



31 January 2020

Dear European friends and neighbours

The UK is leaving the European Union this evening. Those are words I had hoped never to have to write. Not least because an overwhelming majority of people in Scotland did not vote for this.

Scotland is a proud European nation and I profoundly regret the UK's decision to leave. The European Union has brought together like-minded, independent nations on equal terms to work together for the mutual benefit of all our citizens.

These benefits, including being part of a single market of more than 500 million people, have been well rehearsed in economic terms. But today is not about numbers-it is about people.

Scotland is home to more than 230,000 EU citizens, who are welcome in Scotland as our friends and family. These are people who contribute to Scotland's vibrant cultural diversity, who save lives in our health service, who teach our children and who have built homes and businesses across the country.

From the very start of the Brexit process I have been clear that Scotland remains their home and they are welcome to stay. Likewise, many thousands of Scots have made their home in countries across Europe and I am grateful for the warm welcome they continue to receive.

Scotland may lie on the edge of Europe, but we have always been – and want to remain – at its heart. Scots have benefitted hugely from being able to live, work and travel in the rest of the European Union. The links between the people of Scotland and nations across the European Union run deep.

I believe that Scotland has the right to choose its own future and that the best option for Scotland is to be an independent country, in the EU. In the meantime we will stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of Europe around our shared values and interests.

The UK's exit from the EU may be marked with celebrations by some in other parts of the UK, but I am writing to you today – a very symbolic day - to send a strong message of

solidarity, and of hope, to our European friends and neighbours. Scotland very much hopes to resume our membership of the European Union in the future, as an equal member.

It would mean a great deal for the people of Scotland to know that our European friends stand in solidarity with us at this time.

Please leave a light on for Scotland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Iain Davidson". The script is cursive and fluid.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicola Sturgeon". The script is cursive and fluid.

Nicola Sturgeon  
First Minister of Scotland