



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Minister for Europe and the
Americas
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

29 June 2017

The Lord Boswell of Aynho
Chair
Select Committee on the European Union
Committee Office
House of Lords
Millbank House
London
SW1A 0PW

Dear Tim,

Council Decision amending Decision 2014/129/CFSP of 10 March 2014 promoting the European network of independent non-proliferation think tanks in support of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

I am writing with regard to the attached EU Council Decision concerning support provided by the EU to the European network of independent non-proliferation and disarmament think tanks.

The EU has provided financial support to a consortium of think tanks for a number of years. The current arrangement for this expired on 2 July 2017. The Decision extends the support.

The draft of this Council Decision was received on 20 June 2017, before the scrutiny Committees had reformed. Both the document and budget have been closely studied by my officials. As this is a continuation of the UK's policy to support this work within the EU, which your Committee will be aware of, we wanted to avoid blocking the agreement, which would have meant a gap in the funding arrangements.. I therefore regret that I found myself in the position of having to agree to the adoption of this Council document before your Committee had an opportunity to scrutinise it.

Your Committee has previously expressed concern that Council Decisions of this type are not considered earlier in the EU, reducing the possibility of the documents being scrutinised. This is something I am very aware of and I have instructed my officials to continue to raise these concerns with colleagues in the EU.

I am writing in similar terms to the Chair of the House of Commons European Committee, and copying this letter to the Clerks of both Committees, Les Saunders at the Department for Exiting the European Union, Andrew Bell, FCO Departmental Scrutiny Co-ordinator, and Sheila Underwood, FCO Select Committee Liaison Officer.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Duncan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

RT HON SIR ALAN DUNCAN MP