# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations)** |
| **DATE** | **22 July 2020** |
| **BY** | **Jeremy Miles MS, Counsel General and Minister for European Transition** |

On Thursday 16 July, Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) met virtually for the second time and only for the third time this year.

The communique can be found at:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/901463/Joint_Ministerial_Committee__EU_Negotiations__Communique-_16_July_2020_.pdf>

The meeting began with an update on the EU negotiations from the UK’s Chief Negotiator David Frost. The meeting gave me the opportunity to press the UKG on the importance of a deal being reached – and the need for this to prioritise jobs and trade – to avoid compounding the economic pain arising from the pandemic. I also raised the importance of

minimising non-tariff barriers for goods and maximising trade in services and our continued participation in EU Programmes, in particular Erasmus+, either for the UK as a whole or if necessarily, for Wales alone.

The meeting then moved on to endorse some recent progress made on the Intergovernmental Relations Review (IGRR), particularly on Dispute Avoidance and Resolution. I called for the details to be finalised swiftly so that it can be put into operation, and for efforts on IGR machinery proposals to be redoubled. I will provide more information on what I currently see as positive developments on Dispute Avoidance and Resolution when the discussions with the UK Government and other devolved Governments have concluded.

On Preparedness matters, I pressed for confirmation that full details of the legislation required for the end of the transition period would be shared quickly. I emphasised that while there had been some improvement in the sharing of information at official level, there needed to be substantive Ministerial discussion and joint decision making. I also pressed to have full sight of UK projects across the board and progress on delivery so that the full picture of preparedness is visible to us, rather than merely a subset of individual projects.

Finally, there was a discussion on the UK Internal Market and the UK Government’s White Paper. I emphasised that the way the UK Government had approached this White Paper was unacceptable. In particular, I made clear that it is unilaterally proposing a heavy-handed piece of primary legislation which facilitates a ‘race to the bottom’ in standards that Welsh consumers are entitled to have protected, it undermines our devolved competence and previous joint work, with which we had engaged in good faith.

I reiterated the need for a collaborative approach which not only protects Welsh business and our high standards in key areas important to our citizens, such as the environment and animal welfare, but which also protects our constitutional arrangements within the UK.

I also expressed deep concern about the potential impact of the Internal Market White Paper on the Common Frameworks programme, which has been conducted over the last three years on the basis of four Governments reaching agreed positions in the various policy areas.

Finally, I urged the UK Government to turn away from the approach set out in the White Paper, which will do enormous damage on many fronts, and to engage with our suggested approach, which was outlined in a letter sent to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster prior to the publication of the White Paper. A copy of the letter is attached to this Written Statement.

There is no confirmed date for the next JMC(EN) at this point.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.