



The Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

*cc: James Brokenshire
Philip Hammond
Greg Clark*

Brussels, 12/02/2019

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing as a group of MEPs whose constituencies - including Wales, Cornwall, the North East, Yorkshire and Humberside, the North West, and Scotland - have all benefited from EU structural funds for decades and whose need for such funding will continue whether Brexit goes ahead or not.

We note with interest your promises that you will commit more money to areas of the country that have been left out of the economic prosperity enjoyed by London and the South East of England. However, we would draw your attention to the fact that the greatest source of funding to these deprived local economies has been the EU structural funds.

Between them, the European Regional Development Fund, which is precisely designed to assist 'left behind communities' across the EU, and the European Social Fund, which invests in employment-related projects, have invested £1.3bn a year. Our communities have also benefitted from the LEADER programme, which fosters inter-territorial and transnational cooperation of local action groups.

Furthermore, recent analysis by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) estimates that the UK would be entitled to approximately €13 billion of regional development funding for the 2021-2027 period should it stay in the European Union. This is an increase of 22% compared to the current period, which shows that regional disparities in the UK are increasing.

In spite of promises of a Shared Prosperity Fund, as yet this is no more than those three words. No plan has been forthcoming and the promised consultation has been repeatedly delayed. This has led to consternation amongst local authorities and third-sector organisations in the regions we represent. These are the people who are already supporting deprived communities and yet your inability to replace their funding has already resulted in a hiatus and undermined their ability to continue their vital work.

Leaving the EU will only deepen the already shocking inequality that is a blight on our communities. We believe that remaining in the EU is the only good deal for our communities. But, if the UK does leave the EU at the end of next month, we call on you urgently to bring forward a proposal to replace this funding, while fully respecting the competences of the devolved governments.

Without such a proposal, our suspicion that the Government's promises are nothing more than warm words will be confirmed.

We look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Catherine Bearder, LibDem MEP for South East England
Paul Brannen, Paul Brannen, Labour MEP for North East England
Richard Corbett, Labour MEP for Yorkshire and the Humber
Jill Evans, Plaid Cymru MEP for Wales
Julie Girling, Independent MEP (EPP) for South West England and Gibraltar
Theresa Griffin, Labour MEP for North West England
Mary Honeyball, Labour MEP for London
Wajid Khan, Labour MEP for North West England
Jude Kirton-Darling, Labour MEP for North East England
Jean Lambert, Green MEP for London
Clare Moody, Labour MEP for South West England and Gibraltar
Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for South West England and Gibraltar
Alyn Smith, SNP MEP for Scotland
Julie Ward, Labour MEP for North West England
Keith Taylor, Green MEP for South East England
Derek Vaughan, Labour MEP for Wales