



House of Commons
European Scrutiny Committee

The UK's EU representation: what has changed and how is it working?

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to the report*

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European Scrutiny Committee

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Summary

During the UK's membership of the EU, the Government's official Brussels-based operations were conducted through the UK's Permanent Representation to the European Union (UKRep). With the UK's withdrawal from the EU in January 2020, UKRep was rebranded as the UK Mission to the European Union (UKMis).

We know that UKMis has had to adapt to the UK's departure from the European Union. There have been structural and functional reforms to UKMis including staff numbers, budget, and a new emphasis on nurturing the UK's relationship with European Free Trade Association states. However, any information about structural and functional reform is not readily available to the public on the website of Gov.UK. We recommend the publication of UKMis activities to their website, including updates on UK-EU relations, to have full transparency for the public, where possible.

UKMis has the responsibility of representing the interests of the UK's home nations and the wider UK family, which consists of the crown dependencies and the Overseas Territories. Whilst those Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories from which we took evidence expressed broad satisfaction with the UK Mission and UK engagement on Brexit related issues, they still face some critical issues, for example, the Falkland Islands are struggling with the imposition of tariffs. In contrast to the crown dependencies and Overseas Territories, Wales is concerned with a perceived lack of communication from the Government, particularly on devolved areas such as business (to the extent matters are not reserved), transport and housing. We have recommended more structured communication between the UK Government and the devolved nations, as well as a more formal structure for consulting the crown dependencies and Overseas Territories on EU issues that can be fed into UKMis.

The UK Mission's work is not restricted to the UK's institutional relationship with the EU, under the Withdrawal Agreement and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). UKMis spends about 20% to 25% of its time on non-TCA related issues. This includes foreign policy and defence. This work is not readily known and we recommend that UKMis is much clearer about where non-TCA related work, such as PESCO, fits with the rest of its work.

1 Introduction

Background

1. During the UK's membership of the EU, the Government's official Brussels-based operations were conducted through the UK's Permanent Representation to the European Union (UKRep). With the UK's withdrawal from the EU in January 2020, UKRep was rebranded as the UK Mission to the European Union (UKMis). After EU exit, the work of UKMis has pivoted towards supporting UK engagement in the joint UK/EU bodies set up by the Withdrawal Agreement (WA) and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). This includes the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee, the TCA Partnership Council and the various Specialised Committees established under them.
2. When the UK was an EU Member State, it was bound by the EU Treaties which set out the obligations of EU membership. Consequently, the UK was represented and, where applicable, had voting rights in the EU's institutions. This included the Council of the European Union (also often referred to as the Council of Ministers). Since the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the UK can no longer attend Council meetings.
3. The UK's relationship with the EU remains politically important but is arguably now more diplomatically challenging. The UK Mission faces more barriers in representing the UK's interests than UKRep did, with knowledge on the ground in Brussels being at a premium.
4. We launched this short inquiry into the UK's EU representation in March 2022. We wanted to investigate how the strategic aims and objectives of UKMis differ—as is to be expected—from those of its predecessor. There is also considerable uncertainty regarding how the UK engages with the EU in areas that fall outside of the scope of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (for which EU membership previously provided a useful framework for UK engagement). We hoped to answer these questions with this inquiry.
5. As part of our inquiry we held [evidence sessions](#) with the UK's representative to the EU and representatives for the Crown Dependencies, some Overseas Territories and devolved nations.¹ Evidence was not taken from Northern Ireland. In response to our call for written evidence, we received 15 submissions from a broad range of stakeholders, including think tanks, academics and Government representatives. We are grateful to those who contributed to our inquiry.

Structural and functional reform

6. Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby, Ambassador and Head of the UK Mission to the European Union, told us that the purpose of UKMis is to “is to promote the UK and its values in Brussels, to work to protect British interests in the EU, to support British people and businesses, and to develop a positive, mutually beneficial UK-EU relationship.”²
7. Since the UK left the EU, the newly dubbed UK Mission to the EU's resources have been substantially reduced,³ along with structural and functional changes at UKMis. For

1 Oral evidence sessions were held on 15 June 2022, 19 October 2022, and 29 March 2023.

2 Lindsay Croisdale Appleby, [Q2](#)

3 UK in a Changing Europe, [‘Whitehall in Brussels: The UK Permanent Representation in the EU’](#), March 2021

example, the Head of Mission is no longer graded at the most senior level in the Civil Service and the post of Deputy Ambassador has been abolished. Moreover, staff numbers are expected to decrease progressively over the coming years.

