We thought it a good idea to drop you a short note to confirm that our idea for a joint House of Commons and House of Lords Select Committee to cover institutions such as the Council of Europe, NATO, and the OSCE has been run past the appropriate people in the House of Commons, namely the Chief Whip and the leader of the Council of Europe delegation.

They are keen for us to proceed with this, which we are happy to let you know about.

John Howell OBE MP  
Member of Parliament for Henley

Earl of Dundee

Joint working – House of Lords/House of Commons Select Committee on institutions and their overseas parliaments whose membership include UK delegations of Peers and MPs

There is already joint working between the House of Lords and the House of Commons in relation to the Council of Europe, NATO and OSCE parliamentary assemblies, where members of each House attend meetings together and work as one group. Yet there is no joint working to provide input from Parliament: or to discuss issues arising: or to give an opinion on current matters which may affect the UK: these emerging from time to time: such as the readmission of Russia to full membership of the Council of Europe. All three organisations have common and overlapping interests: therefore, it seems sensible to look at one select committee reflecting their shared focus.

Given that all three contain members of both Houses of Parliament, it would also be well worth while to create a select committee of both Houses to examine what is relevant. Joint working would be most valuable in conducting enquiries to help inform the delegations of attitudes in Parliament rather than having to rely solely upon views put forward by the Permanent Representatives to these organisations or upon those of the Foreign Office. Among many others, a topical matter in need of assessment, for example, is the current situation in Ukraine.

Taking into account as well that the affiliation of the Council of Europe (47 states) is far larger than that of the European Union (28 states) as also are those of the OSCE and the NATO Parliamentary Assemblies.

For these reasons there is a strong case for the present HL review of select committees to cause a new one to be instituted this year, 2019, as indicated above (thus a joint HL/HC select committee in relation to the Council of Europe, NATO and OSCE.)
parliamentary assemblies); and for this to be recommended within the first part of the present HL select committee review.

Whilst on balance it is suggested that a committee examining the work of all three international assemblies might be preferable, it would, of course, be possible to set up a committee to look at any one of them.

I declare my interest as a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. In preparing this submission to the Review of Committees, I have been grateful for discussions with other members of the UK/COE Parliamentary Assembly: including in the first place its leader, Roger Gale MP, the leader of the Labour Party delegation, Angela Smith MP, Lord Foulkes (Labour) and John Howell MP (Conservative).

**Earl of Dundee**

**January 2019**