



**The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP**

**Secretary of State for  
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**Ciara Ferguson MLA**  
**Chairperson, Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee**  
Room 371, Parliament Buildings  
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By email: [WindsorFramework.Committee@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:WindsorFramework.Committee@niassembly.gov.uk)

17 March 2026

Your references: DSC 01/26, DSC 20/26 & DSC 26/26  
Our reference: MC/26/99

Dear Ciara,

I write further to your letters, dated 16 January and 29 January 2026 relating to Regulation (EU) 2025/2509 on the safety of toys and the Committee's scrutiny of it, for which the Government is grateful.

We take note of your original letter sent on 8 January 2026, following the Government providing an Explanatory Memorandum to the Committee setting out its position on the Regulation. The Minister for the Cabinet Office responded to that letter on 19 January with further information.

As mentioned separately, the Government will be launching a Call for Evidence within the next six months, which will cover the requirements of the new EU Toy Safety Regulation. This will be used to inform potential future regulatory changes ahead of the main provisions of the Regulation applying from August 2030, reflecting the Government's manifesto

commitment to the UK internal market. We will provide details of the Call for Evidence to the Committee as committed to separately.

Northern Ireland departments, including the Department for Economy, and SOLACE remain free to respond when it has been launched, in addition to conducting any activity they wish to understand the Regulation and the views of local businesses on its impacts and implementation.

As regards the Government's commitments to providing "*timely access to all the necessary information and analysis it needs to carry out its work, including from the EU*", I would note that we continue to provide the Committee with Explanatory Memoranda on amending and replacing EU regulations and directives and supplementary information in full accordance with its scrutiny commitments. This includes for Regulation (EU) 2025/2509, which was drafted by both officials from the Department for Business and Trade and the Office for Product Safety and Standards. These documents set out the Government's assessment of relevant legislation, and we remain available should there be any further questions the Committee wishes to ask in writing. Cabinet Office manages and provides a coordination function for the purposes of the scrutiny process, which is important particularly where there are multiple equities in Government in a particular regulation and has ensured that the Committee received an Explanatory Memorandum and follow up in good time.

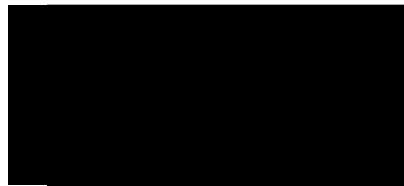
As explained there, the Government does not expect the Regulation (EU) 2025/2509 to create significant barriers to the movement of goods from GB into NI, due to extended transition periods, as well as the Europe wide nature of the toy industry. The engagement of relevant stakeholders with the call for evidence is important as we consider those issues, and we welcome submissions from all regions and nations including Northern Ireland. Whilst the EU conducts its own process on the effects and regulatory impacts of its legislation, this call for evidence will enable the Government to understand and calibrate its domestic approach.

We would also emphasise that, whilst some of these issues engaged by the regulation would be reserved matters, Northern Ireland public authorities maintain an interest in all legislation relevant to Northern Ireland under the Windsor Framework. This is especially the case where they may be expected to carry out local enforcement of the relevant rules, and where they are considering questions of economic policy and development, and consumer affairs. They possess a unique insight into the effects of EU legislation given their close relationship with local stakeholders, and are able to share this separately to the considerations of the

Government as the treaty party, which may at times need to account for wider diplomatic and legal considerations. The UK Government frequently engages with NI departments during the drafting of Explanatory Memoranda for this reason, given that all public authorities are required to act in compatibility with the law including international obligations.

We would invite the relevant public authorities such as the Northern Ireland Department for Economy and SOLACE to engage with the Government's call for evidence in due course. We will continue to encourage them to draw any issues of interest to our attention and to the Committee at relevant moments, in support of its work, and will be able to update the Committee on the outcome of the call for evidence when it has completed reflecting its interest in the Regulation.

Yours sincerely,



**THE RT HON HILARY BENN MP  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**



Mrs Ciara Ferguson MLA, Chairperson  
Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny  
Committee (DSC)  
**Ref:** DSC 26/26  
29 January 2026

**Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP**  
**Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office**

Issued via email to: [REDACTED]

**Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP**  
**Secretary of State for Northern Ireland**

Issued via email to: [REDACTED]

**CC: Rt Hon Lord Murphy of Torfaen**

Issued via email to: [REDACTED]

Nick, Hilary a chairde,

**[Regulation \(EU\) 2025/2509 on the safety of toys](#)**

The enclosed letter dated 19 January 2026 refers.

At its meeting on 22 January 2026, the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee (DSC) agreed a report on its Inquiry into the above-mentioned replacement EU act. A copy of the DSC's report can be found [here](#).

