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High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vice-President of the European Commission
Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles

Brussels, 26 March 2020

Dear High Representative/Vice-President,
Dear Mr. Borrell,

The UK Friendship Group of the European Parliament has been set up following the departure of our British colleagues, in order to offer a platform of exchange between European and British citizens and ensure a continuous dynamic relationship of both parties. The Friendship Group is looking forward to working closely with the External Action Service in order to maintain friendly and as close as possible ties with the UK.

We, the Bureau of the UK Friendship Group, are writing to offer our support in this matter and raise some questions regarding the status and staffing of the EU Delegation in the United Kingdom.

Indeed, this Delegation has a crucial role in the monitoring of the proper implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement, especially with regard to the full respect of the rights of European citizens. The EU Delegation is crucial in, providing legal means and advice to European citizens in difficulty with their settled status. Another challenge is taking action against misinformation and fake news, both in the press and on social networks. We would be grateful to receive information on how the Delegation is tackling these important challenges and which measures are currently taken by the Delegation to support European citizens in the UK.

The European Parliament has decided early on to keep its Liaison Office in the United Kingdom open for it to act as a bridge between European and British lawmakers and societies. In this light, the closing of the European Commission offices in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff did not send a good signal. We need to ensure the EU's presence and influence in all those places where attachment to the EU has remained very strong. Therefore, we strongly advocate for their reopening, under a new status if needed, also to accompany European citizens in this time of uncertainty.

We believe these tasks can only be fully implemented through robust staffing and budgetary means.

Therefore, we would be grateful to receive more information about the evolution of the staff working in the EU delegation and the budgetary means at its disposal.
We thank you for your support and efforts in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

(e-signed)

The UK Friendship Group of the European Parliament,
Nathalie LOISEAU, MEP Renew
Terry REINTKE, MEP Greens
Katarina BARLEY, MEP S&D
Radoslaw SIKORSKI, MEP EPP