8. The Office of the City Remembrancer, which is within the City of London Corporation, told us that “a considerable level of resource will be required” to maintain a good level of influence in the EU.⁴ Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby told the Committee that the number of FCDO staff working in Brussels has decreased to “130 from between 170–180 staff.”⁵ The overall cost of the Mission is difficult to calculate. The Ambassador told us this was because of “their shared platform in Brussels, along with the delegation to NATO and the bilateral embassy to Belgium, which has a shared corporate services function that supports all those missions.”⁶ However, the Ambassador told us that the annual cost of country-based staff pay was £2.5 million a year. The administration budget in 2021 was £268,000 and UKMis spent £128,000 on programmes last year.⁷ Most of the Mission’s resources are spent on TCA related work, with 20–25% of its resources spent on other work.⁸

9. On the subject of the shared platform with the delegation to NATO, we note that we are engaging in a separate inquiry on the UK’s involvement in the PESCO military mobility project and UK-EU defence cooperation. We encourage select committees with relevant terms of reference to take an active interest in such issues, particularly in the context of the war in Ukraine, accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO, the question of Ukraine joining that organisation and the activities of Russia, China and the Wagner Group in Africa.

10. The Ambassador explained to us that after leaving the EU, the UK has made a deliberate effort in Brussels to strengthen its relationships with the other missions which have enhanced relationships with the European Union,⁹ for example, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) which is an “intergovernmental organisation of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.”¹⁰ The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in London has also put an increased focus on those relationships in the time since EU exit.¹¹

11. However, none of this information about the structural and functional reform is readily available to the public on the Gov.UK website. Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby agreed with the Committee’s assessment on transparency, telling us that it is “tremendously important that we establish a strong and open relationship with all parts of the UK legislature—from whichever party or devolved Administration—so that people do understand what we are doing in the new relationship.”¹²

12. Since the UK’s EU exit, there have been structural and functional changes to UKMis. There is however a lack of transparency surrounding what the Mission does, its overall cost - with the ambassador describing such costs as “complex” due to the shared platform - and the work that it conducts, as well as the results of this work.

4 Office of the City Remembrancer [EUR0009] para 14

5 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q6](#)

6 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q4](#)

7 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q4](#)

8 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q17](#)

9 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby, [Q19](#)

10 EFTA, [The European Free Trade Association](#), [Accessed 8 August 2023]

11 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby, [Q19](#)

12 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q14](#)

13. *We agree with the Ambassador on the importance of transparency for the development of a strong and open relationship between UKMis, the UK's elected representatives and the wider public. We therefore recommend the publication of UKMis activities on its website, including updates on UK-EU relations where possible.*

2 UK Government engagement with devolved institutions, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories on EU matters

14. This chapter examines how the devolved institutions engage with the EU and the structures in place that allow for effective communication between the UK Government and the administrations of the devolved nations on EU related matters. It also looks at how thoroughly UKMis represents the interests of the devolved institutions, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, including issues arising from the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and trade after the UK exit from the EU.

15. Devolution is the decentralisation of governmental power. Examples of devolution in the UK are the powers granted to the Scottish Parliament, the Senedd/Welsh Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Greater London Assembly and local authorities.

16. The crown dependencies are the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Bailiwick of Guernsey, and the Isle of Man. Within the Bailiwick of Guernsey there are three separate jurisdictions: Guernsey (which includes the islands of Herm and Jethou); Alderney; and Sark (which includes the island of Brecqhou).

17. The crown dependencies are self-governing entities, over which the Crown has certain responsibilities. Each has a different historic and constitutional relationship with the Crown, but they are not part of the United Kingdom. The three dependencies each have their own political, legal, and fiscal systems, separate from the UK.¹³

18. The 14 British Overseas Territories (OTs) have a total population of around 260,000.¹⁴ Four of the territories have no permanent British population. Akrotiri and Dhekelia (Cyprus) has a resident population of 12,000 Cypriots and 4,000 UK service personnel.¹⁵ Pitcairn is estimated to have a population of only fifty.¹⁶ Aside from Gibraltar, the Antarctic Territories, and the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus, the OTs are all small islands or archipelagos. This report does not cover the issues faced by Gibraltar, such as the negotiations with the EU, because these matters are being covered by a separate inquiry the Committee is conducting.

Engagement with the EU

19. The Scottish Government website states that “engagement and cooperation with Europe is essential to achieving the central aim of Scotland’s Economic Strategy.”¹⁷ The Scottish Government has committed to collaborating “across a wide range of issues on the EU’s agenda, reflecting our shared values and goals.”

13 A prominent example is in the area of social law and policy. Homosexuality was decriminalised in the Isle of Man 1992, 25 years after England and Wales.

14 House of Commons Library, [The UK Overseas Territories and their Governors](#), June 2022

15 Ministry of Defence, [Overseas bases in focus: Cyprus](#), 9 February 2021

16 Pitcairn Islands Government, [Homepage](#) [accessed 30 June 2022]

17 Scottish Government, [Europe](#), [Accessed 2 December 2022]

20. The External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee (a select committee of the Senedd) reported in 2018 that:

We are clear that whilst Wales is leaving the EU as the UK does, it is not leaving Europe. The last forty-five years of cooperation and integration cannot be lightly discarded... [and reiterated that] Brexit should be seen as a realignment of old relationships together with the beginning of new ones.¹⁸

21. Scotland and Wales both have offices in Brussels. The Brussels offices of the devolved administrations focus on many areas of EU law and policy, for example, the environment, fisheries, civil judicial co-operation, and citizens' rights.¹⁹

22. Scotland House Brussels is staffed by both Scottish Government civil servants and locally engaged staff. As of September 2022, there were 17 members of staff and an additional 6 locally engaged posts that are recruited through the FCDO.²⁰

23. Wales has an established presence in Brussels. Since the referendum, it has made institutional changes within its government and Senedd to support such 'para-diplomatic activity', including the creation of an External Affairs Committee in the Senedd.²¹

24. However, Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for the Economy for the Welsh Government, told the Committee that the headcount of the Brussels office had increased by having a European representative. He told us that "the office in Brussels has nine members of staff and a wide range of policy areas: trade, investment, science, research."²²

25. The UK Mission to the EU's website, the Welsh government office website and the Scottish government office website do not mention how or if they work together.

26. However, in evidence to the Committee, the UK's Ambassador to the EU told the Committee that:

"We are aware of the things that the devolved Administrations are doing in Brussels. My senior team meet the heads of the devolved Administration offices here on a weekly basis, and they participate in many of our staff meetings, so locally, I think it is a positive relationship."²³

Joint Ministerial Committee

27. The UK Government and the devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales agreed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) to participate in the Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC). Its purpose was to provide central coordination of the overall relationship between the administrations.

18 External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee, [Wales' future relationship with Europe](#), March 2018

19 Chatham House, [Devolved External Affairs: The impact of Brexit](#), 1 February 2017

20 [Breakdown of staff numbers in Scotland House, Brussels: FOI release](#), 22 September 2022

21 Chatham House, [Devolved External Affairs: The impact of Brexit](#), 1 February 2017

22 Vaughan Gething [Q60](#)

23 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q24](#)

28. The MoU recognised that whilst “relations with the European Union remain the responsibility of the United Kingdom Government and the UK Parliament” the devolved administrations “will have an interest in international and European policy making in relation to devolved matters.”²⁴

29. The Institute for Government (IfG) had critiqued the Joint Ministerial Committee, saying that that “meetings were held only when the UK government decided.” The IfG said this led to an “irregular pattern that limits the opportunities for input from the devolved governments.”²⁵ The IfG also criticised the JMC for “lack of transparency, meetings and the weakness of its dispute resolution protocol.”²⁶

30. Vaughan Gething told us that the JMC worked, “in the sense that there was regular and predictable contact.” He told the Committee that Ministers were able to clearly articulate their positions during the Brexit negotiations, however “the reality is that the UK Government is the state engaging with the EU in those negotiations, so our view was not always reflected as the UK’s position.”²⁷

31. The Joint Ministerial Committee was superseded in 2022 by the structures that emerged from a joint review of Intergovernmental relations (IGR) conducted by the four governments. The review was launched in 2018 and the conclusions published in January 2022. The new intergovernmental relations structure comprises three tiers: The upper tier is comprised of the Prime Minister and Heads of Devolved Governments Council, the middle tier is made up of an Interministerial Committee and a Finance: Interministerial Committee, and finally, the lowest tier is made up of Interministerial Groups. The London School of Economics and Political Science argued that this new structure creates a “sense of optimism about the possibility of a new era of cooperation.”²⁸

UK Mission representation of the interests of devolved administrations, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories

32. The UK Mission is responsible for representing the interests of the home nations and wider UK family in Brussels. Overall, UKMis engagement with the Crown Dependencies (CDs), Overseas Territories (OTs), and the devolved administrations was said to be positive by each witness.

