



HOUSE OF LORDS

European Union Committee

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Rt Hon. Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, United Kingdom

2 July 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

On 28 June it was announced that Mr David Frost, the UK's Chief Negotiator and your Europe Adviser, would succeed Sir Mark Sedwill as National Security Adviser. The European Union Select Committee, which I chair, and which is charged by the House of Lords, *inter alia*, with scrutinising the Government's conduct of negotiations on the future UK-EU relationship, discussed the implications of this announcement at its meeting on 30 June.

We note that Mr Frost was quoted, in a press release issued by your office on 28 June, as saying that the EU negotiations would "remain my top single priority until those negotiations have concluded, one way or another". We note also that it has been widely reported that Mr Frost will take up his new appointment at the end of August, and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster told the House of Commons on 29 June that the UK and the EU would "both ... seek to find a conclusion over the course of the next five weeks".

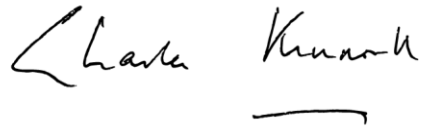
Yet on 8 June the EU's Chief Negotiator, Michel Barnier, told the House of Commons Committee on the Future Relationship with the EU that "we are going to need the next three or four months of July, August, September and October" to conclude negotiations. It was already clear that the EU would not agree to the UK's request to complete negotiations in July, and this was confirmed when on 12 June the UK and EU agreed that negotiating rounds should "take place in July, August and in September, unless agreed otherwise between the parties". The *Financial Times* yesterday noted that the first priority of the incoming German Presidency would be to reach agreement on the EU's post-pandemic recovery fund, and that the future EU-UK trade agreement would be a matter for after the summer break.

The EU is our closest neighbour and ally, and our biggest trading partner—it is difficult to over-state the importance of the UK-EU negotiations. It is thus critical that the negotiations should indeed remain Mr Frost's "top priority"—in fact his only priority—until they are concluded, one way or another. Can you therefore confirm that Mr Frost will remain in post as the UK's Chief Negotiator until the negotiations are completed and a final legal text is ready for ratification?

The Committee also notes that as National Security Adviser Mr Frost will in addition to his many other duties inherit responsibility for the Integrated Review of foreign policy, defence, development and security, which is also due to be concluded in the autumn. Will you undertake that, should there be an interval between Sir Mark's departure as National Security Adviser and the completion of negotiations, Mr Frost will continue to focus his full and undivided attention on the negotiations, despite the heavy demands of his new and vitally important role?

I am copying this letter to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, and to Lord True.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lord Kinnoull'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Lord Kinnoull
Chair of the European Union Committee