



## Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** [PE1435](#)

**Main Petitioner:** Wajahat Nassar

**Subject:** Establishment of a Scottish-Pakistan Youth Council.

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to endorse and be a stakeholder in the establishment of a Scottish-Pakistan Youth Council, to bring Scotland and Pakistan closer in the international environment.

### Background

Pakistan has a population of 172 million and is the world's 15<sup>th</sup> largest economy<sup>1</sup>. The 2001 census data show that the Pakistani community is the largest visible minority ethnic group in Scotland, representing 0.63% of the population (around one third of Scotland's visible minority ethnic population)<sup>2</sup>. 47% of the Scottish Pakistani community were born in Scotland<sup>3</sup>.

The [Scottish Youth Parliament \(SYP\)](#) is the "democratically elected voice of Scotland's young people<sup>4</sup>." Young people aged 14-25 in Scotland can stand for election to the SYP to become a Member of the SYP (MSYP). The SYP vision is for a "stronger, more inclusive Scotland that empowers young people by truly involving them in the decision making process<sup>5</sup>" and represents young people at national level. MSYP's represent either a Scottish parliamentary constituency or a specialist organisation. Many local authorities in Scotland facilitate Youth Councils that represent young people at local authority level.

### Scottish Government Action

The Scottish Government's [South Asia Development Programme](#) which covers international development in Pakistan, aims to build upon existing links by working with communities in Scotland to support sustainable economic development and address poverty alleviation across South Asia.

In 2010, the Scottish Government published its [Pakistan Plan](#). The Plan states that its objective is "to focus on the areas of culture, business, trade and investment and tourism, identifying existing activity and links, building on those and exploring new opportunities. To do that, the Scottish Government

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/09/PakistanPlan>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/onescotland/25.1.8.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/onescotland/25.1.8.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.syp.org.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.syp.org.uk/about-syp-W21page-94->

recognises the important role that many stakeholders can play, especially the Pakistan community and Scots with links to Pakistan. Being able to draw from such a wealth of knowledge will be a key resource for building up a clear picture of past, current and planned links.”

According to the Scottish Government’s [Pakistan Plan](#), “business links between Scotland and Pakistan are currently strongest in the chemical and mineral products, rubber and plastics sectors, with exports in 2008 estimated to account for around £20m of trade. Other areas such as wholesale and retail hotels and other services are estimated to have accounted for a further £10m.” Furthermore, the Pakistan Plan states that in 2008/09, there were around 640 students from Pakistan studying at Scottish colleges and universities.

## **The United Kingdom Context**

In May 2012, Pakistan’s Prime Minister Raza Gillani met with David Cameron in London to develop UK-Pakistan relations<sup>6</sup>. They set out a [Trade and Investment Roadmap](#) which states the steps that both Governments will take to promote investment, support business and achieve the target of increasing bilateral trade to £2.5bn by 2015.

The British Council brings school children in the UK and Pakistan together through its [Connecting Classrooms Project](#). Currently, 150 schools in Pakistan are linked with 90 schools in the UK. This project aims to support international and cultural awareness whilst promoting global citizenship.

The British Council has also worked with 128 of Pakistan’s 132 universities and initiated research and educational links between Pakistani and UK universities<sup>7</sup>. In 2010-11, there were around 11,000 Pakistani students studying at UK colleges and universities with a further 35,000 studying in Pakistan for degrees or professional awards with UK higher education providers<sup>8</sup>.

## **British Pakistani Youth Council (BPYC)**

The [BPYC](#) was set up in 2009 and aims to “provide a platform for British Pakistani young people to voice their issues, concerns and to engage in the mainstream life of the society in the UK<sup>9</sup>.” The BPYC website states that it works with national and devolved Governments on issues relating to British Pakistani young people, with particular emphasis on anti-radicalisation and community cohesion. The BPYC undertakes campaigns both alone and in partnership with others to “promote the lawful interests of British Pakistani young people both in the UK and abroad<sup>10</sup>.”

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/cultural-roadmap-uk-pakistan/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/cultural-roadmap-uk-pakistan/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/cultural-roadmap-uk-pakistan/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.bpyccouncil.org/Main.html>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.bpyccouncil.org/Main.html>

## Scottish Parliament Action

The Scottish Parliament's [Cross Party Group on Pakistan](#) was established in April 2012 and aims to

- “Promote and enhance understanding between Scotland and Pakistan at cultural, social, academic, political and economic levels;
- Develop contact with the Pakistan Parliament and other institutions for advancing mutual interests of Scotland and Pakistan; and
- Represent the interest of people/organisations with Pakistani background living and working in Scotland and act as a forum for the Community living in Scotland<sup>11</sup>.”

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**Researcher**  
20 July 2012

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/mmps/51140.aspx>