Dear [Name],

Engagement with Members of the European Parliament

I was grateful to you for your question during Report Stage of the EU Withdrawal Bill on 30 April where you rightly highlighted the importance of engaging with MEPs. As a former MEP myself, I am fully aware that the European Parliament will play an important role in both our withdrawal and future relationship negotiations.

Whilst I did provide some background to the work we are doing with MEPs, I thought it would be helpful to set out in more detail how the Government is working closely with both UK and non-UK MEPs throughout the process.

As you may be aware, the Prime Minister speaks regularly with President Tajani and has met representatives from the largest political groups in the European Parliament. She has also committed to attending the Conference of Presidents.

In addition, DExEU Ministers are engaging extensively with MEPs. The Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union’s first foreign visit was to the European Parliament in Brussels, and he continues to work closely with his key interlocutors including Guy Verhofstadt. DExEU Ministers also regularly meet MEPs in Brussels, Strasbourg and London. Since the summer there has been at least one DExEU ministerial visit to the Institutions or inward visit by MEPs to London a month.

DExEU works closely with our Permanent Representation in Brussels (UKREP), and both have specific teams in place dedicated to working with the European Parliament. DExEU Ministers and senior officials have met almost 200 MEPs from the majority of political parties (6 out of 8) and from 23 member states. On top of regular meetings on ongoing EU business, the UKRep team and senior leadership regularly brief UK MEPs on the outcome of the negotiations.
Ministers across Whitehall also engage extensively with MEPs on their specific areas of interest with the Chancellor, Home Secretary and the Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster (amongst others) all having met MEPs in the last couple of months.

I hope this letter provides reassurance as to the Government’s understanding of the important role of the European Parliament and our commitment to engaging with MEPs. I am placing a copy of this letter in the library of the House of Lords.

Warm Regards,

Martin Call

LORD CALLANAN
MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION