

JOINT STATEMENT FROM THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON BREXIT

The Scottish Parliament has today hosted the seventh Interparliamentary Forum on Brexit. The forum provides an opportunity for interparliamentary dialogue between legislatures within the United Kingdom, to support more effective scrutiny of Brexit related issues.

Representatives of Committees scrutinising Brexit-related issues in the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales, House of Commons and House of Lords, met to discuss and agree their response to the UK Minister for the Cabinet Office on the review of Intergovernmental relations. This letter recommends that the outcome of the review should include explicit recognition of the scrutiny role for UK and Devolved Parliaments including the timely provision of information. It also recognises the commitment of the UK Minister for the Cabinet Office to resourcing and supporting proposals jointly put forward by the UK Legislatures.

The Forum also discussed common frameworks and the role of devolved administrations in future international agreements. As part of those discussions the Forum met with Michael Russell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations. The Forum also recommends, in its letter to the UK Minister for the Cabinet Office, that each Parliament is given sufficient time and opportunity to scrutinise and approve common frameworks.

Finally the Forum agreed a terms of reference as annexed to this statement.

An official from the Northern Ireland Assembly was in attendance as an observer.

Participants agreed the following statement after the forum:

“Notwithstanding our differing political positions on Brexit, our respective Committees remain committed to working collaboratively to ensure effective scrutiny of the impact of Brexit across the UK. That is demonstrated by our shared and agreed recommendations to the Minister for the Cabinet Office on ensuring that a role for the UK and Devolved Parliaments in scrutinising intergovernmental relations is recognised by the JMC review currently underway.

We had a productive discussion with Michael Russell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations regarding the progress of the negotiations including the development of common frameworks and the role of devolved administrations in future international agreements. We have confirmed to the Minister for the Constitution our shared view that each Parliament and Assembly should have sufficient time to consider and approve Common Frameworks – be they legislative or non-legislative.

“There remains much uncertainty about how the Brexit process will develop over the coming months. We therefore propose to meet again in June to review progress.”

The next meeting of the Forum will be held at the House of Commons in June 2019.

Members in attendance

Bruce Crawford MSP, Convener, Finance and Constitution Committee, Scottish Parliament

Adam Tomkins MSP, Deputy Convener, Finance and Constitution Committee, Scottish Parliament

Joan McAlpine MSP, Convener, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, Scottish Parliament

Mick Antoniw AM, Chair, Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee, National Assembly for Wales

David Rees AM, Chair, External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee, National Assembly for Wales

Lord McFall of Alcluith, Senior Deputy Speaker, House of Lords

Lord Dunlop, member, Constitution Committee, House of Lords

The Earl of Kinnoull, member, Lords European Union Select Committee, House of Lords

Sir Bernard Jenkin MP, Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, House of Commons

Ronnie Cowan MP, member, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, House of Commons

Peter Grant MP, member, Exiting the European Union Committee, House of Commons

Interparliamentary Forum on Brexit – Terms of Reference

“The primary purposes of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum on Brexit is to provide a mechanism for dialogue and cooperation between parliamentarians from all the UK Parliaments on issues of common interest and concern, and to consider a number of scrutiny challenges arising from the new constitutional arrangements which will be required post-Brexit both within the UK and between the UK and the EU and beyond including –

- Confidential and non-legislative inter-governmental relations (IGR) including the JMC structures;
- Legislative and non-legislative common frameworks;
- International treaties including trade deals;
- Conferred powers on UK Ministers to legislate in non-reserved areas currently within the competence of the EU;
- Future relations with the EU and other international relations;
- Future constitutional arrangements within the UK including how non-reserved areas which are currently within the competence of the EU intersect with reserved areas.

Where appropriate and based on the work of the individual committees represented within the Forum we will aim to set out a consensual and common position of our views on each of these areas”