33. UKMis reported a “positive relationship locally”²⁹ with the devolved administrations and told the Committee that it “work[s] very closely with both the officials and the Ministers from the Crown dependencies and the Overseas Territories.”³⁰ The close relationship between UKMis and the CDs and OTs were seen as important due to them each having “small and exposed economies.”³¹ Indeed, Hon. Alfred Cannan MHK, Chief Minister, Isle of Man Government, told the Committee that UKMis was “accessible and open.”³² Vaughan Gething also agreed with Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby, telling us that

24 HM Government, [Memorandum of Understanding](#), October 2013 para 18

25 Institute for Government, [Devolution: Joint Ministerial Committee](#), July 2020

26 *ibid*

27 Vaughan Gething [Q49](#)

28 London School of Economics and Political Sciences, [Review of intergovernmental relations: the new interministerial structures are a step in the right direction](#), 21 January 2022

29 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q24](#)

30 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q25](#)

31 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q25](#)

32 Alfred Cannan [Q31](#)

it was a “fair statement from the UK ambassador that there is a constructive, positive relationship—not just the weekly dialogue, but working through issues.”³³ On the other hand, the UK Overseas Territories Association told the Committee that “in the six years since the UK voted to leave the EU and the year-and-a-half since the ending of the Transition Period no substantive discussion has taken place between HMG and the governments of the Overseas Territories as to what our future relationship with the EU will be or to how we will be represented at an EU level.”³⁴ Vaughan Gething told us that despite the Welsh Government’s satisfaction with engagement on the ground in Brussels, they felt as though there was a lack of consultation on devolved issues relating to post-Brexit matters.³⁵ These issues include the [Shared Prosperity Fund](#) and trade remedies. This issue cuts to the broader relationship between the UK Government and devolved administrations regarding post-Brexit matters.

34. Vaughan Gething argued that “the Internal Market Act is perhaps the most obvious example of where the UK Government has chosen to take powers in plainly devolved areas,”³⁶ and said the Government “used and threatened [the use of such powers] relatively regularly.” Furthermore, in relation to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, he revealed that they had “not had regular ministerial engagement since the start of the pandemic.”³⁷

Trade and Cooperation Agreement

35. “The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement concluded between the EU and the UK sets out preferential arrangements in areas such as trade in goods and in services, digital trade, intellectual property, public procurement, aviation and road transport, energy, fisheries, social security coordination, law enforcement and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, thematic cooperation, and participation in Union programmes.”³⁸

Overseas Territories

36. The Trade and Cooperation Agreement applies to the devolved nations (as part of the UK), and the crown dependencies are covered by the Trade and Cooperation Agreement in respect of goods and fisheries. The Overseas Territories are not within the scope of the Agreement. The UK Government had requested that the OTs were included in the TCA. In December 2020, FCDO Minister for the European Neighbourhood Wendy Morton said:

“Despite trying everything we could, the European Commission refused to negotiate a future relationship that included the OTs. We sought to change the Commission’s position, but it declined to engage.”³⁹

37. The UK Overseas Territories Association said the territories now found themselves in a “challenging” situation.⁴⁰ The House of Lords EU Committee described the absence

33 Vaughan Gething [Q68](#)

34 UK Overseas Territories Association [[EUR0015](#)] para 1.8

35 Vaughan Gething [Q53](#)

36 Vaughan Gething [Q49](#)

37 Vaughan Gething [Q58](#)

38 European Commission, [The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), [Accessed 10 August 2023]

39 HM Gov, [UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement: UK statement on Overseas Territories](#), 30 December 2020

40 UKOTA, [UKOTA newsletter](#), February 2021, p3

of the OTs in the TCA as “striking.”⁴¹ Hon. Teslyn Barkman, MLA for Camp, Falkland Islands, told us that “the impact of not being included within the trade and cooperation agreement has had a financial impact on our economy.”⁴²

38. Both the Falkland Islands representative and Anguilla’s representative acknowledged that the UK Government had offered support, such as during the Covid-19 pandemic and mitigating the effect of EU imposed tariffs. Dorothea Hodge, the Anguilla representative, told us, “the UK has been exceptional in its response in terms of that shock [Covid] in a post-Brexit world”⁴³ and Hon. Teslyn Barkman told us that “there has been official-level support, which is focused on trying to understand how the Falkland Islands can help to mitigate these tariffs”.⁴⁴

39. On tariffs, the Falkland Islands noted that “to date, over £6 million has been paid this year to the European Union, and it is very likely that, by the end of the year, it will be in excess of that £14.7 million that was paid last year.”⁴⁵ Ms Dorothea Hodge, Representative, Anguilla Government told us that Anguilla can no longer sell fish directly to their nearest neighbour.⁴⁶ Dorothea Hodge noted that the Government had failed to provide a “long-term programme for the Overseas Territories that enable them to traverse the UK’s departure from the European Union”.⁴⁷ Teslyn Barkman agreed with this point.⁴⁸

Crown Dependencies

40. Philip Ozouf, Minister for External Relations, States of Jersey, stressed the importance that “UK Government Departments try to understand and accept the general principle that we will deliver TCA compliance in our own way.”⁴⁹

41. The CDs reported a few issues, with specific reference to fishing and mobility, which have been particularly problematic despite being covered by the TCA.

