Thank you for your letter of 28th February regarding the next meeting of the Interparliamentary Forum on Brexit.

The UK Government recognises the importance of maintaining transparent and open relationships with the respective devolved governments and legislatures as well as our own Parliament. I am pleased to hear of the engagement that the Interparliamentary Forum on Brexit continues to facilitate between UK Parliament and the devolved legislatures and would be interested in receiving notification of future meetings.

Please note below some of the key intergovernmental activity that has taken place since the Forum last met in January:

- I held initial bilateral discussions with the First Minister of Wales in Cardiff and Deputy First Minister of Scotland in Edinburgh on 1st February;
- The Prime Minister spoke with the First Minister of Scotland and First Minister of Wales on 2nd March following her speech on the UK’s future economic partnership with the European Union;
- I also spoke with the Deputy First Minister of Scotland ahead of the Prime Minister’s speech on 2nd March;
- I have chaired two constructive and productive meetings of the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) on 22nd February and 8th March;
- The Joint Ministerial Committee (Plenary) met on 14th March 2018, chaired by the Prime Minister;
- Extensive official level engagement continues between the UK Government and devolved administrations on a variety of matters related to EU Exit.

I attach for your reference the communiqués published following each of these recent meetings of the Joint Ministerial Committee as well as the report on intergovernmental relations that was agreed at the Plenary meeting on 14th March and subsequently published.
I hope this information is of interest to the Forum and proves useful in facilitating discussion at your meeting later this week. I will endeavour to provide the Forum with similar updates where possible.

Rt Hon David Lidington CBE MP
ANNEX A: Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) Communique - 22 February 2018

JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE (EU NEGOTIATIONS) COMMUNIQUE

22 February 2018

The seventh Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) met today in 70 Whitehall. The meeting was chaired by the Rt Hon David Lidington MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office.

The attending Ministers were:

From the UK Government: the First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon David Lidington MP; the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, Rt Hon David Davis MP; the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP; the Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP; the Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon David Mundell MP.

From the Welsh Government: Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Mark Drakeford AM.

From the Scottish Government: the Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland’s Place in Europe, Michael Russell MSP.

In the absence of Ministers from the Northern Ireland Executive, a senior civil servant from the Northern Ireland Civil Service was in attendance.

The Chair opened the meeting by summarising the constructive bilateral engagement with the Scottish and Welsh governments, including political developments that had taken place since JMC(EN) last met. The Secretary of State for Exiting the EU provided an update on the previous rounds of negotiations with the EU. The Committee discussed forthcoming priorities, including the implementation period and the future relationship with the EU.

The Committee discussed the role of the Devolved Administrations in contributing to the process of developing the UK position in the next phase of negotiations with the EU on the future relationship. The Committee noted the engagement that had taken place between UK Government and Devolved Administration officials since the previous meeting to open discussion on the future economic and security partnerships. Engagement would continue with the aim of ensuring the Devolved Administrations were fully involved in developing the UK’s negotiating position, while respecting the UK Government's role as negotiator.

The Committee discussed the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, including the proposal to amend clause 11. It was noted that progress had been made, but agreement had not yet been reached between the UK Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government on the form of an amendment. Discussions on further detail would continue in the coming weeks.

The Committee discussed progress on common frameworks. Multilateral official level discussions had explored a range of areas where common frameworks may be required, including where
legislative and non-legislative approaches could be appropriate. These discussions were ongoing.
ANNEX B: Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) Communique - 8 March 2018

JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE (EU NEGOTIATIONS) COMMUNIQUE

08 March 2018

The eighth Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) met today in 70 Whitehall. The meeting was chaired by the Rt Hon David Lidington MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office.

The attending Ministers were:

From the UK Government: the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon David Lidington MP; the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP; the Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP; the Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon David Mundell MP; the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, Robin Walker MP; and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Shailesh Vara MP.

From the Welsh Government: the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Mark Drakeford AM.

From the Scottish Government: the Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland’s Place in Europe, Michael Russell MSP.

Dr Andrew McCormick, Director General International Relations from the Northern Ireland Civil Service attended the meeting in the continued absence of a Northern Ireland Executive.

The Chair opened the meeting by summarising official level engagement since the Committee last met, including discussions on the proposed amendment to the EU (Withdrawal) Bill. The Committee discussed the UK Government’s proposed amendment to clause 11 and progress made towards reaching agreement. The Committee noted the timings for the Committee Stage debate in the House of Lords. All administrations remained committed to reaching agreement on the EU (Withdrawal) Bill. Discussions on further detail on the proposal would continue between the UK Government and Scottish and Welsh Governments in the coming weeks.

JMC(EN) noted and agreed the UK Government's intention to publish its frameworks analysis and committed itself to continuing work towards agreements on common frameworks.
ANNEX C: Joint Ministerial Committee (Plenary) Communiqué - 14 March 2018

JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE (PLENARY)
14 MARCH 2018
NO. 10 DOWNING STREET

A plenary meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee was held today in Downing Street under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Theresa May MP.

The participants were:

- from HM Government the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Theresa May, MP, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon David Lidington MP, the Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Shailesh Vara MP, and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Exiting the EU, Steve Baker MP;
- from the Scottish Government the First Minister, Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP; and
- from the Welsh Government the First Minister, Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM.

Dr Andrew McCormick, Director General, the Executive Office, attended the meeting in the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive.

The three principal agenda items at the meeting were UK security, exiting the European Union, and intergovernmental relations.

On the first item, the Prime Minister provided an update on UK security issues following the recent events in Salisbury. Ministers agreed on the need for all parts of the UK to continue to work together on security issues.

On the second item, the Prime Minister provided an update on the objectives for the UK’s exit from the EU ahead of European Council and an update on the negotiations with the EU. Ministers discussed the implementation period, noting that all administrations were working to provide maximum legal certainty for businesses and consumers across the UK. Ministers agreed on the continued importance of Northern Ireland within discussions and agreed that the Joint Ministerial Committee for EU Negotiations (JMC(EN)) would continue to consider relevant issues.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster provided an update on the work of JMC(EN) to date. Ministers noted the progress that had been made in recent meetings of JMC(EN) but agreed on the need to undertake further work with regards to the role of the devolved administrations in the next phase of negotiations with the EU. Proposals will be presented by the UK Government for discussion at the next meeting of JMC(EN). Ministers also discussed the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, agreeing that further work would be required at JMC(EN) and via further Ministerial discussions, with all administrations reiterating their preference to reach agreement on an amendment to Clause 11.

On the final item, Ministers agreed that officials should review and report to Ministers on the existing intergovernmental structures, including the Memorandum of Understanding, to ensure
they are fit for purpose in light of the UK’s exit from the EU. Ministers agreed to publish the latest intergovernmental annual report.