



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## **Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee**

Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid MP  
Secretary of State for the Home Department  
UK Government

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14 November 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

The Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee (“the Committee”) took evidence from Professor Alan Manning, Chair of the Migration Advisory Committee, via video conference on 1 November 2018.

The purpose of this evidence session was to scrutinise the Migration Advisory Committee’s final report on EEA migrants (“the report”), which was published on 18 September 2018. I am writing to you to raise a number of concerns that the Committee has identified with the report’s recommendations. We urge the UK Government to address these issues as a matter of urgency given the fast approaching withdrawal date.

The Committee is very concerned that the report’s recommendations are not supported by modelling of the likely impact of the proposals on Scotland, or indeed the UK as a whole. For instance, Professor Manning stated in evidence to the Committee that—

“We have not produced estimates of what we think the consequences would be on migration flows in Scotland or in the UK as a whole.

The Committee notes that Oxford Economics has said that if the Migration Advisory Committee’s recommendations are implemented and fewer EU citizens enter or remain in the workforce, then tax rises may need to compensate for the loss of revenue.<sup>1</sup> This is particularly concerning for Scotland, which you will be aware has its own income tax powers.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/eu-workers-uk-tax-treasury-brexite-migrants-british-citizens-a8542506.html>.

The Committee is therefore very concerned that the report does not appear to have given consideration to the fiscal impact on Scotland, as Professor Manning told the Committee:

“We have not done an assessment of how different migration policies would affect the fiscal position of the Scottish Government, specifically.”<sup>2</sup>

The Committee is also alarmed by comments made by Professor Manning regarding the potential impact on key sectors to Scotland’s economy, such as tourism and hospitality. Professor Manning explained in this regard:

“...if we want to move towards a high-wage, high-productivity economy, hospitality, as it runs at the moment, paying really rather low wages, is not a sector in which we would want to encourage growth. Since 2004, the hospitality industry has found it rather easy to grow, but our proposal is that such growth should not be so easy in the future. It is about restricting growth, not getting rid of what is there already.”<sup>3</sup>

The Committee understands why it would be desirable in principle to increase wages in certain sectors, such as tourism and agriculture. However, we are not convinced by the lack of modelling done by the Migration Advisory Committee on its proposals for how this might be realised. The Committee considers that the Migration Advisory Committee’s proposals appear to have been developed without due consideration of their real-world impact on individual businesses and to the economies within the UK.

The Committee strongly rejects the Migration Advisory Committee’s view that sectors, such as tourism, hospitality and agriculture should not be prioritised for growth. The committee notes the Migration Advisory Committee’s view that the health and social care sector should not be supported by essential migrant labour, but does not agree with this assertion.

The Committee greatly values the contribution that EEA migrants make to Scotland in delivering key jobs and services in these vital sectors. We also value EEA migrants’ important social contribution to our communities, something which we note was given only limited consideration in the report.<sup>4</sup>

The Committee is also concerned by the impact that the report’s proposals may have on Scotland’s population. We note that the report’s proposals are not supported by any modelling of their demographic impact, as Professor Manning explained when he gave evidence:

“We have not produced estimates of what we think the consequences would be on migration flows in Scotland or in the UK as a whole”.<sup>5</sup>

Professor Manning explained the reason for this decision was that:

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<sup>2</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, Official Report, 1 November 2018, Col 10.  
<sup>3</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, Official Report, 1 November 2018, Cols 16-17.  
<sup>4</sup> Chapter 6 of the report on “community impacts” considers crime statistics in England and Wales; and the commissioned study by Carrado Giulietti. The Giulietti study uses data sources from the British Household Panel Survey, the UK Longitudinal Survey, and census data from England and Wales. Northern Ireland was excluded from Giulietti’s analysis.  
<sup>5</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, Official Report, 1 November 2018, Col 6.

“We think that it is more important to ensure that the migrants who come to the UK are providing value – those are the ones that we would like to have. We are not so concerned about what the actual numbers are...”<sup>6</sup>

The Migration Advisory Committee’s view on how its proposals may impact on population is concerning given that it is widely acknowledged that EEA migration has helped to reverse Scotland’s declining population in recent years. The Committee is concerned that the report was not informed by any study or in-depth consideration of how other large multi-national countries with similar levels of demographic and economic variation, such as Canada and Australia, have implemented mechanisms for regional variation to ensure that national migration policies effectively meet the needs of all parts of the country.<sup>7</sup>

The Committee is also aware of criticisms that the Home Office has faced in relation to the efficiency and accuracy with which it processes visa and asylum applications. Professor Manning acknowledged in this regard that “there are concerns about how fit for purpose some aspects of the operation of the current system are” but nonetheless he explained that “...our proposals are based on the assumption that the Home Office is capable of operating a system that is efficient, transparent and fair.”<sup>8</sup>

The Committee is also concerned that the Migration Advisory Committee has not done an assessment of the length of time needed and cost to the Home Office of implementing its proposals. In this regard, the Committee notes that Professor Manning asserted that the Home Office will have time to make any service improvements required in order to implement the report’s proposals before the end of the implementation period in 2021:

“There is time, although it is correct to say that the Government would need to come forward with pretty specific proposals in the not too-distant future in order to give business adequate time to plan.”<sup>9</sup>

We therefore urge the UK Government to give consideration to these issues and to share with the Committee the specific proposals that it will need to develop for the Home Office in order to implement the report’s recommendations.

The Committee also notes that there is no Scottish representation on the Migration Advisory Committee. The Committee is aware that the Scottish Government has established an Expert Advisory Group on Migration and Population to identify the potential effects of its recommendations on immigration to Scotland. The Committee welcomes this development and I have copied this letter to Ben Macpherson MSP, the Scottish Government’s Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development, so that the issues we have highlighted may also be brought to the attention of the Expert Advisory Group.

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<sup>6</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, Official Report, 1 November 2018, Col 6.

<sup>7</sup> The Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee has conducted extensive research on comparative migration systems and regional variation. See Hepburn, E. (2017) *Options for Differentiating the UK’s Immigration System*, CTEEA Committee, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh.

<sup>8</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, Official Report, 1 November 2018, Col 12.

<sup>9</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, Official Report, 1 November 2018, Col 12.

I look forward to receiving your response to the serious concerns raised in this letter by Wednesday, 12 December 2018.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan McAlpine', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Joan McAlpine MSP**

Convener

Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee