Dear Joan,

Thank you for your letter of 8 November. I was grateful for the opportunity to give evidence to your Committee earlier this month for its inquiry into the UK’s exit from the European Union. I agreed to write to you to provide further detail on several points.

With regard to the question raised on settled status, the UK Government has put forward a fair and serious offer to the EU, giving EU citizens who have arrived before a specified date the opportunity to acquire UK settled status after completing their qualifying residence period (usually five years’ continuous residence) and enabling them to carry on with their lives as before. Other EU citizens who have arrived before the specified date will be able to make an application to stay until they have built up the necessary period of residence to be able to apply for UK settled status. Family dependants who join a qualifying EU citizen in the UK before the UK’s exit will also be able to apply for UK settled status after five years’ continuous residence, irrespective of the specified date.

Individuals granted settled status will be able to enjoy the same broad rights and privileges as a comparable UK national, such as the right to work and study without restriction, to remain indefinitely in the UK, and to access public services and benefits.

On 7 November, the UK Government published a technical note outlining the details of the UK’s proposed administrative procedures for EU citizens obtaining settled status. The process to obtain settled status will be as streamlined and digital as possible, and the criteria applied will be simple, transparent and strictly in accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement. We intend the cost to be reasonable - no more than the cost of a UK passport. We will set out further details of the new scheme, including eligibility criteria, in due course once an agreement with the EU is reached.
The Committee also enquired about the communication strategy to inform EU citizens on progress of the negotiations and specifically their future status. You will be aware that the Prime Minister wrote an open letter on 10 October to EU citizens living in the UK reassuring them of their future rights. In addition, the Home Office sends regular updates on the negotiations and the future status of EU citizens to anyone who signs up for their email updates. Comprehensive and regularly-updated guidance on the status of EU nationals in the UK can be found on GOV.UK. Anyone who would like to find out the latest information, including when they will need to sign up for the new settlement scheme, should check this guidance and sign up for the Home Office email updates. The Home Office has also set up a user group including representatives of EU citizens in the UK to ensure the process to obtain settled status is transparent and responds properly to users’ needs.

With regard to the question of sharing analysis with the devolved administrations, the UK Government is making arrangements to respond to the recent motion which called on the Government to provide the House of Commons Exiting the European Union Committee with 58 “impact assessments” from the sectoral analysis it has conducted. As the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union wrote in his statement to the House of Commons on 7 November, the Government is committed to providing the information to the Committee in no more than three weeks. Since this work is cross-Government in nature, it will take time to collate and bring together this information in a way that is accessible and informative for the Committee. It is important to note that the information that the Government has does not comprise now, and never has done, quantitative forecasts of impact—not on sectors and not on any nation or region.

We will give careful consideration, as and when information is released to the Exiting the European Union Committee, to how we share that information with others. I am pleased that, following the meeting of JMC(EN) on 16 October, the UK Government and the devolved administrations have agreed to further discussions on the analysis of sectoral issues in preparation for negotiations on the future relationship with the EU.

Rt Hon DAVID MUNDELL MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND