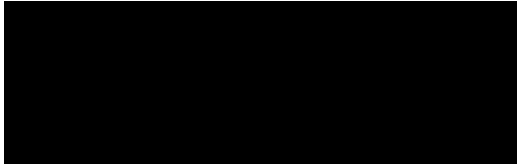


Stormont Castle  
BELFAST  
BT4 3TT



**Michael Potter  
Committee for TEO  
Room 412  
Parliament Buildings  
Ballymiscaw  
Stormont  
BELFAST  
BT4 3SR**

**26 January 2021**

Dear Michael

**Joint Ministerial Committee (European Negotiations) Meeting – Tuesday 29  
December 2020**

I wrote to you on Tuesday 29 December to advise you that the twenty eighth meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) (JMC (EN)) would be held on the same day at 16.30 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 Joint Communiqué.

The Executive was represented at the meeting by the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

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, and The Paymaster General, Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP.

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.

The Joint Communiqué is attached at **Appendix A**.

On the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), an update on the agreement was provided by David Frost, the Prime Minister's Europe Adviser and Chief Negotiator of Task Force Europe.

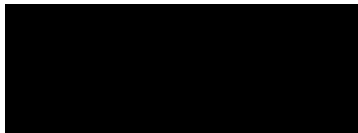
In response the First Minister expressed her thanks to Lord Frost and his team for their work in concluding the agreement, but emphasised that the Agreement would have a different impact in Northern Ireland due to the parallel operation of the Protocol, and this needed to be reflected in the communications and guidance accompanying the Agreement. She also emphasised a number of pressing EU Exit issues impacting our businesses and citizens that need to be resolved. These include the current disruption to the transit of consumer parcels from GB, the restriction on VAT Margin Scheme access for second hand car sales, pet and livestock movements, and the import of seed potatoes from Scotland. The First Minister also asked for clarity on how Northern Ireland would take part in the UK Emissions Trading Scheme due to the continued operation of the SEM. She noted that the Executive were grateful for the engagement on the Protocol, and further engagement was needed to fully understand how it interacts with the Agreement.

The deputy First Minister said that she would also like clarity on the EU Exit issues that the First Minister had raised. She noted the loss of EU Programmes including Erasmus, and supported the Irish government's commitment to allow our students' continued participation. The conclusion of the Agreement and implementation of the Protocol were welcomed by the deputy First Minister and she highlighted the need to assess in detail their interactions, as well as their impact on north south cooperation and readiness, particularly in the context of trade in goods. Moving forward she noted the vital need for the Executive to be represented in the governance framework of the Agreement.

Following the update on Readiness the First Minister noted the need for clear and bespoke guidance for our businesses on how the arrangements on Rules of Origin in the TCA and the Joint Committee decisions would impact them. She emphasised that the disruption to consumer parcels, due to the lack of clarity for traders in Great Britain, was a real time issue impacting our consumers. She welcomed the arrangements on cabotage in the Road Transport part of the Agreement, noting that they had also been welcomed by the Minister for Infrastructure. The First Minister noted that the request for a Legislative Consent Motion for the Future Relationship Bill had been received and the Executive would consider it in due course.

The deputy First Minister expressed her thanks for the update on readiness and emphasised the importance of accurate communications as the Transition Period comes to and end so our businesses and citizens know both what to prepare for and how.

Yours sincerely



**Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer**

**JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE (EU NEGOTIATIONS) COMMUNIQUE**

**29 December 2020**

The twenty-eighth Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) met on 29 December 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 and the Paymaster General, Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP.

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, and deputy First Minister, Michelle O'Neill MLA.

The Committee discussed the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement and readiness, including the implementation of the agreement, the Northern Ireland Protocol and legislation.