



HOUSE OF LORDS

European Union Committee

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28 October 2020

Edward Argar MP
Minister of State for Health
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Dear Ed,

COM(2020) 405 final: REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the establishment of a Programme for the Union's action in the field of health –for the period 2021-2027 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 282/2014 (“EU4Health Programme”)

Thank you for your letter on the above Proposal, dated 24 September, which was considered by our Environment Sub-Committee on 28 October.

We note that, since our last letter, the budget for the EU4Health Programme has been reduced significantly from €9.4 billion to €1.7 billion, and that this reduction will inevitably affect the scale and scope of the Programme. We acknowledge that you are unable to answer a number of our questions until the Commission releases more detail on the breakdown of spending within the Programme in light of the significantly altered budget. We look forward to your responses when that information is available. For ease of reference, and altered slightly to reflect the revised situation, our outstanding questions are as follows:

- 1) Has the revised scale of the EU4Health proposal and the breakdown of spending within it affected the Government's decision not to seek to participate as a third country?
- 2) Please clarify whether you intend to adjust the scale or focus of future investment channelled through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) in light of the EU4Health proposals.

However, we believe there were several questions in our original letter that you are able to answer without sight of the detail of the revised Proposal.

First, you acknowledged in your Explanatory Memorandum (EM) that you are seeking to address some of the same issues as those covered in the proposals through the Future Relationship negotiations. It is therefore unclear why you made the original decision not to do

so through the available provisions allowing for third country participation in EU4Health. Please provide details on the reasoning behind that decision.

Second, what is the current scale of the UK's participation in EU health programmes – i.e. how many individuals and organisations participate, and how much investment is provided through EU programmes? In addition, did you consult those individuals and organisations as part of reaching your initial decision not to participate in the EU4Health programme? If so, what was their response?

And third, we would like to know what assessment you have made of the impact of your original decision not to participate in EU4Health on the health services and facilities that are shared between Northern Ireland and Ireland, such as the Altnagelvin Hospital in Derry/Londonderry.

The Committee continues to take an active interest in this matter and we look forward to a response in 10 working days.

I am copying this letter to Sir William Cash MP, Chair of the Commons European Scrutiny Committee; Jessica Mulley, Clerk to the Commons Committee; Les Saunders, Cabinet Office; and Rebecca Diment, Departmental Scrutiny Coordinator.

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

Lord Kinnoull
Chair of the European Union Committee