

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities,
and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

5 March 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

Scrutiny of Common Frameworks

Thank you for your letter dated 19 December 2023, in response to the letter sent to you following the meeting of the Interparliamentary Forum held at the Scottish Parliament on 27 October 2023.

The fifth meeting of the Interparliamentary Forum was held at the House of Lords on 29 February 2024. We agreed this statement published here: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2024/february-2024/interparliamentary-forum-february-2024-meeting/>

We discussed issues of common interest including the operation of the arrangements for intergovernmental relations that have been in place since 2022 and the legislative consent process.

We also had a further discussion about scrutiny of Common Frameworks by our legislatures, in light of your reply. Following the formation of a new Northern Ireland Executive on 3 February 2024, we firmly believe that it may now be possible for some further progress to be made towards finalising the 28 Common Frameworks that are currently operating on a provisional basis. This will support scrutiny of Common Frameworks by enabling the agreed annual reporting to take place. The Committee for the Executive Office in the Northern Ireland Assembly will be prepared to take this issue up with the Northern Ireland Executive. We note that two proposed frameworks – on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications and on Services – are not yet provisional and ask you to clarify the status of these frameworks in your reply.

The evaluation of the entire Common Frameworks process that you refer to in your letter as being due for publication this Spring will be of interest across each of our legislatures. We agreed to write to you requesting that details of the outcomes of this review be provided to us in a response to this letter once it is complete, so that these can be considered at the next meeting of the Forum. We would also be interested in your views about the role that the Interparliamentary Forum could play in future monitoring of Common Frameworks.

We are copying this letter to Michelle O'Neill MLA, First Minister of Northern Ireland; Emma Little-Pengelly MLA, deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland; Rt Hon Angus Robertson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture in the Scottish Government; and Mick Antoniw MS, Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution in the Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Drake', written in black ink.

Baroness Drake

Chair, House of Lords Constitution Committee