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Lord Boswell of Aynho
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24 May 2018

Dear Tim,

Thank you for your letter of 18 April. Please forgive the slight delay in our reply – we wanted to take the opportunity in our response to give you a brief update on the Joint Ministerial Committee on EU Negotiations (JMC(EN)) meeting that took place on Wednesday 2 May as well as address the points you raised in your letter.

We greatly appreciate the work the House of Lords European Union Select Committee does in examining the political and legal ramifications of the UK's exit from the European Union, particularly the reports outlined in your letter. We also recognise that the discussions of the Joint Ministerial Committees (JMCs) are of great interest to you and your Committee, as well as a number of others. In the interest of transparency and in order to keep the Committee abreast of discussions at all JMCs, we will commit to provide regular updates, wherever possible alongside the Government's regular report to Parliament in relation to clause 11 regulations and frameworks progress in the EU (Withdrawal) Bill. This commitment formed part of the agreement reached with the Welsh Government on clause 11 on 24 April.

We should like to take this opportunity to inform you of our progress following the JMC(EN) meeting on 2 May. The Committee discussed the negotiations with the EU, including a proposal put forward by the UK Government to create a ministerial forum to enable the devolved administrations to contribute to the development of the UK negotiating line in areas which intersect with the devolution settlements or have a significant impact on the devolved nations in advance of negotiations with the EU. The Committee agreed to progress with both the Ministerial and official level discussions on offer. These are already underway and JMC(EN) will continue to oversee this work. The Committee also noted the need for continued dialogue on the subject of common frameworks, and agreed plans for the next phase of official level talks on a range of policy areas where such frameworks may be required.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, Robin Walker MP last met the Chief Ministers of the Crown Dependencies on 5 March. The meeting confirmed the Crown Dependencies' understanding of their inclusion in the territorial scope of the draft Withdrawal Agreement and the Chief Ministers welcomed the establishment of a Cabinet Office-chaired Contact Group for senior Dependencies officials to discuss broader strategies for treatment of Crown Dependency interests in Exit negotiations and the UK's future framework agreements with the EU. All sides agreed the importance of starting official and ministerial discussions on the place of the Crown Dependencies in the Future Economic Partnership in the wake of the Prime Minister's Mansion House speech. Since then, a series of official-level talks on the policy areas relating to the Future Economic Partnership have been held.

The sixth meeting of the UK-Gibraltar Joint Ministerial Council (Gibraltar EU Negotiations) took place on 8 March, with DExEU Minister Robin Walker chairing a meeting with the Economic Secretary to the Treasury and the Minister for Europe alongside the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister, Finance Minister and the Attorney General of Gibraltar. As set out in Written Ministerial Statements by Robin Walker and Lord Callanan on 12 and 15 March respectively, we agreed a series of measures that will ensure that the valued and historic links between the UK and Gibraltar grow, deepen and endure. The UK will guarantee Gibraltar financial services firms' access to UK markets as now until 2020 and we will work closely with the Government of Gibraltar to design a replacement framework underpinned by modern arrangements for information-sharing, transparency and regulatory co-operation. In addition, there will be enhanced liaison on environmental and fisheries issues, assurance on home-fee status for Gibraltarians studying at English universities, healthcare arrangements, continued market access for gambling companies and cooperation on transport issues.

The Overseas Territories Premiers last came to London on 27 November 2017 for the UK–Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council on European Negotiations (JMC–OT EN) and also met the Prime Minister. As part of my wider report to you before the summer recess, I shall provide an update on the JMC-OT EN that will be held on 14 June.

We hope this response has been helpful to you, and that the Committee will be assisted by the correspondence outlined above.

Yours sincerely,



Rt Hon David Lidington CBE MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Minister for the Cabinet Office



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