During its deliberations on the evidence received as part of the Inquiry, the Committee agreed that I would write again<sup>1</sup> to reiterate the Committee's frustration and disappointment that officials from the British Government's Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) did not provide oral evidence during the Inquiry, and to ask again that officials from all relevant British Government departments and agencies engage directly with the Committee as and when necessary.

The Committee accepts that the Cabinet Office has a co-ordinating role in assisting the Committee in gathering the evidence necessary to allow it to assess the impact of an EU act notified to it, and in particular those which deal with reserved or excepted matters. However, it does not accept that the Cabinet Office should be the gatekeepers to the Committee's direct engagement with British Government departments and agencies.

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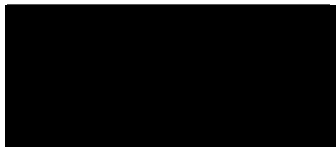
<sup>1</sup> Further to my letter dated 16 January 2026.

I refer you again to [correspondence](#) to former MLA and the then Speaker of the Assembly Alex Maskey, dated 2 February 2024, from former MP and the then Secretary of State the Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris, which states that, *“The UK Government will endeavour to ensure the Assembly has timely access to all the necessary information and analysis it needs to carry out its work, including from the EU.”*

The Committee is firmly of the view that, in this instance, an oral evidence session with OPSS officials would have gone a long way to ensure that it had all the necessary information and analysis needed to carry out its work.

I would appreciate a response at your earliest convenience, including a response to the outstanding requests for information in my letter dated 16 January 2026.

Le meas,



Ciara Ferguson MLA  
**Chairperson**  
**Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee**  
**ENC**



Rt Hon. Nick Thomas-Symonds MP  
Minister for the Cabinet Office  
His Majesty's Paymaster General  
Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London  
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*Ciara Ferguson*  
*Chairperson, Windsor Framework Democratic*  
*Scrutiny Committee*  
*Room 382, Parliament Buildings*  
*Stormont*  
*Belfast, BT4 3XX*

19<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Dear Ciara,

## **REGULATION ON THE SAFETY OF TOYS**

Thank you for your letter dated 8 January 2026, regarding Regulation (EU) 2025/2509 on the safety of toys.

The Government's assessment of this Regulation has been set out in the Explanatory Memorandum from the Department for Business and Trade dated 5th January 2026, which I am attaching for completeness. This has been supplied by the Government in line with its scrutiny commitments.

Whilst some of these issues engaged by the regulation would be reserved matters, the Committee's scrutiny of the regulation in the round is important. With regards to reserved matters specifically, I would draw the Committee's attention to the fact that the Government will be launching a Call for Evidence within the next six months, which will cover the requirements of the new EU Toy Safety Regulation. This will be used to inform potential future regulatory changes ahead of the main provisions of the Regulation applying from August 2030, reflecting the Government's manifesto commitment to the UK internal market. I would note that many of the Government's toy safety objectives are included in the new EU Toy Safety Regulation.

Subject to assessment, the Government has powers to make changes to legislation in Great Britain, including through use of powers in the Product Regulation and Metrology Act 2025. I have asked that my officials provide details of the Call for Evidence to the Committee, Northern Ireland departments and SOLACE when it has been launched, so that any points that they consider relevant can be submitted and considered directly.

Those bodies may also wish to pass the details of that Call for Evidence on to stakeholders they deem relevant.

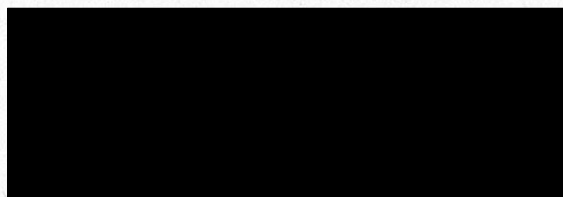
In any case, the Government does not expect the Regulation to create significant barriers to the movement of goods from GB into NI, due to extended transition periods, as well as the Europe wide nature of the toy industry. However, it is right that we build on our understanding through this Call for Evidence and provide opportunity for industry and public authorities in Northern Ireland to share their views, reflecting that commitment of the Government to the health of the UK internal market.

Since the Regulation was first proposed, the Government has sought to engage officials in Northern Ireland departments on their interests in this act and I note the Executive Office's correspondence with the Committee dated 15 December. My officials remain ready to continue this engagement with them, including on matters of economic policy, consumer affairs, and the interests of local councils. Northern Ireland departments and/or SOLACE of course remain entitled to put any further views or issues to the Committee relating to the Regulation and can also engage local industry on the issues, beyond the Call for Evidence that the Government is undertaking.

If the Committee has any questions as to the Government's Explanatory Memorandum or wishes to make any representations ahead of the Call for Evidence, I would be happy to consider those issues in writing.

