

Mark Drakeford AM/AC

**Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government**



**Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government**

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P-MD-1844-17

John Griffiths AM
Chair, Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

23 May 2017

Dear John

I am writing in response to your letter of 26 April asking what representations we will be making to the UK Government to ensure that the protection of human rights is central to the Brexit negotiations.

As a Government, we have been unambiguous in our commitment to maintaining the social protections related to human rights, and more broadly, which derive from our membership of the EU. We share the concern of the Committee that the process of withdrawing from the European Union, including the intention from outgoing UK Government not to convert the Charter of Fundamental Rights into UK law, risks weakening the human rights legal framework in the UK.

Securing social protections formed one of the six priorities in our White Paper, Securing Wales' Future, and I have pressed the UK Government on these at meetings of the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) and in bilateral discussions with the UK Government. In particular, we have made clear that the Welsh Government would strongly oppose any efforts to withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The outgoing UK Government showed some signs of recognising the priority we attached to this, with its White Paper "Legislating for the United Kingdom's Withdrawal from the European Union" stating: "The UK's withdrawal from the EU will not change the UK's participation in the ECHR and there are no plans to withdraw from the ECHR." However, as

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

outlined above, we have real concerns around the outgoing UK Government's intentions in respect of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Our commitment to human rights and other social protections will be a critical part of the discussions we will have with the incoming UK Government after the General Election. At this time, ahead of the election, it is not possible to specify the exact nature or form of those discussions, but we will continue to do all we can to ensure that the rights which people in Wales presently enjoy are not weakened through the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Mark Drakeford AC/AM

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