



Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Minister for the Cabinet Office
Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London
SW1A 2AS

The Earl of Kinnoull
Chair of the European Union Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

31 March 2020

Dear Earl of Kinnoull,

Scrutiny of the future relationship negotiations and the UK-EU Joint Committee

Thank you for your understanding with regards to my attendance at your Committee on 24 March. I look forward to appearing in due course. In your letter of 18 March you suggested some ways in which my officials and I could engage with your committee. As I am sure you will appreciate, the attention of Ministers and officials is focused on the response to Covid-19 for the time being. We are currently discussing with the Commission how to structure negotiations appropriately and will consider how best to keep Parliament informed during these extraordinary times.

You asked whether the Government will provide your Committee with access to sensitive information, such as legal texts. I was asked a similar question by the Future Relationship Committee on 11 March, with specific regard to the draft legal text. The UK and EU exchanged draft legal texts on 18 March 2020. We are sharing ours in confidence as a negotiating document as part of the ongoing negotiating process. Our overall approach to negotiations is set out in detail in the document we published on 27 February, "The Future Relationship with the EU: The UK's Approach to Negotiations". We will keep under review whether it is useful to make documents available more widely.

I wrote to Select Committee Chairs on 24 March regarding parliamentary scrutiny of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee. I intend to lay a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) ahead of, and following, each meeting, outlining the decisions taken by the WAJC. Consistent with this, a WMS was made on 25 March ahead of the first meeting, setting out the provisional agenda and UK delegation. Now that Parliament has gone into recess, I intend to update Parliament by writing to you and the Chair of the Future Relationship Committee.

I would also like to confirm receipt of your letter of 19 March to which I will respond.

I am copying my reply to the Rt Hon Baroness Evans of Bowes Park, Leader of the House of Lords, Sir William Cash MP, Chair of the House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee, and the Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP, Chair of the House of Commons Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Minister for the Cabinet Office**