

## European Union (Withdrawal) Act

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health and Social Care Committee, Chair, Liaison Committee (Commons), Chair, Liaison Committee

Does the hon. Gentleman agree that had our constituents seen the reality of the actual Brexit deal, they too would have rejected it, and that they should have the opportunity to have the final say and a right to vote, not just MPs?

Sam Gyimah Conservative, East Surrey

The hon. Lady makes a powerful point, to which I shall return in a second.

We have this misleading cliché today that we just have to get on with it, as though the result is somehow immaterial so long as we do. That gives me cause for extreme concern about supporting the deal. Let me make two principal points. First, as far as I can understand it, the backstop is there to try to solve an impossible problem: we want to take control of our borders but we want the other side to have an open border. The back-stop exists now because after months and years of negotiation, we have not found a solution to that problem. If those who, like my right hon. Friend Nicky Morgan, say that alternative arrangements could solve the problem genuinely believe that such arrangements could, they need not fear the backstop.

The truth is that dealing with these alternative arrangements on their own will not address the need for the backstop. The side deal that the Prime Minister has come back with improves things to some extent, but the EU has no need to act in bad faith because it knows that, between now and 2020, we will keep going round the same loop, trying to find alternative arrangements. If we are not careful, we may still end up in that backstop, which is why there is such serious concern.

My second point is on the political declaration.

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