

Communiqué
Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (IMG EFRA)
25 January 2021

The Inter Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs met on Monday 25 January by video conference. The meeting was chaired by Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Energy, Environment and Rural Affairs.

The attending ministers were:

- From the UK Government: George Eustice MP, Secretary of State for Defra, Victoria Prentis, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.
- From the Scottish Government: Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism; and Ben Macpherson MSP, Minister for the Natural Environment and Rural Affairs.
- From the Welsh Government: Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs.
- From the Northern Ireland Executive: Edwin Poots, Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

The chair welcomed Mr Macpherson to the group and Ministers to the meeting.

The group then discussed the implications of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, along with the Northern Ireland Protocol. The areas of discussion included border disruption, Rules of Origin, fisheries and support for businesses. Ministers agreed to continue to work collaboratively to find workable long term solutions to the many issues facing businesses, including those presented by the lack of time to understand and implement the new processes and procedures linked to the new trading relationship. Ministers agreed to explore the possibility of establishing a Scottish seafood industry taskforce.

The group then went onto discuss future engagement with the EU, and between the devolved administrations and the UK Government. This section focused on funding, common frameworks and future governance, and GB-NI movement of goods. The devolved administrations also sought clarity on how the various compensation and future funding streams were to be allocated and deployed, stressing the need to respect the devolved settlements.

The group considered the Secondary Legislation programme for January – March 2021. The devolved administrations highlighted the tight timescales involved in delivering such a programme given the expected Scottish and Welsh elections in May.

Finally, the Chair confirmed that the next meeting of the IMG was scheduled for March 2021.