Dear Joan,

I wrote to you and to the Convener of the Finance and Constitution Committee on 23 January to alert your committees to the twenty second meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee on EU Negotiations [JMC (EN)] on 28 January. I am now writing to report on the Scottish Government’s actions at that meeting and provide you with a copy of the Joint Communiqué agreed at the meeting.

The other Ministers attending were:

- From the UK Government: The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP, the Minister of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union, Lord Callanan, the Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon. Alister Jack MP, the Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon. Simon Hart MP, The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon. Julian Smith MP, and Minister for the Constitution, Chloe Smith MP.

- From Northern Ireland: First Minister of Northern Ireland, Rt Hon. Arlene Foster MLA and Deputy First Minister Northern Ireland, Michelle O’Neill MLA.

- From the Welsh Government: First Minister of Wales, Rt Hon. Mark Drakeford AM and the Counsel General and Brexit Minister, Jeremy Miles AM.

I took this opportunity to congratulate the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland on their appointment and welcomed the restoration of the Northern Ireland Executive.

In this meeting I made clear my disappointment that the Prime Minister rejected an opportunity to give the people of Scotland a choice on an alternative future. I reiterated that it is essential that the devolved administrations be meaningfully engaged in relation to the negotiations and are involved in forming the UK’s joint negotiating position. I highlighted that it is important that we are able to feed in to the UK position prior to important decisions being taken.
I also reiterated our concern on the tight timetable being set by the UK Government for its negotiations since this will unnecessarily prevent the UK from minimising the negative impacts of leaving the EU.

I made clear that before the next meeting of this committee it is urgent that we make progress on these matters, and the review of intergovernmental relations.

I attach the Joint Communiqué which was agreed at the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

MICHAEL RUSSELL
The twenty second Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) met today in Cathays Park Cardiff. The meeting was chaired by First Minister of Wales, Rt Hon. Mark Drakeford AM.

The attending Ministers were:

From the UK Government: The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP, the Minister of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union, Lord Callanan, the Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon. Alister Jack MP, the Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon. Simon Hart MP, The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon. Julian Smith MP, and Minister for the Constitution, Chloe Smith MP.

From the Northern Ireland Executive: First Minister Rt Hon. Arlene Foster MLA and deputy First Minister Michelle O’Neill MLA.

From the Scottish Government: The Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations, Michael Russell MSP.

From the Welsh Government: First Minister of Wales, Rt Hon. Mark Drakeford AM and the Counsel General and Brexit Minister, Jeremy Miles AM.

The Committee discussed the UK’s exit from the EU, including the role of the devolved administrations in EU exit negotiations and the strategic choices relating to leaving the European Union. The Committee also discussed other issues, including an update on the intergovernmental relations review.