



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Convener  
Education and Skills Committee  
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29 January 2019

Dear Ben,

## **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT BI-ANNUAL REPORTS**

I am writing to you regarding the reports that the Scottish Government provides to the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee on a bi-annual basis. As you will be aware, these reports relate to the Scottish Government's delivery of programmes funded by the European Union (EU), as well as the Scottish Government's transposition of EU obligations.

The Committee considered the Scottish Government's latest bi-annual reports at its meeting on Thursday, 17 January. At this meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government to seek clarification on specific matters relating to European Structural Funds, the 1+2 Language Policy and Horizon 2020. I am writing to you in your capacity as the Minister for Europe and would be grateful if you could coordinate the Scottish Government's response to this letter on behalf of your ministerial colleagues.

### European Structural Funds

The Committee notes the Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation's comment on page 2 of his letter, which states "At the end of 2017, we were notified that the value of the programmes had been reduced by €22 million as result of expenditure targets for 2017 not being met." The Committee seeks further clarification on the reasons why the expenditure targets for 2017 were not met and what action the Scottish Government is taking to address this issue.

The Committee also seeks further clarification on why the expenditure targets for 2018 will not be met and how this relates to the number of unemployed young people in South-west Scotland. The Committee also notes that youth unemployment

in North Ayrshire reduced from 1,900 to 1,200 in the relevant period. The Committee seeks clarification on how much of this reduction in youth unemployment can be attributed to the positive impact of European structural funds.

### 1 +2 Language Policy

The Committee notes the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skill's report. The Committee seeks clarification on the figures provided in Annexe A, including why there has been an increase in modern languages entries and passes for SCQF Level 3, whilst there has been a decrease in entries and passes at SCQF Level 4 (as well as in relation to other levels) and what action the Scottish Government is taking to address these trends.

The Committee also seeks further clarification on the national figures since 2016 for the number of modern languages that are offered to pupils from Primary 1 through to S6, as well as the number of teachers that are currently in post for each modern language that the Scottish Government seeks to promote. The Committee would also welcome information on what measures the Scottish Government is taking to expand the choice of languages that is taught in Scottish schools.

The Scottish Government will be aware of the Committee's report on Erasmus+, which was published last year and the concerns it raised about the potential impact of Brexit on language learning and teaching in Scotland. In light of the figures provided in Annexe A of the above-mentioned report and the ongoing Article 50 negotiations, the Committee seeks a further update on what consideration the Scottish Government has given to the impact that a range of Brexit outcomes may have on language learning and teaching in Scotland.

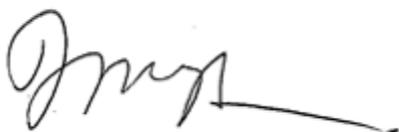
### Horizon 2020

The Committee notes the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science's report. The Committee seeks clarification on what scenario planning the Scottish Government has done in relation to the availability of research and innovation funding for Scottish institutions in the event of a range of Brexit scenarios, including no-deal.

The Official Report of the Committee's meeting on 17 January is now available: [www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11900&mode=pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11900&mode=pdf).

The Committee would be grateful to receive the Scottish Government's reply by 25 February 2019.

Yours Sincerely,



**Joan McAlpine MSP**

Convener

Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee