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Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP  
Chair, Exiting the EU Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
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Dear Hilary

Following agreement by leaders at today's European Council, the Government has published a copy of the Withdrawal Agreement and a copy of the Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

The Political Declaration sets out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom. It is the basis on which we will move towards delivering the final legal agreement by the end of 2020, covering an economic partnership, a security partnership, and specific agreements on cross-cutting cooperation.

The Withdrawal Agreement sets out the terms of the UK's smooth and orderly exit from the European Union, including a good agreement on Citizens' Rights, a fair settlement of our financial obligations as a departing Member State, and a Protocol to ensure we avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

As stipulated by section 13 of the EU (Withdrawal) Act, the Government will lay these documents as Act papers, in addition to a Statement that political agreement has been reached, before Parliament at the earliest opportunity. However, in these circumstances the Government judges it to be important to allow parliamentarians and the public to have access to the documents as soon as possible, owing to the exceptional public interest and in recognition of their having been published in any event by the European Council.

The UK Government has also published an Explainer for the Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom, as it did for the draft Withdrawal Agreement on 14 November. I am attaching a copy of this and will be placing a copy in the Library of the House, along with this letter.

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