? Those are very straight questions about the Government's negotiating objective when they talk to the other 27 member states.



Thursday

Amongst the many Government departments answering questions on the floor of the House of Commons, few probably realise there is a regular slot for the [Church Commissioners](#). As Bishops of the church of England sit in the House of Lords, the Church of England is represented in the House of Commons by a senior MP who answers questions once a month. I took the opportunity to [contribute to an exchange](#) on extremism with Dame Caroline Spelman who currently represents the Church Commissioners;



Recent research on extremism suggests that a sense of humiliation, particularly among traumatised communities and individuals, is a major driver of extremism. Are the Church Commissioners aware of the need to look at bullying and trauma-tisation?

Dame Caroline Spelman MP The hon. Lady is right that humiliation is a strong emotion that can lead to people taking strong positions and actions as a consequence. The Church is not just looking at that, but has rolled out those important initiatives. I commend to her initiatives such as Near Neighbours, funding for which came from the Department for Communities and Local Government, which demonstrated that, in our cities, there is a great opportunity to bridge the gap and speak into the humiliation that some people feel.

A random act of kindness

In a week that has been full of doom and gloom about the international situation, I used [Business Questions](#) to pay tribute to two constituents and their random act of kindness;

Tom Weaver and Philip Loveday are two disabled veterans living in Bridgend. They decided to spend £1,500 of their own savings to buy lunch for citizens across the county borough of Bridgend. They wanted to carry out random acts of kindness for people because living with their disability they had found great help and support in the local community. The local branch of Subway added another 500 meals, so we handed out 1,000 lunches. Given that this week we have discussed Brexit, Aleppo and the fall of the pound, may we have a Government statement on the importance of random acts of kindness in raising the spirits of us all and making this a great country to live in?



David Lidington MP (Leader of the House): I welcome the hon. Lady's comments and add my unreserved congratulations support and good will to her two constituents. It is the truth that in our constituency work every single one of us in this House comes across cases, such as the one she has described this morning, of the most incredible acts of selflessness and public spirit by our fellow citizens. Whenever politics is at risk of making us feel a bit low and depressed, those sorts of acts of kindness and generosity by ordinary, decent British citizens really warm the heart and make us have faith in this country.

Baby Loss Awareness

The final debate on Thursday afternoons is usually a debate selected by the Backbench Select Committee. This week a cross-party group of MPs had proposed a debate on Baby Loss. This debate was very emotional; several MPs spoke movingly about their own experience of losing a baby and the difficulties they face. Debates like these, while very difficult for those involved, serve a real purpose in shining a light on often overlooked or taboo subjects. Of the contributions, that of [Vicky Foxcroft, MP](#) for Lewisham, Deptford, was one of the most powerful.

I want to start by paying tribute to the hon. Members for Eddisbury (Antoinette Sandbach) and for Colchester (Will Quince) for securing this debate. This is probably the hardest speech that I have ever had to write and deliver.

This week has been a tough week, as I had never heard of Baby Loss Awareness Week but it has been all around me. There have been online discussions and commemorative badges, and we have a debate in the Chamber today. I have struggled in a debate with myself about whether I should contribute today, as it is such a personal issue, and whether I want to share my very personal experiences. The absolute truth is that I struggle to talk to my family and very close friends about this, but during the events of this week, I can see that a large focus is on people talking about their loved ones, supporting each other and making sure that, when needed, important issues are raised and addressed. I thank all my friends who have come into the Chamber today to support me as they know how hard this is for me. I also want to apologise to my many friends who I have not told about this. It is not because I do not want them to know or that I am embarrassed; it is just because I find it so very hard to do so. Ever since I was elected, I have always said that I want to be the kind of politician who is willing to share my experiences—not for therapy, but to empower others and to seek to change things for the better. Lewisham bereavement counselling service tells me that it has a two-to-four month waiting list, and that just is not good enough.

