

Rt Hon David Lidington CBE MP  
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster  
Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2AS

*By email*

25 March 2019

Dear Minister,

Further to your meeting in January with the Commission's chairman, I am writing with reference to the ongoing uncertainty about whether the European Parliamentary Elections (EPEs) will need to be held in the UK.

I know that your discussions with Sir John touched on the Commission's contingency planning work, in relation to scheduled and unscheduled electoral events, and that he outlined the prudent, risk-based activity we are undertaking to ensure that we and the electoral community can be prepared.

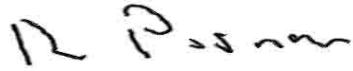
Delivering a national poll which can be judged to be well-run, and in which the public can have confidence, is a significant enterprise. For the EPEs, if they were to proceed, there are effectively fixed dates in the calendar, and the available time continues to decrease for prudent operational and regulatory preparations.

The most pressing issue is for Returning Officers and electoral administrators across the country. The absence of assurances from the Government regarding the reimbursement of any reasonable spending by them on contingency preparations is understandably having an increasing impact on their preparations. Time is receding for undertaking activity such as securing venues for polling stations and counts, for engaging sufficient temporary staff and sourcing stocks of paper. Normally, at this stage in the lead up to elections, the necessary funding or guarantee from government to reimburse reasonable spend by administrators is in place.

I urge you to ensure that this issue is considered as part of Cabinet discussions, with a view to confirming to Returning Officers and electoral administrators at the earliest opportunity that the Cabinet Office will meet their reasonable spending on contingency preparations for the EPEs. In view of the proximity of publication of the notice of election of 12 April, should the EPEs need to proceed, a decision on funding by the end of March would be consistent with enabling well run and fair elections.

Should you require any further information or to discuss these issues, we stand ready to assist. I am copying this letter to your ministerial colleague, Chloe Smith, with whom we have also had useful and welcome recent discussions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B Posner". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Bob Posner**  
**Chief Executive**

cc Chloe Smith MP, Minister for the Constitution