



**Michelle Donelan MP**  
Minister of State for Universities

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Baroness Donaghy  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0AA

14<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Baroness Donaghy,

I would like to thank you for sharing the Committee's report and I am responding on behalf of the Secretary of State. The Government recognises the benefits of educational exchanges that the Committee has highlighted and we remain committed to creating opportunities for young people to make the best start in life and contribute to their communities. We have considered the report's findings carefully and I provide further information on our position below. I have limited my comments to your thoughts on Erasmus+ as research is led by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and I understand they plan to write separately.

As part of our preparations for negotiations with the EU, the Government considered the EU programmes that the UK participates in under the current Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020) to decide whether or not to seek participation in the next generation of EU programmes. In doing so, the Government considered a range of factors including looking at which programmes represented value for money and were in the interests of the UK taxpayer.

Following this, the Government made clear in our public mandate *The Future Relationship with the EU* (February 2020) that it remained open to considering participation in some elements of the Erasmus+ programme on a time-limited basis, provided they were in line with the UK's interests and that we could agree a fair and proportionate financial contribution. As you know, negotiations with the EU are still ongoing at this time.

In parallel we have been continuing to develop a UK-wide domestic alternative to Erasmus+, as a contingency measure. Spending Review 2020 provides funding to prepare for a UK-wide domestic alternative to Erasmus+, in the event that the UK no longer participates in Erasmus+, to fund outward global education mobilities.

The committee's report noted the need to provide certainty to students and educational institutions as soon as possible. We appreciate the need to provide those affected with as much information as possible with sufficient time to make preparations. This is why the domestic alternative is being prepared simultaneously with EU negotiations, to ensure we are prepared for every possible outcome.

The committee's report also noted the need to have a domestic alternative in place by the end of the transition period, which provides support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, should the UK not participate in the next Erasmus+. I am keen to ensure that any domestic alternative should support mobility, aim to level up, and expand the opportunity of an international experience to more students from disadvantaged backgrounds. We have been giving this close consideration as we develop the scheme.

I will endeavour to keep this committee informed on further developments in the new year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michelle Donelan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

**Michelle Donelan MP**  
**Minister of State for Universities**