



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Minister for Europe and the
Americas
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

6 February 2020

Chair
European Scrutiny Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Chair,

COUNCIL DECISION AND REGULATION CONCERNING RESTRICTIVE MEASURES IN VIEW OF TURKEY'S UNAUTHORISED DRILLING ACTIVITIES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

I am writing with regard to the EU Council Decision and Regulation concerning restrictive measures in view of Turkey's unauthorised drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Council Decision and Regulation establishes a new sanctions regime. As detailed in the explanatory memorandum, it contains provisions to allow for an EU wide travel ban and asset freeze for individuals, and asset freeze for entities, responsible for drilling activities, which have not been authorised by the Republic of Cyprus, within its territorial sea or in its exclusive economic zone or on its continental shelf, including in cases where the exclusive economic zone or continental shelf has not been delimited in accordance with international law. No individuals or entities were listed at the sanctions regime's inception.

Unfortunately due to the dissolution of Parliament at the time, I found myself in the position of having to agree to the adoption of this Council Decision and Regulation before your Committee had an opportunity to scrutinise the documents.

Your Committee has previously expressed concern that restrictive measures are not considered earlier in the EU, reducing the possibility of the documents being scrutinised. This is something I am very aware of and I have instructed my officials to continue to raise these concerns with colleagues in the EU.

As you know, the responsibility to keep your Committee informed on issues concerning sanctions is something I take seriously and the need for the override of scrutiny on this occasion was regrettably unavoidable. In addition I must also sincerely apologise for the delay in sending this letter and its accompanying documents. Having reviewed the circumstances under which this delay happened,

we have taken steps in order for this oversight not to be repeated and ensure such a delay does not happen again.

I am writing in similar terms to the Chair of the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Union, and copying this letter to the Clerks of both Committees, Les Saunders at the Department for Exiting the European Union, Adam Nutley, FCO Scrutiny Coordinator, Jennifer Burch, FCO Parliamentary Adviser, and Olivia Cormack, FCO Select Committee Liaison Officer.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christopher Pincher', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.A simple horizontal blue line, likely a decorative element or a placeholder for a signature.

THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PINCHER MP