

From the Chair



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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You asked for the Committee's advice about becoming an unpaid member of the advisory board of a new think-tank called the Red Tape Initiative.

The Committee noted that the purpose of the Red Tape Initiative is to identify opportunities for repealing aspects of EU-derived regulation following the UK's decision to leave the EU. The Initiative's proposals will be published for public debate and promoted on a non-partisan basis within Parliament. The aim is for the Initiative to be launched in March 2017 and for you to become a member of the advisory board at that time. The Initiative will complete its work by the end of the Parliament in 2020. The role of the advisory board will be to provide views on what may be sensible and acceptable deregulatory measures.

When considering your application, the Committee took into account that your former Departments have no concerns about the appointment. It was also mindful that over eighteen months have passed since you left Ministerial office.

Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises the appointment be subject to the following conditions:

- You should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of yourself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to you as a Minister; and
- For two years from your last day in Ministerial office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of the Red Tape Initiative.

By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a Minister or Crown servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not

been made publicly available. Applicants are also reminded that they may be subject to other duties of confidentiality, whether under the Official Secrets Act, the Civil Service Code or otherwise.

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant/Minister *“should not engage in communication with Government (Ministers, civil servants, including special advisers, and other relevant officials/public office holders) – wherever it takes place - with a view to influencing a Government decision, policy or contract award/grant in relation to their own interests or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted or with which they hold office.”*

I should be grateful if you would inform us as soon as you take up employment with the Red Tape Initiative, or if it is announced that you will do so, either by returning the enclosed form or by emailing the office at the above address. We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments that have not been taken up or announced. This could lead to a false assumption being made about whether you had complied with the Ministerial Code.

Once the appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee’s website and include the main details of the application, together with the Advisory Committee’s advice, in the regularly updated consolidated list on our website and in the next annual report.

The Baroness Browning

Rt Hon David Laws