Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Committee to thank you for coming to give evidence to us last week. The Committee very much appreciated that you had travelled from London to discuss progress in relation to the Article 50 negotiations with us.

At the evidence session, you helpfully committed to providing more information on the issue of settled status in relation to EU citizens and the “specific online opportunity to get the maximum information” for EU citizens. I would be very grateful if you were able to provide this information to the Committee in due course.

As I am sure you will recognise, events often move very fast in relation to Brexit. I hope, therefore, that you do not mind if I seek a little more clarification as part of your commitment to write to the Committee with an “update on where officials are in sharing analyses” with the Scottish Government relating to a number of different sectors.

When you gave evidence to us, in a response to a question about the 58 sectors listed in the letter from the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU to Baroness Verma, you said that “the [UK] Government had previously indicated that such assessments and analyses had been made” and that there “is not a Scotland-specific analysis; there is analysis of how those sectors apply within Scotland.”
However, since you appeared before the Committee, in a House of Commons Written Statement, the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU indicated that “it is not the case that 58 sectoral impact assessments exist.” Instead, he explained that the—

“sectoral analysis is a wide mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis, contained in a range of documents developed at different times since the referendum. It examines the nature of activity in the sectors, how trade is conducted with the EU currently in these sectors and, in many cases, considers the alternatives following the UK’s exit from the EU as well as considering precedents.”

As you know, the Committee conducted extensive inquiry work on the impact of leaving the EU on Scotland. We would therefore be interested to know which sectors have been covered in the analysis that officials are discussing sharing with the Scottish Government and whether it is qualitative or quantitative in nature. In addition, when you gave evidence to the Committee, you said that “Scotland’s interest in the particular sectors and industries was fully represented in the work.” In light of this, it would be helpful if you could also indicate which sectoral analyses specifically considered the nature of activity in Scotland.

Finally, there was also a discussion at the Committee on the recently announced Cabinet sub-committees relating to Brexit. The Committee considers that it is important that Scottish interests are represented in all of these formations. Therefore, I would be grateful if you could provide more detail of how you represent Scottish interests on the sub-committees of which you are a member as well as how you use your direct access to the Prime Minister and other ministers to represent Scottish interests in the negotiations on the UK’s future relationship with the EU.

Joan McAlpine MSP
Convener
European and External Relations Committee