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Further to the letter from the Minister for Public Finance and Migration, Ben Macpherson MSP, of 23 March 2020, I am writing to update the Committee on developments following the rescheduling of the UEFA EURO 2020 football championship and the implications for the implementation of the UEFA European Championship (Scotland) Act 2020 (“the 2020 Act”).

UEFA, while cognisant of the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, has indicated that the Championship will take place in 2021 with the same format and Glasgow has now completed the process of reconfirming its host city status.

Primary legislation is therefore needed to amend the 2020 Act to ensure that there is appropriate commercial rights protection for UEFA and its sponsors in order to meet the requirements to host matches in Glasgow in the summer of 2021. The Championship will support the economic recovery in Glasgow and Scotland more generally. Importantly, it will allow our country to play its part in a celebration of football as Glasgow takes its place on the international stage, along with other major European cities.

A number of options have been considered with regards to how best to make required changes to the 2020 Act. Given the small number of relatively minor changes to be made and as these are required as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Bill is considered to be the most appropriate legislative vehicle, rather than progressing the changes through a new stand-alone Bill.

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The following amendments to the 2020 Act are contained in the Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Bill which was introduced to Parliament today:

- Changes to the dates of the Championship period, the definition of Championship and the repeal date as these currently refer to dates in 2020. This will enable the event to be held in Glasgow in 2021. Although there is no suggestion from UEFA that the Championship will be delayed beyond the proposed dates in 2021, I am of the view that it is prudent for these changes to allow for the possibility of further postponement of the event into 2022 if this was necessary due to the longer-term impact of the pandemic.
- Provisions to correct a European Convention on Human Rights compliance issue with the exception to the ticket touting offence for auctions of match tickets where the proceeds are given to charity. As the Committee is aware, work to correct this had been underway earlier in the year through a remedial Order but was disrupted by the coronavirus outbreak and postponement of the Championship. As was the case for the remedial Order, the Bill removes the requirement that the charity be based in the UK or the EU and ensures that there are equivalent criteria to qualify for the exception for Scottish and non-Scottish charities alike. This removes any scope for discrimination based on the national origin or other status of the charity.

Subject to the Parliamentary approval of the changes to the 2020 Act contained in the Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Bill, I will bring forward regulations as required in order to ensure successful delivery of the Championship.

I would also like to assure the Committee that the Scottish Government will continue to work with Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Life and other partners to engage with businesses and others that are affected by the 2020 Act to ensure that they understand the implications for them and to help ensure that they have an opportunity to benefit from the economic opportunity the event represents.

I hope this is helpful and I look forward to working with the Committee in due course on the regulations to be made under the 2020 Act.

I have copied this letter to the Convener of the COVID-19 Committee and the Convener of the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee.

FIONA HYSLOP

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