

Convenor of the European and External Relations Committee

JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE (EUROPE), 13 OCTOBER 2014

1. I attended the meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee (Europe) on Monday, 13 October on behalf of the Scottish Government in place of the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs. David Lidington (FCO) chaired the meeting which was attended by Ed Vaizey (BIS), Edward Davey (DECC), Priti Patel (HMT), David Mundell (SO), Alun Cairns (WO), Jane Hutt (Welsh Government) and Jennifer McCann (Northern Irish Executive). Here is a summary of the agenda and the messages I communicated on behalf of the Scottish Government.

2. The agenda set for the meeting was (1) EU institutional renewal, (2) the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and (3) Preparations for October European Council. I had also given prior notice that I would be raising the 3rd Pillar Opt-out in relation to criminal matters and the UK Prime Minister's recent proposals to repeal the Human Rights Act.

EU institutional renewal

3. In line with previous statements by the First Minister and the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, I set out our key priorities for EU action - growth and competitiveness together with the pursuit of social and environmental objectives (tackling youth unemployment, climate change and energy security), safeguarding the mobility of EU citizens and regulatory reform - and our encouragement that President Barroso has remarked that the Commission will engage with us on these issues.

TTIP

4. I highlighted the great potential for TTIP to positively impact on the Scottish economy but highlighted that there are a lot of concerns in Scotland regarding its impact on the NHS and the potential for lowering regulatory standards. I urged the UK Government to work with us to examine the regional and sectorial impacts of TTIP and to engage with key stakeholders, not just in London but in Scotland. I also reiterated the importance of the NHS in Scotland and the importance of receiving a guarantee that it will not be adversely affected by TTIP.

Preparations for October European Council

5. I informed the Committee that we would wish to input on the UK's position on a number of matters and would write in this respect.

AOB

6. As other business, I first raised the UK Government's decision to opt-out and then back into 3rd Pillar criminal measures and the fact that the UK had still not secured the agreement of all of the other Member States by the deadline of 1 December. I expressed my serious concern that, despite the proximity of the deadline, we had still not received any indication from the UK Government about the transitional measures that would need to be put in place should an agreement not be reached.

7. Finally, I also raised our serious concerns at the UK Prime Minister's proposals to repeal the Human Rights Act in the next Westminster Parliament, how this was very badly received in Scotland and how we considered the proposals were affecting our standing in the world.

ROSEANNA CUNNINGHAM
Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs
14 October 2014