



HOUSE OF LORDS

European Union Committee

House of Lords
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Robin Walker MP
Minister of State
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9 September 2020

Dear Robin,

Thank you once again for appearing before the House of Lords European Union Select Committee at its meeting on 28 July, to discuss the Northern Ireland Office's responsibilities in relation to the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. We are also grateful for your follow-up letter, dated 11 August 2020, which the Committee considered at its meeting on 8 September 2020.

We are grateful for the clarification regarding discussion of VAT matters in the Business Engagement Forum, and for your offer of a read-out of the discussion of this matter that was scheduled to take place in late August/early September. We would be grateful if this update could also set out any other issues that have been addressed in your engagement with Northern Ireland businesses since your appearance before the Committee, including their response to the Government guidance for business moving goods into or out of Northern Ireland, published on 7 August 2020, and the publication of the United Kingdom Internal Market Bill on 9 September.

We would be grateful to receive such an update by 23 September 2020, and to receive further updates on discussions in the Business Engagement Forum on a monthly basis thereafter.

We also note the publication on 7 August of further information on the Protocol's "dedicated mechanism" which will ensure no diminution in human rights protections in Northern Ireland. We will seek the views of stakeholders on this guidance, and would be grateful for details of any further developments in relation to the Northern Ireland Office's responsibility for Article 2 of the Protocol on the rights of individuals, including on the scheduling of a standalone meeting of the Joint Consultative Working Group to discuss these issues.

I have copied this letter to Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The Committee is in separate correspondence with Mr Gove regarding the Cabinet Office's overarching responsibility for the Protocol.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Kinnoull', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Lord Kinnoull
Chair of the European Union Committee