



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Sir William Cash MP
Chair
European Scrutiny Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1 0AA

07 March 2022

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 26 January on behalf of the European Scrutiny Committee about the EU's Single Customs Window (SCW) and plans for the UK's Single Trade Window (STW). I welcome the Committee's questions on an area of importance for myself and the Government.

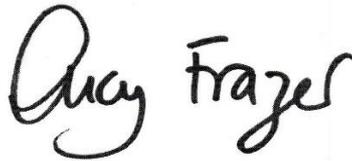
The Trade Specialised Committee between the EU and UK on Customs Cooperation and Rules of Origin took place on 7 October 2021. EU officials presented key information on their SCW as part of an overview of their customs regime, including planned legislative developments. UK officials then shared a summary of our STW objectives and used the corresponding item to reiterate our expectation that the Committee serve as the first step towards further discussions on the SCW and STW between the EU and the UK over the coming months and years.

EU officials emphasised the importance of maintaining an open channel of communication to understand better each other's ideas and how we might best move forward. The discussion was concluded by the UK Chair, who noted that it was encouraging that both parties were beginning engagement on these conversations and had agreed to further discussions.

The Government's priority remains to protect peace and stability in Northern Ireland. We are working intensively with our EU partners to find solutions to the challenges in Northern Ireland, preserving peace and the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in the long term. The outcome of those discussions may impact on the answers to the questions you have set out in your letter, and so whilst talks are ongoing, it is not possible to comment on the applicability of the SCW in NI.

Overall, my officials are reassured that the discussion was positive and that both parties were supportive of further discussion, which is expected to become more substantive as our policy thinking develops. Once I am in a position to update the Committee on this issue, I will be happy to respond to the questions that you have set out in writing in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

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

THE RT HON LUCY FRAZER QC MP