



HOUSE OF LORDS

Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee

House of Lords

London

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Northern Ireland Executive
Parliament Buildings
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Dear Arlene and Michelle,

I am writing on behalf of the Committee to seek the input of the Northern Ireland Executive on the progress of the Common Frameworks programme. We were very sorry that we were unable to reflect the views of the Executive in our recent report into the Common Frameworks programme, and that ministers from the Executive were unable to give evidence alongside ministers from the Scottish and Welsh Governments in November 2020. However, we did benefit from a highly productive discussion with the Committee for the Executive Office which greatly improved the quality of our report. We also had valuable input from stakeholders across Northern Ireland.

As we set out in our report, the Northern Ireland Executive has as yet been unable to approve 21 frameworks which have been agreed by the other relevant governments. However, we welcome the fact that progress has since been made, including the 5 provisional frameworks that were agreed before Easter.

Our report highlighted the concerns raised to us by the Scottish and Welsh Governments and our inquiry was greatly enriched by their contribution. We believe that evidence from your administration would be similarly helpful both to our inquiry and to help ensure that Northern Ireland's concerns are heard in Westminster.

We would, therefore, welcome more information from the Executive as to whether there are particular issues within individual frameworks that are holding up the confirmation process or whether the Executive have concerns about the frameworks process more broadly. For example, our Committee recently wrote to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the Company Law, Late Payment, and Specified Quantities and Packaged Goods frameworks. These three frameworks appear to be in areas where there is pre-existing close cooperation between the Executive and the UK Government. We would be grateful if you could advise us as to why these frameworks have not been able to reach provisional status?

In terms of providing evidence to the Committee, we would of course greatly welcome any opportunity you or any representative of the Executive might have to give oral evidence to

the Committee in the coming months. However, if this were not possible, we would welcome a written submission from the Executive.

We are copying this letter to Colin McGrath MLA as Chairperson of the Committee for the Executive Office and Chloe Smith MP as Minister of State for Constitution and Devolution.

Yours sincerely,

Baroness Andrews
Chair of the Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee