



# Committee on the Future Relationship with the European Union

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Email: [freucom@parliament.uk](mailto:freucom@parliament.uk) Website: [www.parliament.uk/freucom](http://www.parliament.uk/freucom)

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP  
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster  
Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2AS

20 March 2020

Dear Michael,

Thank you for giving evidence to the Committee on Wednesday 11 March. As I indicated at the meeting, I am writing to you to follow-up on some of the issues that arose in your evidence on the negotiations on the Future Relationship with the EU.

Firstly, I welcome your commitment to keep Parliament updated on the progress of the future relationship negotiations, and your willingness to convey our invitation to Mr Frost, the UK's lead negotiator, to appear before us. I would welcome suggested dates when it would be convenient for him to give evidence. I also look forward to hearing from you how you propose to report back to Parliament as the negotiations progress.

Secondly, COVID-19 is presenting considerable challenges for the country and it is evident that Whitehall is working incredibly hard on trying to manage these. This cross-government response will, no doubt, result in many civil servants being reassigned from their usual duties to priorities set by the Government over the coming months. Taking into account the pressure COVID-19 is placing on the capacity of both the UK and EU, and given developments since you appeared before the Committee, I would appreciate an update on the following:

1. Progress on the negotiations on the Future Relationship since you appeared before and your current assessment of the chances of agreement in all the areas that the UK wishes to have a relationship with the EU by the December deadline.
2. The implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement, in particular the timetable for establishing the Joint Committee, the associated specialised committees including that for the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol, and the UK's policy for reporting on those discussions. We are aware of the importance of the work of the Joint Committee, particularly to the people of Northern Ireland who will have to put any relevant decisions into practice and adapt in good time before the end of the transition period.
3. The arrangements the Government is planning to put in place to identify goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland that may be at risk of entering the EU.
4. Government and business preparedness to implement the Future Relationship with the EU, whatever form it may take, and the mechanisms that are in place to enable the public and private sector to consult and feedback as the negotiations progress.
5. Finally, could you provide a list of the EU agencies and programmes the UK currently participates in, indicating whether the Government is seeking to continue this participation after the transition period, and on what terms.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

**Hilary Benn**  
Chair of the Committee