



The Rt Hon.Humza Yousaf MSP  
First Minister  
Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
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Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

By Email: [firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)

28 July 2023

Dear Humza,

Your Government yesterday published a paper on citizenship, the latest in the series of papers on independence begun under the previous First Minister.

When you took office you stated the Scottish people's priorities would be your priorities. This means both of Scotland's Governments could and should be focusing on the priorities of increasing opportunity, growing the economy and supporting businesses. I and others in the UK Government have been focused on growing Scotland's economy - building on existing positive initiatives such as city deals, freeports and investment zones. As the Prime Minister has set out, the UK Government is putting the needs of people across the UK first - including through halving inflation, growing our economy and creating better-paid jobs and opportunity right across the country, and reducing debt so that we can secure the future of public services.

It is my strong view that, as Ministers, we have a responsibility to spend taxpayers money wisely - and specifically on the policy matters and service provisions for which we are responsible. It therefore seems clear to me that to use Scottish Government funds and civil service resources to design a prospectus for independence or support a Minister for Independence is simply irresponsible. This is particularly true given there is no referendum on independence in prospect, and it has been unequivocally determined by the Supreme Court that it is outside the competence of the Scottish Parliament to legislate for such a referendum.

People expect their Governments to be fully focused on the issues which matter most to them. I believe that in continuing to prioritise activity like this, Scottish Government Ministers are putting their own obsession with independence ahead of pressing priorities in Scotland. This is not an effective or efficient use of the record block grant. Rather this money should be used to invest in improving devolved public services - cutting NHS waiting times, raising educational standards and providing vital transport links.

I hope you and your Ministerial colleagues will agree to cease being distracted by independence and instead work with us to deliver for business and people in Scotland.

I am copying this letter to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Cabinet Secretary.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*Alister*

**THE RT HON. ALISTER JACK MP  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND**



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The Rt Hon Alister Jack MP  
Secretary of State for Scotland  
Dover House  
London

By email

14 August 2023

Dear Alister

Thank you for your letter of 28 July. The First Minister has asked me to respond.

The priorities of the people of Scotland are this government's priorities. They tell us what their priorities are when they vote in elections; and they elected a Scottish Parliament committed to a lawful referendum on Scottish independence, and to giving the people of Scotland the information they need to make a choice about their constitutional future. This Scottish Government has a mandate, given to us by the people of Scotland, to do this work.

The UK Government should respect the mandate of the Scottish electorate and enter into discussions with the Scottish Government about a section 30 Order to allow the Scottish Parliament to legislate for an independence referendum.

The First Minister has also set three critical and interdependent missions for his government: to tackle poverty and protect people from harm; to build a fair, green and growing economy; and to prioritise the recovery and reform of our public services. We welcome any opportunity for our two governments to work together, within our areas of responsibility, to deliver on these priorities.

Yours sincerely

**ANGUS ROBERTSON**

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10 July 2023

Dear Angus,

Thank you for your correspondence of 29 June about UK bilateral agreements with international partners.

While international relations, including treaty-making, is a reserved matter, the UK Government recognises that the Devolved Governments have a strong interest in non-legally binding bilateral agreements with our international partners where they relate to devolved matters.

The importance of involving the Devolved Governments in treaties and MOUs is underlined in the FCDO's [Guidance on Practice and Procedures](#) and I am aware of positive examples where my officials have consulted with Scottish Government colleagues appropriately on such bilateral agreements. While it is for the lead department responsible for the agreements to ensure that the Devolved Governments are consulted and involved as appropriate, I have asked my officials to be proactive in identifying opportunities that may affect areas of devolved responsibility and the FCDO is ready to facilitate and support this where necessary.

Thank you for raising the forthcoming UK-Germany hydrogen partnership agreement between the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and the German Ministry for Economy and Climate Action. Like you, I look forward to Scotland being able to make an important contribution to this partnership and see it as a good example of how the UK and Scottish Governments can work together on topics that are of key importance to us both, and for our collective energy security and net zero goals. As you know, the partnership is still in development and I suggest our officials continue to work together closely as the working level structures are designed.

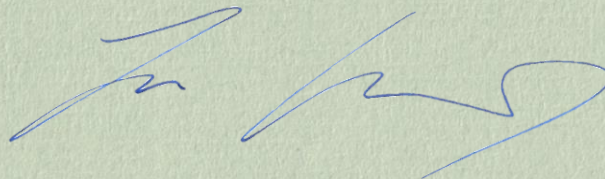
I can confirm that Scottish Government and Scottish Development International officials were invited to attend the Energy Transition Forum on 6 June and worked with British Embassy Paris on the format for this event. We look forward to working closely with the Scottish Government on the Bilateral Franco-British Commission on Education.

Regarding the Ukraine Recovery Conference, due to the focus on and importance of the business community's presence there were strict limitations on the capacity for delegations at the event. However, as part of a whole-of-UK business presence at Ukraine Recovery Conference, we were pleased to welcome a range of Scottish-headquartered companies including Cairnhill Structures and Pacific Green; the wider Energy sector company representation included companies such as Shell and BP, which obviously have a very strong presence in Scotland too.

Following the conference, we are pleased to invite Scottish companies to register interest in joining a pilot business-to-business networking platform: [Business Bridge Ukraine](#), which the Department for Business and Trade has launched to bring together Ukrainian businesses, global counterparts and the UK private sector, to connect, convene and collaborate.

Thank you for your proposal to meet in the autumn while you are in London. Our offices should stay in touch to arrange a suitable time.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Cleverly', written in a cursive style.

**THE RT HON. JAMES CLEVERLY MP**  
**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary**