Many thanks for your e-mail of 2 June 2020 seeking views from the Scottish Government on the above petition. I offer the following comments.

The European Flag

The Scottish Government has traditionally flown the European Flag on the 9th of May each year to mark Europe Day. This is in commemoration of the anniversary of the Schumann Declaration in 1950 which led, in turn, to the establishment of the forerunner of what was to become the EU. In 2016 Scotland voted, overwhelmingly, to remain in the European Union.

In order to send an unequivocal signal of the commitment to the values that underpin the EU and of solidarity with EU nationals resident in Scotland, the Scottish Government made the decision to routinely fly the European Flag at the main buildings of St Andrew’s House and Victoria Quay. With the exception of designated flag flying dates, when it will be replaced with the flag relevant for flying that day.

Flying the European Flag is a concrete and visible expression of the value that is placed on the contribution the 230,000 EU nationals who live and work here have made to Scotland.

It is also worth reflecting on the fact that regardless of Brexit, the UK will remain a member of the Council of Europe and that the European Flag was, in fact, first adopted by the Council in 1955. It was only in 1985 that the then European Community adopted the flag. Therefore, even after Brexit, Scotland will maintain an important relationship with an institution that uses the European Flag.

The aims of the Council of Europe speak directly to the values on which this Parliament is based:
- A joint endeavour to build peace and prosperity together;
- While respecting democracy, human rights, the rule of law and diversity.

The Commonwealth Flag

The Commonwealth Flag is flown from Scottish Government buildings on Commonwealth Day, normally the second Monday in March.

Conclusion

Scottish Ministers are showing their commitment to the values of the EU and solidarity with the 230,000 EU nationals who live and work in Scotland. There are, therefore no plans to replace the routine flying of the EU Flag with the Commonwealth Flag on Scottish Government buildings.