Dear Secretary of State,

Implications for Scotland of the UK’s withdrawal from the EU

I am writing to you as Convener of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, following my letters of 19 July and 2 December in which I invited you to give evidence to the Committee.

I am deeply disappointed that we have not received a formal response to this correspondence. Despite oral assurances from your officials and Mr Mundell that you would be willing to appear before the Committee, the former have now indicated that you are too busy and suggested that the Minister of State, David Jones MP, appear in your place.

Whilst the Committee would welcome the opportunity to hear from Mr Jones, it remains of the view that it must meet with you, as the senior UK Minister for the UK’s withdrawal from the EU, before the negotiations begin. Furthermore, I met with the Secretary of State for Scotland on 26 January 2016, who assured me that you would be able to give evidence to the Committee.

The Committee’s ongoing work has highlighted the wide range of serious concerns which have been expressed by individuals, businesses and organisations throughout Scotland. Having taken evidence from the First Minister and Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland’s Place in Europe, the Committee considers it essential that it also hears from a senior member of the UK Government in order to highlight the many concerns of the Scottish people and gain some clarity on the UK Government’s position in relation to Scotland.
Should it be helpful to give evidence via video conference rather than in person at the Scottish Parliament, the Committee would be amenable to this. I therefore ask that your office gets in touch with the clerks to the Committee as soon as possible in order to arrange a suitable date.

Yours sincerely,

Joan McAlpine MSP
Convener
European and External Relations Committee