Standing Council on Europe
Minutes of Meeting of 27 March 2017

Apologies were noted from: Lord John Kerr, Sir David Edward, Dame Anne Glover, Anne Richards

The chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted that as the First Minister (FM) would be meeting with the Prime Minister later in the afternoon, the meeting was again on a significant day. Members were informed that Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, had accepted an invitation to join the Standing Council.

The First Minister summarised recent developments for the Standing Council. She also noted that in the week Article 50 would be triggered there was still no clarity from the UK Government on what this would contain, or any advance sight of the white paper for the Great Repeal Bill. FM set out her reasoning for seeking powers to call an independence referendum. FM then took questions and observations on what she had said.

It was suggested that the Article 50 letter would have three principle components: the elements of the 'divorce', a framework for an interim agreement; and the outline of a long term deal. The importance of EU's commitment to transparency in the negotiations was underlined, and that this could impact on the UK negotiating stance. The work done to assure EU nationals in Scotland was welcomed, and the position of Scottish Nationals in the EU highlighted. FM noted that assurances had been given but consideration would be given to opportunities to underline this. There was also some discussion of the Great Repeal Bill.

Professor Jim Rollo of the UK Trade Policy Observatory at the University of Sussex then presented to the meeting on Trade Policy after Brexit, followed by discussion.

Officials from the Office of the Chief Economic Adviser provided a high level overview, followed by short discussion, on the economic consequences of leaving the EU.

The meeting closed with a commitment to holding another plenary session early following Article 50, the EU response and French Presidential elections.

Standing Council Secretariat