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First Minister of Scotland



Scottish Government
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There are now just six days before formal negotiations on the UK's departure from the European Union are due to start. Following the election, you will be aware that people are becoming increasingly worried about the confusion surrounding the UK's position. I have seen Carwyn Jones's letter to you of 12 June and strongly agree with the concerns that he set out.

The EU itself has expressed concern that time is passing and the UK has yet to appoint a negotiating team with a stable mandate, so close to the start of talks. You will be aware that in the EU referendum people in Scotland voted overwhelmingly to remain. However, in an effort to reach a consensus, the Scottish Government published compromise proposals in December with the aim of keeping Scotland and the UK as a whole in the European Single Market and Customs Union.

Removing the UK, and Scotland in particular, from the European Single Market and Customs Union, will cause severe long-term economic damage, hitting jobs, growth and living standards. It is therefore essential that membership of the European Single Market, and participation in the EU Customs Union is protected. During the election you sought a mandate for your proposals to leave the European Single Market. That proposal failed to garner support, it is now clear that a new proposal is needed urgently to protect the economy and bring people together.

The proposals to maintain the UK's European Single Market membership, contained in the Scottish Government's document, "*Scotland's Place in Europe*" provide a blueprint for this approach. Adopting these proposals for the UK as a whole will bring clarity, in place of the current confusion, and provide a coherent base for the UK's future relationship with the EU.

The UK Government must also adopt a much more inclusive process in reaching UK objectives for the negotiations. Firstly, the Joint Ministerial Committee on EU Negotiations should be re-convened immediately and work to fulfil its original terms of reference to agree a UK approach to and objectives for the negotiations. The Scottish Government stands

ready to engage fully and constructively in that committee, which must operate on the basis of trust and a genuine opportunity to influence the UK approach. To broaden support for the negotiating position this should be accompanied by the establishment of a cross-party advisory group, comprising those parties represented at Westminster and parties from both sides of the political debate in Northern Ireland, alongside the UK and devolved governments.

Secondly, the negotiating team must include representation from the devolved governments. It will not be possible for the UK to effectively implement the outcome of Brexit negotiations without the co-operation of devolved governments. It is therefore essential that we are part of the negotiating process.

Finally, the UK Government should now – with immediate effect - guarantee the rights of EU nationals to remain in the UK beyond the date of our exit from the EU.

I have said that I will reflect on the election result in Scotland, listen to voters and consider carefully the best way forward for Scotland. I hope that the UK Government, too, will reflect on what the election results mean for the importance of finding an outcome from Brexit that meets the needs and aspirations of all of the people and nations of the UK.

I am copying this letter to Carwyn Jones, Arlene Foster, Michelle O'Neill and David Davis.

The image shows a handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read 'Nicola Sturgeon'. The first part of the signature is somewhat obscured by a large, stylized flourish that starts with a large 'N' and loops back.

NICOLA STURGEON