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The Earl of Kinnoull
Chairman
Select Committee on the European Union
House of Lords
London
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3rd October 2019

Dear Charles,

EM 9645/18: PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING RULES ON SUPPORT FOR STRATEGIC PLANS TO BE DRAWN UP BY MEMBER STATES UNDER THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP STRATEGIC PLANS) AND FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL GUARANTEE FUND (EAGF) AND BY THE EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL FUND FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (EAFRD) AND REPEALING REGULATION (EU) NO 1305/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AND REGULATION (EU) NO 1307/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL (AND ADD 1)

9646/18: COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACCOMPANYING THE DOCUMENT PROPOSALS FOR A - REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING RULES ON SUPPORT FOR STRATEGIC PLANS TO BE DRAWN UP BY MEMBER STATES UNDER THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP STRATEGIC PLANS) AND FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL GUARANTEE FUND (EAGF) AND BY THE EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL FUND FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (EAFRD) AND REPEALING REGULATION (EU) NO 1305/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AND REGULATION (EU) NO 1307/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL - REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE FINANCING, MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND REPEALING REGULATION (EU) NO 1306/2013 - REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING REGULATIONS (EU) NO 1308/2013 ESTABLISHING A COMMON ORGANISATION OF THE MARKETS IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, (EU) NO 1151/2012 ON QUALITY SCHEMES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND FOODSTUFFS, (EU) NO 251/2014 ON THE DEFINITION, DESCRIPTION, PRESENTATION, LABELLING AND THE PROTECTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS OF AROMATISED WINE PRODUCTS, (EU) NO 228/2013 LAYING DOWN SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR AGRICULTURE IN THE

OUTERMOST REGIONS OF THE UNION AND (EU) NO 229/2013 LAYING DOWN SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR AGRICULTURE IN FAVOUR OF THE SMALLER AEGEAN ISLANDS (AND ADD 1-2)

9634/18: PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON THE FINANCING, MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND REPEALING REGULATION (EU) NO 1306/2013 (AND ADD 1)

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Thank you for your letter of 5th September 2019. I am writing to provide you and your committee with a high-level update on the progress of the CAP Reform negotiations, and the UK's approach to these negotiations.

Since the Department's last CAP Reform correspondence with your Committee, the Finnish Presidency has taken over from the Romanian Presidency in coordinating the CAP Reform negotiations. Technical discussion of the proposals is ongoing in Working Parties, and the Presidency is proposing redrafted text in accordance with Member State feedback.

Former agriculture commissioner Phil Hogan, who was strongly associated with the CAP Reform proposals, has now been appointed as the European Union's trade commissioner. The new agriculture commissioner is Janusz Wojciechowski. Commissioner Wojciechowski is yet to pass substantive public comment on the proposals, but Commissioner Hogan has indicated that he does not expect his successor to make substantial changes to the Reform proposals.

In my last letter, I mentioned that the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, composed of new members following the Parliament elections earlier this year, may want to scrutinise these proposals again. However, on September 4th, the Committee decided to take forward the reports on CAP reform that were agreed by the Committee pre-election. This means that the European Parliamentary scrutiny process will continue from where it left off, rather than beginning anew, and first reading will now take place.

The Committee is no doubt aware that, as of the 1st September 2019, UK officials only attend EU meetings where the UK has a significant national interest in the outcome of discussions. The topics of such meetings would include topics such as UK exit, sovereignty, international relations, security, or finance. As the UK will not be implementing the next CAP, and will instead be pursuing our own ambitious domestic agriculture reform, the overwhelming majority of CAP-related meetings do not fit this criteria. The Government continues to review attendance on a case-by-case basis.

We are fully committed to the duty of sincere cooperation and the decision to reduce attendance at EU meetings is not intended to obstruct EU business. While we are preparing to leave the EU on 31st October, we do not wish to stand in the way of the conduct of EU business during our last few weeks in the EU. We have agreed to delegate our vote to Finland as they hold the Presidency of the EU, with instructions to abstain, or to cast our vote in favour if it would otherwise pass at EU27 in those situations where we are a swing vote.

I am writing in similar terms to Sir William Cash MP, Chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee. I am also copying this letter to the Clerks of the Commons and Lords Committees, Jessica Mulley and Chris Johnson respectively; Les Saunders, Department for Exiting the European Union; and Phillippa Edmunds, Defra Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

Best wishes,



GEORGE EUSTICE MP