



Lord Gardiner of Kimble
Senior Deputy Speaker
Chair of the Procedure and Privileges Committee
House of Lords
London SW1A 0PW

31 July 2024

Dear Lord Gardiner,

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Procedure and Privileges Committee regarding notification to the House of the International Agreements Committee's (IAC) scrutiny work. There are two ways in which we would like to improve the way our work is notified to the House via *House of Lords Business* under the provisions of the PPC's [7th Report of Session 2022-23](#). Experience since the reporting changes were made in 2023 has shown that paradoxically the treaties considered by the IAC that raise the most significant issues are receiving less prominence than those which are routine and uncontentious. This is due to the constraints of the scrutiny procedure under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRAG). Our proposals seek to remedy this issue.

First, we propose that for those treaties which are reported by the IAC or, where appropriate, the European Affairs Committee, *House of Lords Business* should specify whether the treaty is reported for special attention or for information.

Second, there is an issue relating to the length of time for which treaties are listed. The current practice is to include treaties in *HoL Business* until the date when the CRAG scrutiny period ends. However, since the time constraints imposed by CRAG mean that the Committee usually reports towards the end of this period (or occasionally even after the scrutiny period has ended), the effect is that the *HoL Business* entry may appear only for a day or two, or sometimes not at all. In the past year, there are numerous examples of "special attention" reports not being recorded in the table at all.

To help address these issues, I would like to propose the following changes to *HoL Business*:

- In the list titled 'Treaties considered by a Select Committee', where a treaty is reported on by the IAC or the European Affairs Committee, the title of the treaty entry should be accompanied by an italic note reading either "*Special attention drawn to the treaty by the International Agreements [or European Affairs] Committee, Xth Report*" or "*Xth Report from the International Agreements [or European Affairs] Committee.*"
- Treaties which have been reported on by a committee (for special attention or for information) would remain in the list entitled "Treaties considered by a Select Committee" for a period of two weeks from the point that the Table Office has been notified of this outcome. Other treaties will continue to be removed from the list at the end of the CRAG period. The staff of the IAC have negotiated with the Table

Office a way of implementing this process in a way which will not add any undue administrative burden.

I would be grateful if the Procedure and Privileges Committee could consider these proposals.

I am very happy to discuss the proposals above further before the next meeting of the Procedure and Privileges Committee, if there is any aspect you would like to discuss in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'The Rt Hon. Lord Goldsmith', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Rt Hon. Lord Goldsmith KC

Chair of the House of Lords International Agreements Committee