

Boris Johnson letter: Why did Boris refuse to sign his letter? Read three letters in full; BORIS JOHNSON has sent an unsigned extension request letter to the EU asking for a delay to Brexit from the current deadline of October 31. But why did the PM refuse to sign the letter?

Express Online

October 20, 2019 Sunday 11:17 AM GMT

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Length: 855 words

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Body

Despite several protestations, Boris Johnson did comply with the law last night and sent three **letters** in all to the European Union to ask for a Brexit delay. In compliance with the Benn Act, he sent an unsigned photocopy of his request, as well as an explanatory note from the UK's ambassador to the EU and a personal, signed **letter** explaining his personal stance. But what did these **letters** actually say and why did Boris Johnson refuse to add his signature to the extension request **letter**?

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Boris Johnson was beaten in the House of Commons on Super Saturday, despite his strong conviction that he could win support.

However, in a turn of events, 322 MPs chose to back the Letwin amendment bill which essentially compelled the government to seek an extension to the Brexit process.

The now approved amendment submitted by Sir Oliver Letwin says parliament will withhold approval of Mr Johnson's Brexit deal until the withdrawal deal implementing Brexit has passed.

This could happen as early as next week with a series of votes kicking off on Tuesday.

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The Benn Act which was passed last month outlined that if Boris Johnson did not manage to get a Brexit deal approved by the EU and UK parliaments by the end of day on October 19, he was required to request an extension from the EU.

The current deadline is October 31, but the Benn Act dictates that the deadline must be moved to January 31.

Despite Mr Johnson protests that delays would be harmful to the UK, he did comply with the legal mandate and sent the **letter** to the EU.

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However, of the three letters, the extension request letter was sent without an accompanying signature.

What did the extension request letter say? Mr Johnson sent three letters to the European Union last night.

The first was the unsigned letter requesting a deadline extension to 11pm GMT on January 31, 2020.

Within the letter, he wrote that he was seeking an extension and that if the deal were ratified ahead of the aforementioned date the period should be terminated early.

The letter was written from the "Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland".

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The second letter was from Sir Tim Barrow, the UK's ambassador to the EU, inviting the Secretary-General to read the letter and consider the extension request.

The third letter was a personal, signed letter from Mr Johnson.

The PM's letter was much longer in length and was addressed to European Council President Donald Tusk.

Mr Johnson wrote of the "corrosive impact" of a long delay, adding that he remained confident that he could ratify his Brexit deal by October 31.

Why did Boris Johnson refuse to sign the extension request Brexit letter? In his refusal to sign the letter, as well as an additional letter outlining his personal stance in opposition to the extension request, Mr Johnson has thoroughly indicated that he is opposed to an extension.

His failure to sign shows his lack of support and endorsement in the legally mandated course of action.

The PM had hoped to pass his Brexit deal through the House of Commons on Saturday, but in another bruising defeat, 322 MPs voted to withhold approval from his deal, forcing his hand.

Mr Johnson has repeatedly insisted he will not negotiate any further extension of the UK's membership for the EU and has said he would prefer to leave the EU with no deal than delay the UK's departure date again.

The PM has even said previously he would "rather be dead in a ditch" than ask the EU to delay Brexit.

However, now he has been forced to make the request and EU leaders are consulting on the matter according to Donald Tusk who tweeted about the PM's letter.

He tweeted: "The extension request has just arrived. I will now start consulting EU leaders on how to react."

Mr Johnson's refusal has sparked outrage among some MPs.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn accused Johnson of "petulant posturing and bluster" and said "his damaging deal was defeated today."

John McDonnell said Mr Johnson was "behaving a bit like a spoilt brat" by sending an unsigned letter to Brussels.

While Anna Soubry, from The Independent Group for Change, accused the prime minister of acting like a "truculent child" and Liberal Democrat Christine Jardine MP said Mr Johnson was going against the will of the Commons.

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One former Tory cabinet minister told The Guardian: "This is clearly against the spirit of the Benn Act and is not consistent with the assurances that were given by Downing Street to the Scottish courts about applying for an extension.

"It will also put government law officers in a very uncomfortable position."

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Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper; Web Publication

Journal Code: WEBDE

Subject: BREXIT (89%); EUROPEAN UNION (89%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (88%); APPROVALS (87%); GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (72%); INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS (72%); TRENDS & EVENTS (72%); BRITISH PARLIAMENT (71%); DELAYS & POSTPONEMENTS (71%)

Organization: EUROPEAN UNION (84%)

Person: BORIS JOHNSON (89%); OLIVER LETWIN (50%)

Geographic: BRUSSELS, BELGIUM (70%); UNITED KINGDOM (94%); EUROPEAN UNION MEMBER STATES (91%); EUROPE (87%); BELGIUM (75%)

Load-Date: October 20, 2019