42. Philip Ozouf told us that there are issues with replacement fishing boats. He also said that Jersey “need to get through this short-term issue of licensing, and long-term issuing of licences to French fishermen.”⁵⁰

43. In respect of mobility he told us that “the issue of the requirement of passports from the UK’s withdrawal from the EU has become quite a big issue for us” which had resulted in “a cliff edge in French visitors coming to Jersey and vice versa.”⁵¹

Trade

44. Both the Scottish and the Welsh Government told us that the EU exit had an impact on trade.

41 House of Lords European Union Committee, [Beyond Brexit: the institutional framework](#), 21st Report of Session 2019–21, 22 March 2021

42 Teslyn Barkman [Q44](#)

43 Dorothea Hodge [Q46](#)

44 Teslyn Barkman [Q46](#)

45 Teslyn Barkman [Q42](#)

46 Dorothea Hodge [Q44](#)

47 Dorothea Hodge [Q46](#)

48 Teslyn Barkman [Q46](#)

49 Philip Ozouf [Q34](#)

50 Philip Ozouf [Q37](#)

51 Philip Ozouf [Q35](#)

45. Vaughan Gething told us that in “Wales more of our trade is undertaken with the European Union as a whole than with the UK as a whole, so it is an even more important trading relationship for us.”⁵² He used this as an example as to why a close relationship with the EU is important to Wales. He told us that “half of our trade, externally, is with the European Union. It is a larger portion than the rest of the UK, so there is a very practical and pragmatic nature to our relationship with the European Union.”⁵³
46. Vaughan Gething told us that choosing to diverge from European standards could make trade more difficult. “If you are in favour of that divergence, you also need to be honest about the consequences of it, rather than say, actually, we can do what we like and still have the same access. That just isn’t the way trading relationships operate in any part of the world.”⁵⁴
47. The Scottish Government did not attend to give oral evidence but did submit written evidence. It argued that the UK’s EU exit has been “overwhelmingly negative” for Scotland.⁵⁵ It wrote that Scotland’s trade in goods with the EU “was 12% lower (or £2.3bn in cash terms) in 2021 because of Brexit.”⁵⁶
48. **The Overseas Territories are significantly affected by being excluded from the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, including the imposition of tariffs on seafood for the Falkland Islands and issues with fishing for Anguilla. *The Government should continue to try and get coverage for the OTs through a similar Agreement.***
49. **Those Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories from which we took evidence expressed broad satisfaction with the UK Mission and Government engagement on EU matters since Brexit. The Crown Dependencies have urged the Government to respect them in implementing the TCA differently, based on their small economies.**
50. **Whilst there is broad satisfaction from the devolved administration in Wales with the UK Mission’s engagement on the ground in Brussels, it has expressed concern over a perceived lack of communication from the Government when proposing new laws that involve diverging from EU-standards, specifically devolved areas.**
51. ***To facilitate better working between the Government and the devolved administrations working on matters that relate to the EU and EU standards, we recommend that the Government should significantly improve communication with the devolved administrations, particularly in areas touching on devolved competences, where appropriate structures should be put in place. We recommend greater use is made of the newly established structures agreed in the Review of Intergovernmental Relations for this purpose.***
52. ***The Government should implement a formal structure for consulting the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories on EU-related issues that can be fed into UKMis.***

52 Vaughan Gething [Q59](#)

53 Vaughan Gething [Q71](#). (It is important to note here that Wales is home to one of Europe’s largest aviation manufacturing sites at Broughton in Flintshire, where nearly 5,000 people make wings for most of the Airbus family of large commercial aircraft. This is the main reason why more trade takes places between Wales and the EU, than any other area of the UK.)

54 Vaughan Gething [Q75](#)

55 Scottish Government [\[EUR0018\]](#) para 1

56 Scottish Government [\[EUR0018\]](#) para 7

3 The UK Mission's wider work

53. On 21 June 2021, the Committee launched an inquiry into the 'institutional framework' of the TCA with a particular focus on: the powers and responsibilities of the Partnership Council and Specialised Committees; transparency requirements of these joint bodies; the UK and EU's respective approaches to representing their interests in them; and how their work may affect the operation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.⁵⁷

54. The evidence sessions the Committee held with legal and trade experts, business and voluntary organisations and former UK and EU officials highlighted the complexity of the TCA's governance arrangements and the variety of issues likely to be considered in its various joint UK/EU bodies.⁵⁸ Across evidence sessions, attention was drawn to the ability for the Partnership Council and certain Specialised Committees to adopt binding decisions and, in some cases, modify the Agreement itself.

55. Aside from some peripheral consideration, areas outside the scope of the TCA have not been considered within the auspices of its bodies. A high-profile example is the war in Ukraine and UK/EU coordination on sanctions against Russia. It is unclear how the UK has been working with the EU's institutions in such areas since Brexit and, for example, whether there are specific fora for cooperation, or joint action is arranged on a less formal and more ad hoc basis.

56. However, Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby told the Committee that UKMis works "extensively"⁵⁹ with EU institutions on non-TCA related issues. He told us that about "20% to 25% of the Mission's resource is doing things that are non-TCA-related on any given day."⁶⁰ The EU is a geopolitical entity that interacts with a number of international organisations or processes such as the UN, the G7, the Council of Europe NATO, the Commonwealth and the International Organization for Migration.

57. The UK Mission has various teams that work on foreign policy. We were told that these teams "spend a lot of time doing bilateral diplomacy with the EAS [European External Action Service] on, for example, how we should approach the challenges in the western Balkans."⁶¹

58. UKMis has been working on the coordination of sanctions in the last few months. Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby told us that this is done through "both bilateral meetings here in Brussels and the UK's engagement with the European institutions in multilateral fora, whether that is, for example, in the G7 or in Geneva."⁶²

59. The UK Mission also works closely with the EU on the development of its climate strategies, food security work such as on grain prices, and environmental and land policies that the UK is pursuing.

57 European Scrutiny Committee, '[MPs launch EU trade agreement bodies' inquiry](#)' (21 June 2021)

58 See European Scrutiny Committee, 'Oral evidence: The institutional framework of the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement' HC 450. Transcript for: 12 July 2021 - [Q1-44](#) (legal and policy experts); 15 September 2021 - [Q44-85](#) (business and voluntary organisations); and 15 December 2021 - [Q86-115](#) (former officials)

59 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q16](#)

60 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q17](#)

61 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q16](#)

62 Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby [Q16](#)

60. The committee has recently launched an inquiry into PESCO and UK-EU defence cooperation, in which the UK Mission is also involved. This information is not readily available to the public.

61. The UK Mission's work is not restricted to the UK's institutional relationship with the EU under the Withdrawal Agreement and the TCA. The UK Mission also works on other topics with an EU dimension, like foreign policy and defence. This work, however, is not publicised to any significant extent and there is little understanding of where it fits with the Mission's priorities.

62. The EU is a geopolitical entity that has interactions, links, and agreements with a variety of international organisations; Reducing the size of the UK Mission could negatively impact the ability of the UK to effectively exert influence in favour of its own geopolitical interests.

63. Government should clarify how non-TCA related issues, such as PESCO, fit with the rest of the UK Mission's work. This information should be available to the public, where appropriate.

Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

1. Since the UK's EU exit, there have been structural and functional changes to UKMis. There is however a lack of transparency surrounding what the Mission does, its overall cost - with the ambassador describing such costs as "complex" due to the shared platform - and the work that it conducts, as well as the results of this work. (Paragraph 12)
2. *We agree with the Ambassador on the importance of transparency for the development of a strong and open relationship between UKMis, the UK's elected representatives and the wider public. We therefore recommend the publication of UKMis activities on its website, including updates on UK-EU relations where possible.* (Paragraph 13)

UK Government engagement with devolved institutions, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories on EU matters

3. The Overseas Territories are significantly affected by being excluded from the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, including the imposition of tariffs on seafood for the Falkland Islands and issues with fishing for Anguilla. *The Government should continue to try and get coverage for the OTs through a similar Agreement.* (Paragraph 48)
4. Those Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories from which we took evidence expressed broad satisfaction with the UK Mission and Government engagement on EU matters since Brexit. The Crown Dependencies have urged the Government to respect them in implementing the TCA differently, based on their small economies. (Paragraph 49)
5. Whilst there is broad satisfaction from the devolved administration in Wales with the UK Mission's engagement on the ground in Brussels, it has expressed concern over a perceived lack of communication from the Government when proposing new laws that involve diverging from EU-standards, specifically devolved areas. (Paragraph 50)
6. *To facilitate better working between the Government and the devolved administrations working on matters that relate to the EU and EU standards, we recommend that the Government should significantly improve communication with the devolved administrations, particularly in areas touching on devolved competences, where appropriate structures should be put in place. We recommend greater use is made of the newly established structures agreed in the Review of Intergovernmental Relations for this purpose.* (Paragraph 51)
7. *The Government should implement a formal structure for consulting the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories on EU-related issues that can be fed into UKMis.* (Paragraph 52)

The UK Mission's wider work

8. The UK Mission's work is not restricted to the UK's institutional relationship with the EU under the Withdrawal Agreement and the TCA. The UK Mission also works on other topics with an EU dimension, like foreign policy and defence. This work, however, is not publicised to any significant extent and there is little understanding of where it fits with the Mission's priorities. (Paragraph 61)
9. The EU is a geopolitical entity that has interactions, links, and agreements with a variety of international organisations; Reducing the size of the UK Mission could negatively impact the ability of the UK to effectively exert influence in favour of its own geopolitical interests. (Paragraph 62)
10. *Government should clarify how non-TCA related issues, such as PESCO, fit with the rest of the UK Mission's work. This information should be available to the public, where appropriate.* (Paragraph 63)

Formal minutes

Wednesday 18 October 2021

Members present:

Sir William Cash, in the Chair

Jon Cruddas

Richard Drax

Mr David Jones

Gavin Robinson

Greg Smith

The UK's EU representation: what has changed and how is it working?

