

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



Department of

**Justice**

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Our ref: COR/444/2015

Dr Robin James  
British Co-Clerk of the Assembly  
British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly

Email: [jamesrg@parliament.uk](mailto:jamesrg@parliament.uk)

*Dear Dr James*

8 September 2015

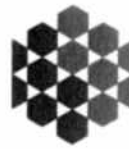
## **CROSS BORDER POLICE CO-OPERATION AND ILLICIT TRADE**

Thank you for sending me a copy of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly's report on cross-border police co-operation and illicit trade together with the Hansard record of the debate.

This was evidently a comprehensive study which identifies the benefits of cross-border co-operation and highlights some excellent examples of such partnership in action. The strength of the relationship between PSNI and AGS and the co-operation between them has been evident for many years and they have had many successes.

It is clear, of course, that the two police services cannot deal with the issues of cross-border crime alone. They need Government backing, both legislative and resource, and the support and co-operation of other law enforcement agencies.

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The Organised Crime Task Force, which your report highlights, has been in operation for some time now and I have no doubt that the multi-agency approach has been a powerful tool. Naturally there is still more work to be done. The Assembly's report identifies a number of suggested areas for improvement which we will certainly consider carefully.

In fact, we have already begun work on examining the legislation and have been in touch with HMRC about issues concerning fuel launderers. We are also looking at our OCTF strategy and will consider your report as part of that work.

Thank you again. I very much welcome the constructive, positive approach taken by the Assembly.

**DAVID FORD MLA**  
**Minister of Justice**