



HOUSE OF LORDS

European Affairs Sub-Committee on The
Windsor Framework

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

23 May 2024

Dear John,

STRENGTHENING NORTHERN IRELAND'S VOICE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WINDSOR FRAMEWORK

As you know, the European Affairs Sub-Committee on the Windsor Framework will cease to exist at the forthcoming election. In practice, this means that the Sub-Committee will finish its work at the point of prorogation, halfway through its current inquiry.

On 8 May, the Sub-Committee launched an inquiry into strengthening Northern Ireland's voice in the context of the Windsor Framework.

The Windsor Framework, announced in February 2023, now includes a complex institutional architecture, which has evolved over a number of years and has been added to by the Government's recent announcements in the command paper 'Safeguarding the Union'. The Sub-Committee hoped its inquiry would bring clarity to the various mechanisms and bodies established under the Windsor Framework and explore how the voices of Northern Ireland stakeholders, policymakers and politicians could be heard most effectively.

The Sub-Committee feels very strongly about the importance of this inquiry and has asked me to write to you on their behalf drawing attention to the evidence taken so far.

On Wednesday 8 May the Sub-Committee heard evidence from Professor David Phinnemore from the Post-Brexit Governance Unit at Queen's University Belfast; Professor Simon Usherwood, Professor of Politics and International Studies at the Open University; and Anton Spisak, Associate Fellow at the Centre for European Reform.

In a second session we heard from Dr Sylvia de Mars, Reader in Transnational Public Law at Newcastle Law School; Martin Howe KC, Barrister at 8 New Square Chambers; and Professor Colin Murray, Professor of Law and Democracy at Newcastle Law School.

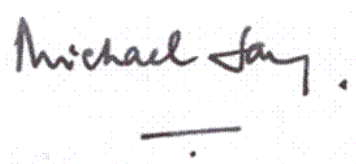
On Wednesday 22 May we heard from Robbie Butler MLA, Deputy Leader of the Ulster Unionist Party; Matthew O'Toole MLA, Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) Leader of the Opposition in the Northern Ireland Assembly; and Dr Stephen Farry MP, Deputy Leader of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland. We had hoped to hear from the

Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin later on in our inquiry but were unable to do so due to the timing of the election.

We are grateful to all our witnesses for their assistance, and it is our hope that a committee in the new Parliament might wish to continue this important work. The transcripts from the evidence sessions are available on the Committee's website.

I am copying this letter to Lord Ricketts, Chair of the House of Lords European Affairs Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Michael Jay". Below the signature is a horizontal line with a small dot underneath it.

Lord Jay of Ewelme

Chair of the Sub-Committee on the Windsor Framework