



HOUSE OF LORDS

European Union Committee

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Rt Hon Jesse Norman MP
Financial Secretary to the Treasury
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Rd,
Westminster,
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14 January 2021

Dear Jesse

Thank you for your letter, dated 17 December 2020, on COM (2020) 673: Proposal for a Regulation establishing the European Union Single Window (CSW) Environment for Customs and amending Regulation (EU) No 952/2013. The House of Lords European Union Select Committee considered this document at its meeting on 12 January 2021.

We are grateful to you for your detailed response to our letter of 2 December. We would be grateful for further responses to a number of consequential questions.

We welcome the Government's commitment to create a UK Single Trade Window. Following the publication of the 2025 Border Strategy on 17 December, can you set out how the UK Single Trade Window will compare to the EU Single Window environment and the degree of compatibility between the two systems? In view of the Government's commitment to "strive towards common data standards and systems interoperability", how in practice will customs controls be integrated between separate UK and EU Single Window programmes?

How will the Government meet your commitment to ensure that Northern Ireland traders "enjoy the benefits of both an EU and UK STW, so that wherever possible interoperability and common standards remove duplication from end-to-end trade"? Can you provide further detail on your engagement thus far, and in the future, with Northern Ireland traders on the interaction between the UK and EU programmes, in particular following the publication of the 2025 Border Strategy?

In the longer term, we invite you to keep the Committee informed of any divergence or significant emergent differences between the UK and EU approaches, and the implications of this for businesses based in or trading with Northern Ireland.

What update can you give us on the expected timetable for adoption of the EU Single Window Environment Regulation? Has the Commission as yet formally communicated with the UK as regards the application of this Regulation to Northern Ireland under the Protocol? If not, when do you expect this to happen, including discussions in the Joint Consultative Working Group? We would also be grateful for updates on engagement with the Commission about the costs of implementing and managing new systems in Northern Ireland as the technical requirements become clear.

We note that the Government is still considering whether the Single Window Regulation is automatically applied to Northern Ireland under the Protocol. It is our understanding that

the Regulation does apply to Northern Ireland under the Protocol. Can you explain why the Government has yet to reach the same conclusion? When and on what basis will the Government reach a determination on this point, and on whether and how it will require domestic implementation in UK law? What account will the Government take of the Commission's position in reaching its conclusion?

We note your statement that the Northern Ireland Executive "will hold responsibility for practical implementation of the Protocol in many respects". In that context, what assessment has the Government made of the division of responsibility between it and the Executive as regards the implementation of this Regulation?

We would be grateful for a response to this letter by 28 January 2021. In the meantime we will retain this document under scrutiny. In view of our commitment to cooperate with the Northern Ireland Assembly as regards Protocol-related scrutiny, I have copied this letter to Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA, Chair of the Assembly Committee for the Economy; and Steve Aiken MLA, Chair of the Assembly Committee for Finance.

Yours sincerely,

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

Lord Kinnoull
Chair of the European Union Committee