



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Task Force for the Preparation and Conduct of the Negotiations with the United Kingdom under Article 50 of the TEU

The Chief Negotiator

04 SEP. 2019

Personnelle

Brussels,
tf50(2019)6195047

Dear Professor Greer,

I very much regret to inform you that I will no longer be able to deliver the 2019 William J. Clinton Leadership Lecture on 9 September at Queens' University in Belfast.

Throughout the Brexit negotiations, which started in June 2017, I have taken the position to refrain from interfering in the ongoing debate in the United Kingdom on the best way forward for the country outside of the European Union.

The position of the EU has always been one of utmost respect for the sovereign decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union and for the red lines defined by the UK government.

My intention for next Monday was to deliver a lecture in that spirit and to reiterate my full respect for the United Kingdom. I wanted to reinforce the common goal that we have with the UK government to manage the consequences of Brexit in an orderly manner, in particular given the unique circumstances in Northern Ireland.

However, I must also be aware that my first public speech in the United Kingdom since the referendum could be used by some to undermine the chances for an orderly Brexit.

At this particular juncture of the process, the UK is engaged in an intense political debate. In many respects, we have finally arrived at a moment of truth for the country. It is my judgement that pronouncing myself publicly in the midst of the debate that is ongoing at Westminster would not be appropriate, even though my attitude has always been to work in an objective manner, based on facts and the law, together with the UK, to find solutions for the consequences of Brexit.

My regret in having to postpone this lecture is amplified by the work done by researchers at Queen's University. Indeed, your University has done a lot of excellent work in highlighting the consequences of Brexit with regard to the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement and the need to protect the integrity of the Single Market and the place of Ireland in it.

*Professor Ian Greer
President and Vice-Chancellor
Queen's University Belfast
By email: Vc.Office@qub.ac.uk*

I would like to thank you once again for providing me with the opportunity to deliver this prestigious lecture at Queen's University. I remain available to do so at a later stage should you wish to find another date.

Yours sincerely, *à la manière*

MB

Michel Barnier