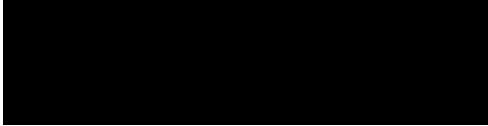


Stormont Castle
BELFAST
BT4 3TT



**Marie Austin
Committee for TEO
Room 412
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3SR**

22 September 2020

Dear Marie

**JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE (EUROPEAN NEGOTIATIONS) MEETING –
THURSDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2020**

I wrote to you on the 3rd September to advise you that the twenty fifth meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee on EU Negotiations (JMC (EN)) would be held on the 3rd September at 1.45pm and to provide you with a copy of the agreed agenda. I am now writing to report on the Executive's actions at that meeting and provide you with a copy of the agreed Joint Communiqué.

The Executive was represented at the meeting by the First Minister, deputy First Minister, Junior Minister Lyons and Junior Minister Kearney. The other Ministers that attended the meeting were:

From the UK Government: The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP; The Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon Alister Jack MP; The Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon Simon Hart MP; The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP; The Paymaster General, Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP; The Minister for the Constitution, Chloe Smith MP and Sherpa, Prime Minister's Europe Adviser and Chief Negotiator of Task Force Europe, David Frost.

From the Welsh Government: The Counsel General and Minister for European Transition, Jeremy Miles MS.

From the Scottish Government: The Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs, Michael Russell, MSP and the Minister for Europe and International Development, Jenny Gilruth, MSP.

On the agenda item on the negotiations with the EU the deputy First Minister noted the limited time available for an agreement on the Future Relationship to be concluded, ratified and implemented before the end of the transition period and the need for political intervention to reach agreement. She also expressed concern that if there was not a good outcome on regulatory divergence, rules of origin and unfettered access this would make our businesses uncompetitive.

The First Minister reiterated the need to take into account the interactions between the negotiations on the future relationship and the Protocol. In particular some key decisions that are required for the implementation of the Protocol which will be closely related to the outcome of the negotiations such as SPS checks.

On operational readiness (including the Protocol) the First Minister welcomed the increased official level engagement on this issue, but emphasised the need for appropriate Ministerial engagement as we approach the end of the transition period. She also emphasised the need to develop consistent and shared messaging on operational readiness issues across all administrations.

The deputy First Minister expressed her concern on the large volume of EU Exit legislation that would be required before the end of the transition period, and the continuing lack of clarity on the implementation of the Protocol. She emphasised that time was running out and that clarity is needed as soon as possible to enable the relevant sectors to prepare for the end of the transition period.

In the discussion on Common Frameworks the First Minister endorsed the outline frameworks on Nutrition Health Claim, Composition and Labelling and Hazardous Substances Planning, but noted that many of the Frameworks brought forward would be impacted by the Protocol and emphasised that our endorsement must be viewed from that perspective.

The deputy First Minister expressed concerns as to the limited time for the necessary work under this programme to be completed before the end of the transition period, and suggested that where necessary interim or provisional frameworks should be put in place.

On the UK Internal Market the First Minister highlighted the need for the forthcoming legislation to include the commitment to unfettered access.

Under Any Other Business Junior Minister Kearney highlighted his concerns as to limited time available to conclude a future relationship agreement with the European Union, and expressed his hope that the outstanding issues could be resolved.

The Joint Communiqué which was agreed at the meeting is attached at **Appendix A**.

Yours sincerely,



Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE (EU NEGOTIATIONS) COMMUNIQUE

3 SEPTEMBER 2020

The twenty-fifth Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) met on 3 September 2020 via video conference. The meeting was chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

The attending Ministers were:

From the UK Government: The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP; The Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon Alister Jack MP; The Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon Simon Hart MP; The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP; The Paymaster General, Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP; The Minister for the Constitution and Devolution, Chloe Smith MP and Sherpa, Prime Minister's Europe Adviser and Chief Negotiator of Task Force Europe, David Frost.

From the Scottish Government: The Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs, Michael Russell MSP and The Minister for Europe and International Development, Jenny Gilruth MSP.

From the Welsh Government: The Counsel General and Minister for European Transition, Jeremy Miles MS.

From the Northern Ireland Executive: First Minister, Rt Hon Arlene Foster MLA, deputy First Minister, Michelle O'Neill MLA, Junior Minister Gordon Lyons MLA and Junior Minister Declan Kearney MLA.

The Committee discussed progress on negotiations with the EU, an update on transition readiness, the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol, including the legislative timetable, progress with work on the UK Common Frameworks Programme and interactions with the UK Internal Market.