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Our Reference: 202000047959
Your Reference: COVID-19 Future of the British Council

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Dear Willie,

Thank you for your email of 15 June regarding the University Council of Modern Languages Scotland (UCML) concerns for the future of the British Council.

The British Council is a valued partner of the Scottish Government, and I recognise the challenges the organisation is facing as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. However, as the British Council is a public body of the UK Government, I cannot directly address issues about its funding or future. I can assure you though that the Scottish Government very much values the education and cultural work of the British Council, and we are providing financial support for several of their programmes in Scotland.

We continue to fund the British Council's Language Assistants programme in Scotland, which supports both outgoing and incoming students to work as language assistants in schools. We are also helping to shape their Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning programme in Scotland. Global citizenship, multicultural awareness and language competence are key themes of the curriculum in schools in Scotland.

We also contribute funding and work closely with the British Council in matters relating to higher education. This support covers a number of different international programmes, including: the major UK-India research programme UKIERI; the global student exchange IAESTE programme; the student vocational placement Generation UK China programme; as well as the British Council's key role in the Erasmus+ National Agency.

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The Scottish Government has an established and positive relationship with British Council in promoting Scotland's place on the world stage. Now more than ever is a critical time to ensure the momentum, that has been gathered in making Scotland's place in world culture so celebrated, is not lost or diminished by a reduction in British Council Scotland's capacity to support, facilitate and advise on developing those delicate cultural partnerships that enable our creative and cultural sector to flourish overseas.

If you haven't already done so, I would suggest that you raise your concerns about funding for the British Council directly with the UK Government. In the meantime, I hope I have made clear that we value and recognise the work that they do in Scotland.

Yours sincerely



JOHN SWINNEY

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