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Dear Alicia,

I am writing as a follow up to the FAC Evidence Session on the FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts on 28 March 2023 with the reassurance you requested about our communications with the Russian Embassy. We remain in contact with the Russian Embassy in London when necessary. The most recent meeting was on 17 April when Tom Drew, Director General, Defence and Intelligence, summoned the Russian Ambassador, Andrey Kelin, and made it clear that the UK considers Mr Kara-Murza's conviction to be contrary to Russia's international obligations on human rights, including the right to a fair trial. The previous meeting was on 6 April when the FCDO's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Director, Ben Fender, summoned the Deputy Head of Mission, Alexander Gusarov, to the FCDO to discuss the situation of Mr Kara-Murza. During the meeting, Mr Fender also recalled the Committee's recent evidence session with Sir Philip Barton and made clear to Mr Gusarov, for the avoidance of any doubt, that President Putin would not be welcome in the UK.

Yours ever,

Leo Docherty MP
Minister for Europe