**Alex Agius Saliba (S&D).** – Mr President, as the Brexit deadline looms over our heads, concerns and risks of having a disorderly no-deal exit of the UK are becoming a sad and lousy reality. No agreement would be a recipe for disaster – a catastrophe that should be avoided. Unfortunately, the uncertainties and political instabilities are growing by the hour. Our first priority in this situation remains to safeguard the rights and choices of the EU citizens resident in the UK and the British citizens resident in the EU. A hard Brexit would economically be highly damaging to business, threatening thousands of jobs, both in the UK and in the Union.

Our second priority must be to assist business and workers to ensure that burdens and costs are kept at a minimum. Finally, the highly damaging implications that a no-deal exit would have for the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland should be kept to a minimum. Working together to undertake all reasonable efforts and engage in constructive dialogue to avoid a no-deal scenario must always come before petty party politics.