



10 DOWNING STREET
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THE PRIME MINISTER

14 October 2016

Dear Arlene

I am writing to invite you to the next Plenary meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee, which is due to take place from 1100-1300 on Monday 24 October at 10 Downing Street.

As I outlined in our meeting in July, I am committed to full engagement with the Northern Ireland Executive on the UK's exit from the EU and will take full account of the specific interests of the people of Northern Ireland in order to get the best possible deal for all parts of our United Kingdom as we leave the EU.

Thank you for your letter dated 10 August setting out the Northern Ireland Executive's priorities. I understand that the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU has been in contact to discuss the issues you outlined and wrote to you on 30 August proposing a Ministerial meeting to take forward that engagement through the machinery of the Joint Ministerial Committee, which will complement and enhance our bilateral engagement.

I agree with you that the future of the border with Ireland is of the highest priority for Northern Ireland, and indeed is an important priority for the UK as a whole. The UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government have all been clear that we wish to see the continuance of the free movement of people and goods across the island of Ireland and the maintenance of the Common Travel Area across the whole of the UK and Ireland, which has served us well. No one wants to see a return to the borders of the past, the disruption that would bring to the people and businesses crossing the border as part of their daily lives and the opportunity it could present for those who are not committed to supporting the political process and the rule of law.

I also recognise the unique issues raised by the single electricity market and the supply of gas to Northern Ireland, and resolving these will be a priority for the Government. We are committed to working with you, with the Irish Government and with the EU to make sure that Northern Ireland continues to have access to an affordable, secure and sustainable supply of energy for business and domestic use.

The agrifood industry and Structural Funds are also high priorities. We recognise the need to find a satisfactory solution.

I would be grateful if you could confirm your attendance as soon as is convenient for the next meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee (Plenary), and inform me which of your Ministerial colleagues, if any, will be attending the meeting with you. I look forward to seeing you again to continue our constructive discussion on this important issue.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Your sincerely
R. Foster

The Right Honourable Arlene Foster MLA