3 July 2017

Dear Joan,

I wrote to you on the 1 June to give notice that there would be a meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee on Europe [JMC (E)] on the 21 June. I am now writing to report on the Scottish Government’s actions at this meeting.

Items on the agenda were as follows:

- The Circular Economy
- The EU’s Clean Energy Package
- UK Government offensive and defensive priorities for European business
- June European Council agenda priorities

Following the General Election and new appointments in the Department for Exiting the European Union, The Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns DBE is now Minister of State and chairs the JMC(E).

In my opening remarks I repeated the message which I made at the last JMC(E) that the Scottish Government sees the JMC(E) as a very important forum for us and wishes to remain fully engaged in the EU’s on-going business. I acknowledged the difficulties posed by the General Election, but expressed my continued dissatisfaction that papers were again circulated extremely late. I stressed that the Scottish Government expects to see significant improvements ahead of the October JMC(E) meeting. I did note however that I was pleased to see that the item on the UKG’s Offensive and Defensive priorities in light of the Commission Work Programme will be discussed, as I had previously called for this on numerous occasions.

Mr Wheelhouse, Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy presented the Scottish Government’s views on the item, the Circular Economy, notably that UKG targets are not ambitious enough and that the UK Government’s position will not provide a sufficient driver to stimulate innovation to drive up reuse and recycling activities. Mr Wheelhouse stated that
he would like to push for more challenging targets and if this was not acceptable to the UK Government, then to have it noted that Scottish Government targets are more ambitious.

On the second item, *the EU's Clean Energy Package*, Mr Wheelhouse made similar remarks stating that the Scottish Government view is to align more closely with the most ambitious Member States. Mr Wheelhouse discussed the Scottish Government’s Energy Strategy consultation which proposed to set a new 2030 energy efficiency target at 30%, the same level for Scotland as the European Commission’s target. He noted that the Scottish Government has yet to take a final position on a 2030 energy efficiency target, however, it will be informed from consultation responses, and the outcome of the negotiations in Brussels.

On the third Item, I stated that the Scottish Government broadly supports the UKG position on prioritisation of the circular economy, the digital single market, services and law enforcement. I stated that due to the papers being release late, I would come back with more detailed positions for the next meeting, once I have been able to reflect on them.

With regard to the fourth item, *UKG European Council Priorities*, I made clear our dissatisfaction with the timing of the JMC(E); taking place one day before the European Council means that is is impossible to influence these issues before the Council. This underlines the importance of good dialogue throughout the year. I stated that our position on many of these items reflects what we have already said about priorities. On migration, I reiterated that inward migration is absolutely critical to Scotland’s population growth and that any move to limit migration, from within or beyond the EU, has the potential to seriously harm our economy.

I trust that you find this helpful. I will write to you again prior to the next JMC(E) meeting, which should meet prior to the European Council scheduled for 19 and 20 October 2017.


ALASDAIR ALLAN