

DRAFT MEDIA RELEASE FOR THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON BREXIT

The House of Commons has hosted the eighth Interparliamentary Forum on Brexit. The forum provides an opportunity for interparliamentary dialogue between legislatures within the United Kingdom, to support more effective scrutiny of Brexit related issues.

Representatives of committees scrutinising Brexit-related issues in the Scottish Parliament, House of Commons and House of Lords met to discuss progress on the review of Intergovernmental relations and development of common frameworks. Unfortunately, Members from the National Assembly for Wales were unable to attend on this occasion. Officials from the Northern Ireland Assembly were in attendance as observers.

Members agreed a joint letter to the newly appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon Michael Gove, regarding the scrutiny role for UK and devolved parliaments and inviting him to attend the forum at a future meeting. The Forum also discussed the role of devolved institutions in the negotiation of international agreements. Arabella Lang, House of Commons Parliament and Treaties Hub and Eleanor Hourigan, Counsel on the Joint Committee on Human Rights provided a presentation on the current system of treaty scrutiny and proposals for reform.

Participants agreed the following statement after the forum:

“There remains great uncertainty about how the Brexit process will develop. The Forum’s strength is in its ability to bring together Members of differing political backgrounds from across the UK to discuss important questions relating to Brexit and devolution. The Forum has written to the new Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon Michael Gove, to reiterate its recommendations for the UK and devolved parliaments to have a role in scrutinising intergovernmental relations as part of the JMC review.

“We had a productive discussion on the importance of developing mechanisms for greater parliamentary scrutiny of governments in their negotiation of future international treaties and other agreements including the importance of timely and regular information sharing with regards to the UK governments’ negotiating mandate.

“The Forum agreed that parliamentary scrutiny of international treaties is a matter for all of the legislatures of the UK and have asked officials to consider models for scrutiny across the legislatures.

“We intend to meet again in Cardiff in November 2019.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

House of Commons

Sir Bernard Jenkin MP, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee

Sir Patrick McLoughlin MP, European Statutory Instruments Committee

Sir William Cash MP, European Scrutiny Committee

House of Lords

The Earl of Kinnoull, EU Committee

Lord Jay of Ewelme, EU Committee

Lord Blencathra, Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee

Lord Kirkwood of Kirkhope, Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee

Scottish Parliament

Joan McAlpine MSP, Convener of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee

Claire Baker MSP, Deputy Convener of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee

Bruce Crawford MSP, Convener of the Finance & Constitution Committee

Adam Tomkins MSP, Deputy Convener of the Finance & Constitution Committee

Officials

Officials from the Northern Ireland Assembly and National Assembly for Wales were in attendance as observers.