I trust this information will be of assistance to the Committee.

**Yours sincerely,**



**RT HON NICK THOMAS-SYMONDS MP  
MINISTER FOR THE CABINET OFFICE  
HIS MAJESTY'S PAYMASTER GENERAL**



Mrs Ciara Ferguson MLA, Chairperson  
Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny  
Committee (DSC)  
**Ref:** DSC 20/26  
16 January 2026

**Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP**  
**Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office**

Issued via email to: [REDACTED]

**Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP**  
**Secretary of State for Northern Ireland**

Issued via email to: [REDACTED]

Hilary, Nick, a chairde,

**Re:** [Regulation \(EU\) 2025/2509 on the safety of toys](#)

I refer to my enclosed letter on behalf of the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee (DSC) dated 8 January 2026, in relation to the above published replacement EU act. On 8 January 2026, the DSC decided to hold an inquiry into the act, pursuant to paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 6B to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

In the enclosed correspondence, I had formally requested (on behalf of the Committee) that officials from the British Government's Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) attend the meeting of the DSC on 15 January – remotely – to give oral evidence on the replacement EU act.

Officials did not attend the meeting, and, at the time of writing, no response has been received to my correspondence.

In oral evidence at today's meeting, officials from the Executive Office (TEO) told the Committee that product safety sits solely with the OPSS and is not within the policy remit of any departments here. Similarly, SOLACE NI (on behalf of local councils) has previously stated in [correspondence](#) to the Committee – dated 30 June 2025 - that the OPSS is the “*appropriate body with national level policy and legislative responsibility for consumer product safety regulation in Northern Ireland.*”

In [correspondence](#) to Alex Maskey - former MLA and the then Speaker of the Assembly - dated 2 February 2024, The Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris, - former MP and the then Secretary of State - stated that, “*The UK Government will endeavour to ensure the Assembly has timely access to all*

*the necessary information and analysis it needs to carry out its work, including from the EU.”* The Committee therefore agreed that I write to you both to express deep disappointment that OPSS officials did not attend the Committee meeting to provide oral evidence, and to ask that you encourage your colleagues and officials to engage with this Committee as and when necessary.

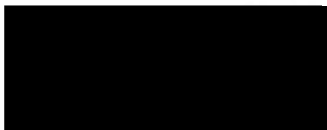
SOLACE NI also stated – in [correspondence](#) to the Committee dated 18 April 2025 – that it would expect *“national and regional level engagement with affected businesses and regulatory impact assessments be completed, with practical guidance for businesses and enforcing bodies also provided by the central competent authority for the specific regulatory function.”* SOLACE NI also stated in the same correspondence that it would expect the OPSS to undertake this.

The Committee therefore agreed to request confirmation from the British Government of which body or department will undertake regional level engagement with affected businesses and complete regulatory impact assessments in relation to this EU act.

I would appreciate a response in relation to this request for information – and the requests for information in my enclosed correspondence - as soon as possible.

The Committee must publish its inquiry report by 22 January 2026. Therefore, in light of the time constraints under which the Committee is operating, the Committee would accept some/all of the requested information being provided in correspondence from officials if it would facilitate a timelier response.

Le meas,



Ciara Ferguson MLA  
**Chairperson**  
**Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee**  
**ENC**

Mrs Ciara Ferguson MLA, Chairperson  
Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny  
Committee (DSC)

REF: DSC 01/26

8 January 2026

**Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP**  
**Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office**

Issued via email to: [REDACTED]

Cc [REDACTED]

Nick, a chara,

At its meeting on 8 January 2026, the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee (DSC) considered [Regulation \(EU\) 2025/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 November 2025 on the safety of toys and repealing Directive 2009/48/EC](#).

This act was notified to the DSC on 2 January 2026.

The DSC decided to hold an inquiry into the replacement EU act, pursuant to paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 6B to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Under paragraph 9(2)(a), the DSC must seek substantive discussion and engagement with the British Government. Therefore, the Committee is requesting your assessment of:

- Whether it appears likely that the application of the replacement EU act would have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities here in a way that is liable to persist; and
- Whether it appears likely that not applying the replacement EU act would have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities here in a way that is liable to persist.

In considering the potential for divergence, the Committee also requests details of the position in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Committee also agreed to formally request that officials from the British Government's Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) attend a meeting of the DSC **on Thursday 15 January 2026** – remotely – to provide oral evidence on the replacement EU act.

**I would appreciate a response to the request for OPSS officials to attend by 11.00am on Monday 12 January 2026**, and a response to the wider requests for information as soon as possible thereafter (and by Monday 19 January 2026 at 11.00am at the latest).

Le meas,



Ciara Ferguson, MLA  
**Chairperson, Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee**