



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee

## **Minutes of Proceedings** **11 April 2024**

**Meeting Location:** Room 30

**Present:**

Philip McGuigan MLA (Chairperson)

David Brooks MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Steve Aiken MLA

Patrick Brown MLA

Jonathan Buckley MLA

Joanne Bunting MLA

Declan Kearney MLA

**Apologies:**

Sorcha Eastwood MLA

Emma Sheerin MLA

**In Attendance:** Marie Austin (Assembly Clerk)  
Sinead Kelly (Senior Assistant Clerk)  
Oliver Bellew (Assistant Clerk)  
Victoria Bourquin (Assistant Clerk)  
Suzanne Patton (Clerical Officer)  
Shelley Garner (Clerical Officer)

**In Attendance by Video:**

Leigh Gibson (Senior Assistant Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 10:02am in private session.

**1. Apologies**

As above.

**2. COM/2024/52: Proposed Replacement EU Act: Field inspections and seed productions – Moldova and Ukraine**

Maeve Corrigan, Legal Adviser, Assembly Legal Services, provided legal advice on the proposed replacement EU act: COM/2024/52: Field inspections and seed productions – Moldova and Ukraine.

A question and answer session followed.

The Legal Adviser left the meeting at 10.11am.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to move to open session at 10.11am.

### **3. Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

### **4. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2024.

Steve Aiken MLA expressed his gratitude to Members for condolences expressed on the untimely passing of his father-in-law.

### **5. Matters Arising**

None.

### **6. COM/2024/52: Proposed Replacement EU Act: Field inspections and seed productions – Moldova and Ukraine**

The Committee considered the proposed replacement EU act: COM/2024/52: Field inspections and seed productions – Moldova and Ukraine, including the departmental assessment of impact.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to monitor the progress of the proposed replacement act, pursuant to paragraph 7(1) of the Windsor Framework (Democratic Scrutiny) Regulations 2024.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that a revised departmental assessment of impact be provided if any changes are made to the proposed EU act, in the course of its legislative passage, that would have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland in a way that is liable to persist.

## **7. Regulation (EU) 2023/214: Published New EU Act on the labelling of organic pet food**

Jonathan Buckley MLA joined the meeting at 10.19am.

The Committee received oral evidence from:

Brian Ervine, Head of Environmental Farming Branch, DAERA

Leanne McGrath, Deputy Principal, Environmental Farming Branch,  
DAERA.

A question and answer session followed.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Declan Kearney left the meeting at 10.33am.

The officials left the meeting at 10.37am.

The Committee noted that a notification in relation to the new EU act was received by the Speaker on 28 March 2024, in accordance with paragraph 19(2) of Schedule 6B of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the key representatives of businesses and civil society identified as being affected, or who would be affected, if the Regulation enters into force, to seek views on the new EU act, and highlighting the need to respond as soon as possible.

Declan Kearney joined the meeting at 10.40am.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that any responses would be published, as and when received, to help inform any debate on a possible applicability motion.

The Committee noted that, as previously agreed, the departmental assessment of impact and the Hansard of the oral evidence session would be circulated to all MLAs.

## **8. Correspondence**

**8.1.** The Committee considered a response from the Executive Office to the Committee's request for an updated table on current proposed EU legislation.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that departments are now asked to provide initial assessments of impact for those proposed EU Acts that are likely to be adopted and/or published before the European Parliament elections in June and would likely have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland in a way that is liable to persist, if they were applied.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that the table makes clear, for each act: whether it is subject to Article 13(3a) or Article 13(4) of the Windsor Framework; and, for those subject to Article 13(a), whether the act is an amending or replacement act. Further, the table should provide, for each act, an estimated time for adoption and/or publication in the EU Official Journal.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request a formatting change to insert repeat page headings.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that an updated table is provided on a monthly basis.

**8.2.** The Committee noted a response from the Executive Office to its request for information on the monitoring of EU law.

**8.3** The Committee noted a response from the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office in relation to pauses in notifications and a UK Explanatory Memorandum on the proposed EU act to amend Regulation (EU) 2017/852 on Mercury.

## **9. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson informed Members that both he and the Deputy Chairperson met with officials from the Executive Office to discuss Committee processes, volume of work and capacity issues. Members noted that similar meetings would be scheduled on a quarterly basis.

The Committee discussed the proposed visits to Brussels and Westminster.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to consider options for the proposed visits to Brussels and Westminster.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

No business was raised.

#### **11. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 18 April 2024 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.57am.

**Philip McGuigan, MLA**

**Chairperson, Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee**