

From: Minister for External Affairs and
International Development

1 April 2014

Convenor of the European and External Relations Committee

JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE (EUROPE), 19 MARCH 2014

1. Following the cancellation of JMC(E) scheduled for 3 March 2014, I represented the Scottish Government at the reconvened meeting of the JMC(E) on 19 March by video-conference. Here is a summary of the agenda and the messages I communicated on behalf of the Scottish Government.

2. The meeting was chaired by David Lidington (Minister of State for Europe) and attended by Michael Fallon (DECC), Dan Rogerson (DEFRA), Shailesh Vara (MOJ), Andrew Robathan (Northern Ireland Office) and Baroness Randerson (Wales Office) from the UK Government. Jane Hutt (Minister for Finance) represented the Welsh Government and Junior Ministers Jonathan Bell and Jennifer McCann represented the Northern Ireland Executive, all by video-conference.

3. The agenda for the meeting was (1) 2030 Framework on Climate and Energy Policies; (2) Upstream Engagement; (3) Review of Devolved Ministers' attendance at meetings of the Council of Ministers; and (4) March European Council.

2030 Framework on Climate and Energy Policies

4. On this agenda item, I expressed my concern that DECC had not fully consulted with the Scottish Government prior to adopting its position on the Commission's proposals given the contribution that could have been made by our industry experts on renewables. I also conveyed our support for ambitious Commission proposals (with a 40% target for reduction in greenhouse gases being a minimum) while also supporting the adoption of an EU-wide target in relation to the use of renewables (given their pre-eminence in Scotland and the economic opportunities which they present).

Upstream Engagement

5. On this agenda item, I stressed that in order to ensure that all of the devolved administrations were adequately consulted on upstream engagement with the Commission, it was vital that the UK Government recorded, in relation to each dossier, whether or not the devolved administrations had been consulted. I also highlighted that upstream engagement was a priority of the Scottish Parliament as well as the Scottish Government and that the UK Government must keep us informed of its planning for the new Commission. I also raised the publication of our paper '*Scotland's Priorities for EU Reform*' and outlined how this would form an excellent basis for working constructively with the Commission within the existing Treaty framework for the reform of EU law and policy.

Devolved Ministers' attendance at Council

6. On this agenda item, I affirmed the commitment of Scottish Ministers to continue to attend Council and urged the UK Government to consider fielding Ministers from the devolved administrations to represent the UK position in areas where the interests of the devolved administrations outweigh those of the UK Government or where our Ministers have greater experience of the portfolio. I also requested that records monitoring attendance and representation at Council should include requests to attend and represent so that we can monitor how effective the recent changes to the Concordat on the Co-ordination of EU Policy Issues have been.

March European Council

7. On this agenda item, I requested that we be kept updated on the situation in Ukraine and detailed the strong links we have with a number of African countries which will be very important for the Commonwealth Games ahead of the EU-Africa Summit in April. I also reaffirmed our commitment to engage with the new Commission, particularly in our key priority areas.

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1 April 2014