Draft Report (*The UK's EU representation: what has changed and how is it working?*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 63 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Twenty-third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

Adjournment

Adjourned till Wednesday 25 October 2023 at 1.45 pm

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Wednesday 15 June 2022

Lindsay Croisdale-Appleby CMG, Ambassador and Head of the UK Mission to the European Union, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office; **Will Macfarlane**, Director, Economics and Trade at UKMis, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

[Q1–26](#)

Wednesday 19 October 2022

Deputy Philip Ozouf, Minister for External Relations, Government of Jersey; **Hon Alfred Cannan MHK**, Chief Minister, Isle of Man; **Deputy Jonathan Le Tocq**, Minister for External Affairs, Guernsey

[Q27–37](#)

Dorothea Hodge, Representative of Anguilla, Anguilla; **Teslyn Barkman**, Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Camp constituency, Falkland Islands

[Q38–47](#)

Wednesday 29 March 2023

Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for the Economy, Welsh Government

[Q48–75](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

EUR numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 British Agriculture Bureau ([EUR0002](#))
- 2 Government of Jersey ([EUR0004](#))
- 3 Group, Coventry University ([EUR0014](#))
- 4 IFC Forum ([EUR0012](#))
- 5 Institute for Government ([EUR0005](#))
- 6 Isle of Man Government ([EUR0010](#))
- 7 Knight, Tracy (Chair, UK Overseas Territories Association) ([EUR0015](#))
- 8 Law Society of Scotland ([EUR0001](#))
- 9 Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee ([EUR0013](#))
- 10 Office of the City Remembrancer, City of London Corporation ([EUR0009](#))
- 11 Scottish Government ([EUR0018](#))
- 12 States of Guernsey (Government of Guernsey) ([EUR0007](#))
- 13 The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders Limited (SMMT) ([EUR0003](#))
- 14 UK in a Changing Europe ([EUR0008](#))
- 15 Universities UK ([EUR0011](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Documents considered by the Committee on 11 May 2022	HC 119-i
2nd	Documents considered by the Committee on 25 May 2022	HC 119-ii
3rd	Documents considered by the Committee on 8 June 2022	HC 119-iii
4th	Documents considered by the Committee on 22 June 2022	HC 119-iv
5th	Retained EU Law: Where next?	HC 122
6th	Documents considered by the Committee on 18 July 2022	HC 119-v
7th	Documents considered by the Committee on 7 September 2022	HC 119-vi
8th	Documents considered by the Committee on 12 October 2022	HC 119-vii
9th	Documents considered by the Committee on 26 October 2022	HC 119-viii
10th	Documents considered by the Committee on 23 November 2022	HC 119-ix
11th	Documents considered by the Committee on 7 December 2022	HC 119-x
12th	Documents considered by the Committee on 11 January 2023	HC 119-xi
13th	Documents considered by the Committee on 25 January 2023	HC 119-xii
14th	Documents considered by the Committee on 8 February 2023	HC 119-xiii
15th	The Windsor Framework and Prime Ministerial accountability	HC 1215
16th	Documents considered by the Committee on 29 March 2023	HC 119-xiv
17th	Documents considered by the Committee on 19 April 2023	HC 119-xv
18th	Documents considered by the Committee on 24 May 2023 relating to the Windsor Framework	HC 119-xvi
19th	Documents considered by the Committee on 14 June 2023	HC 119-xvii
20th	Documents considered by the Committee on 21 June 2023	HC xviii
21st	Documents considered by the Committee on 12 July 2023	HC 119-xix
22nd	Documents considered by the Committee on 6 September 2023	HC 119-xx
1st Special	Revised EU Scrutiny Arrangements	HC 721

Number	Title	Reference
2nd Special	Retained EU Law: Where next?: Government response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 885

