



**Department for
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& Net Zero**

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Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Chair, Science & Technology Committee
House of Commons
Palace of Westminster
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(By e-mail only)

05 April 2023

Dear Greg,

Thank you for your letter of 24 January to the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, regarding the Government's position on Euratom association. I am responding on behalf of the Department.

I am glad the committee visited the Culham Centre for Fusion for Fusion Energy as part of your inquiry. The work taking place there is hugely important for the world and our future energy security.

The lack of progress on Euratom Research & Training association is frustrating, especially given the importance of fusion. Our position has always been one of openness to discussions on research collaboration and that very much continues to be our position. We welcome the EU's recent openness to discussions, following two years of delays. The EU have not yet made any proposals to address the financial terms of UK association, given we are now over 2 years into a 7-year programme. We will continue to put the interests of businesses and researchers across the UK first so they can take forward ground-breaking research and drive forward innovation with their international partners.

The journey to fusion energy generation is a global one and we need to make sure the UK continues to lead the way. We have committed over £700 million for fusion over this Spending Review to support critical fusion R&D, deliver the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) programme and boost STEM skills to develop the skills pipeline needed for the future commercial sector. Developing a future workforce to support growth of the UK fusion sector will be crucial to the successful delivery of the STEP Programme, and the UK's wider Fusion Strategy. To this end, I have recently announced the development of the STEP Skills Centre at the STEP site in West Burton in Nottinghamshire. Building on the success of the UKAEA Oxfordshire Advanced Skills Centre, the STEP Skills Centre will provide local opportunities to gain valuable, hands-on skills for life whilst working at the forefront of fusion science. We are also funding up to 200 student placements through the UK's world-leading Fusion Centre for Doctoral Training over 2019-2024.

Maintaining the UK's position as a world leader in fusion is one of the top priorities for my department. I will write to you to provide further updates on the actions we are taking to break this impasse in due course.

I hope you will find this reply helpful.

Yours aye,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a horizontal line that loops back to the left and then continues to the right.

ANDREW BOWIE MP
Minister for Nuclear and Networks