Dear Cabinet Secretary,

**Suspension and interruption of European Structural and Investment Funds**

I am writing to you concerning the suspension of the European Structural and Investment Funds, an issue in which I understand the previous European and External Relations Committee took a keen interest.

I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with an update for its meeting of 30 June 2016 on the current situation in relation to the European Structural and Investment funds, including—

- confirmation that the payments under the 2007-2013 programming period remain suspended for the Highlands and Islands and Lowlands European Social Fund Programmes, and for the Lowlands and Uplands Regional Development Fund Programme;
- the current status of payments for the 2007-2013 Highlands and Islands Regional Development Fund Programme;
- what progress has been made in reducing the error rates identified by the European Commission in its Decisions relating to the suspension of the three programmes;
- what progress has been made in addressing the deficiencies of the management and control system, including the first-level management verifications and the problems with the audit trail, identified by the European Commission.
Yours sincerely

Joan McAlpine MSP
Convener
European and External Relations Committee