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Documents considered by the Committee on 12 May 2021	HC 121-i
2nd	Documents considered by the Committee on 26 May 2021	HC 121-ii
3rd	Documents considered by the Committee on 9 June 2021	HC 121-iii
4th	Documents considered by the Committee on 23 June 2021	HC 121-iv
5th	Documents considered by the Committee on 7 July 2021	HC 121-v
6th	Documents considered by the Committee on 19 July 2021	HC 121-vi
7th	Documents considered by the Committee on 8 September 2021	HC 121-vii
8th	Documents considered by the Committee on 22 September 2021	HC 121-viii
9th	Brexit divorce bill and UK participation in EU programmes: how much and who pays?	HC 815
10th	Documents considered by the Committee on 20 October 2021	HX 121-ix
11th	Documents considered by the Committee on 3 November 2021	HC 121-x
12th	Documents considered by the Committee on 17 November 2021	HC 121-xi
13th	Documents considered by the Committee on 1 December 2021	HC 121-xii
14th	Documents considered by the Committee on 8 December 2021	HC 121-xiii
15th	Documents considered by the Committee on 12 January 2022	HC 121-xiv
16th	Documents considered by the Committee on 26 January 2022	HC 121-xv
17th	Documents considered by the Committee on 9 February 2022	HC 121-xvi
18th	Documents considered by the Committee on 23 February 2022	HC 121-xvii
19th	Documents considered by the Committee on 9 March 2022	HC 121-xviii
20th	Documents considered by the Committee on 30 March 2022	HC 121-xix
21st	Documents considered by the Committee on 28 April 2022	HC 121-xx

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
None	Documents considered by the Committee on 25 November 2020	HC 229-xxvi
1st	The EU's mandate for negotiating a new partnership with the UK	HC 218
2nd	COVID-19 pandemic: the EU's policy response and its implications for the UK	HC 275
3rd	Documents considered by the Committee on 26 March 2020	HC 229-i
4th	Documents considered by the Committee on 23 April 2020	HC 229-ii
5th	The EU's mandate for negotiating a new partnership with the UK: outcome of Select Committee consultation	HC 333
6th	Documents considered by the Committee on 30 April 2020	HC 229-iii
7th	Documents considered by the Committee on 7 May 2020	HC 229-iv
8th	Documents considered by the Committee on 14 May 2020	HC 229-v
9th	Documents considered by the Committee on 21 May 2020	HC 229-vi
10th	Documents considered by the Committee on 4 June 2020	HC 229-vii
11th	Documents considered by the Committee on 11 June 2020	HC 229-viii
12th	UK-EU Joint Committee: Decision of 12 June 2020 amending the Withdrawal Agreement	HC 465
13th	Documents considered by the Committee on 18 June 2020	HC 229-ix
14th	Documents considered by the Committee on 25 June 2020	HC 229-x
15th	Documents considered by the Committee on 2 July 2020	HC 229-xi
16th	Documents considered by the Committee on 9 July 2020	HC 229-xii
17th	Documents considered by the Committee on 16 July 2020	HC 229-xiii
18th	Documents considered by the Committee on 23 July 2020	HC 229-xiv
19th	Documents considered by the Committee on 3 September 2020	HC 229-xv
20th	Documents considered by the Committee on 10 September 2020	HC 229-xvi
21st	Documents considered by the Committee on 16 September 2020	HC 229-xvii
22nd	Documents considered by the Committee on 24 September	HC 229-xviii
23rd	Documents considered by the Committee on 1 October 2020	HC 229-xix
24th	Documents considered by the Committee on 8 October 2020	HC 229-xx
25th	Documents considered by the Committee on 15 October 2020	HC 229-xxi

Number	Title	Reference
26th	Documents considered by the Committee on 21 October 2020	HC 229-xxii
27th	Documents considered by the Committee on 4 November 2020	HC 229-xxiii
28th	Documents considered by the Committee on 11 November 2020	HC 229xxiv
29th	Documents considered by the Committee on 19 November 2020	HC 229-xxv
31st	Documents considered by the Committee on 3 December 2020	HC 229-xxvii
32nd	Documents considered by the Committee on 9 December 2020	HC 229-xxviii
33rd	Documents considered by the Committee on 16 December 2020	HC 229-xxix
34th	Documents considered by the Committee on 20 January 2021	HC 229-xxx
35th	Documents considered by the Committee on 3 February 2021	HC 229-xxxi
36th	Brexit: The future operation of the Channel Tunnel Fixed Link	HC 1062
37th	Documents considered by the Committee on 10 February 2021	HC 229-xxxii
38th	Documents considered by the Committee on 24 February 2021	HC 229-xxxiii
39th	Documents considered by the Committee on 10 March 2021	HC 229-xxxiv
40th	Documents considered by the Committee on 17 March 2021	HC 229-xxxv
41st	Northern Ireland Protocol: Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee Decisions and declarations of 17 December 2020	HC 1343
42nd	Documents considered by the Committee on 24 March 2021	HC 229-xxxvi
43rd	Documents considered by the Committee on 14 April 2021	HC 229-xxxvii
44th	Documents considered by the Committee on 21 April 2021	HC 229-xxxviii