

European Scrutiny Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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From: Sir William Cash MP

19 July 2021

Robin Walker MP
Minister of State for Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Office
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Article 2(1) of the Northern Ireland Protocol: Upholding human rights and equality standards—new EU proposal to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay

Thank you for your letter of 14 July 2021 in which you respond to the questions we raised in [our letter of 26 May](#) concerning the possible implications of a [proposed EU Directive on pay transparency](#) for the implementation of Article 2(1) of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland on the rights of individuals.

We note the importance you attach to the information exchange mechanism currently being established in the official-level EU/UK Joint Consultative Working Group as a means of ensuring that the UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive are made aware of planned EU laws which may be relevant to Article 2(1). You say that “the UK has received no notification from the EU regarding this specific Directive”. We ask you to inform us if this should change.

You also underline the “vital role” of the dedicated mechanism established under Article 2(1) of the Protocol to ensure that the UK Government implements the commitments it has made on equality and protection against discrimination. With this in mind, we ask whether the Government and/or the Northern Ireland Executive have requested the advice of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and/or the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission on the proposed EU Directive on pay transparency or intend to do so. We would be grateful if any advice requested or received from these bodies could be shared with us along with details of how the Government and/or the Northern Ireland Executive intend to respond.

I am copying this letter to Simon Hoare MP and Steve Habberley, Chair and Clerk of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee; Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP and Sean Kinsey, the Chair and Clerk of the Women and Equalities Committee; Darren Jones MP and Rebecca Davies, the Chair and Clerk of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee; Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP and Lucinda Maer, the Chair and Clerk of the Joint Committee on Human Rights; Lord Jay and Stuart Stoner, the Chair and Clerk of the House of Lords Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; Thomas Lough of your Department; and Les Saunders and Donald Harris in the Cabinet Office.

CHAIR