EDUCATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

AGENDA

1st Meeting, 2014 (Session 4)

Tuesday 7 January 2014

The Committee will meet at 10.00 am in Committee Room 1.

1. **Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill:** The Committee will consider the Bill at Stage 2 (Day 2).

2. **EU Issues:** The Committee will consider correspondence from the European and External Relations Committee on the EU Strategy and EU Engagement.

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Clerk to the Education and Culture Committee
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Edinburgh
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The papers for this meeting are as follows—

**Agenda item 2**

Paper from the Clerk

EC/S4/14/1/1
Letter from the European and External Relations Committee

Background
1. As part of its annual reporting of the Parliament’s EU engagement activities, the European and External Relations Committee (EERC) has written to subject committees to ask them to provide details of their work and set their EU priorities for the coming year.

2. The EERC will then produce a report, which will be debated in the Chamber. It is expected that the debate will take place in February 2014.

3. The letter from the EERC together with the draft Education and Culture Committee response is included at the Annexe.

Context of the work programme
4. As the response outlines, the Committee has not yet decided upon the detail of its approach to the various items in its work programme and so the relevant EU issues are indicative only at this stage. As the Committee’s work programme takes shape, the EU Reporter will highlight relevant EU issues to the Committee for consideration, as appropriate.

Recommendation
5. The Committee is invited to agree the response to the EERC regarding its EU priorities.

Assistant Clerk to the Committee
20 December 2013
Dear Stewart,

I am writing to you regarding the coordination of the EU Strategy and EU engagement by Scottish Parliament committees in 2013 - 14. As you are aware, the EER Committee holds a chamber debate each year on its report on its EU priorities and the EU priorities of committees for the forthcoming year.

It is expected that this debate will take place in February 2014. I would therefore be very grateful if your Committee could report to the EER Committee in early January 2014 on the work you have done over the last year on this subject and highlight your EU priorities over the coming year.

The approach taken this year in identifying priorities has been modified to allow for consideration of additional relevant documents as appropriate to your committee, and the EERC Clerks will liaise with your committee’s Clerks and EU Reporter on this and provide advice and assistance as required.

I look forward to receiving your report by 10 January 2014.

Yours sincerely,

Christina McKelvie
Convener
European and External Relations Committee
Dear Christina

Thank you for your letter inviting the Education and Culture Committee to provide details of its recent EU engagement and EU priorities for the coming year.

Although the European Union does not have legislative competence in relation to education and culture, the Committee has incorporated consideration of EU issues on a number of topics. Recently, for example, the Committee took evidence from witnesses and from the Chief Executive of Creative Scotland and examined a possible opportunity to apply for European Structural Funds for film-making in Scotland, which had been successfully allocated in other areas of the UK in the previous funding round.

Also, during the course of the Committee’s scrutiny of the Scottish Government draft budget 2014-15, we asked the Scottish Government what progress it was making in accessing structural funding for youth employability and job creation, which are key priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

In December 2012, the former EU Reporter met a range of EU officials to discuss higher and vocational education, and the rights of children and child protection issues. This was reported to the Committee.

In relation to its work programme for the coming year, the Committee has agreed to look at a number of areas that are likely to be relevant to EU policy-making. In doing so, the Committee welcomes the expansion of the approach to identifying EU priorities, which will allow consideration of additional relevant documents, such as Europe 2020 and the Scottish Government’s response to it.
Whilst the Committee has not yet agreed the detail of its work programme, it has agreed to consider various topics that will likely have an EU perspective. For example, work on the educational attainment gap could tie-in with the Europe 2020 headline targets for improving education levels, and the youth guarantee scheme that ensures education, training or employment opportunities for all 16-24 year olds. The Scottish Government monitors performance against a number of EU targets and the Committee’s work could include analysis of this data.

The Committee also expects to consider aspects of foreign language teaching. This work could combine aspects of the EERC’s recent inquiry into foreign language learning in primary schools as well as the EU 1+2 Barcelona model of language learning. Again, the Scottish Government has developed policies in this area and will provide six-monthly updates to the EERC on its progress, which the Committee could scrutinise. The EU Reporter’s membership of the EERC will be of particular benefit in this area.

In addition, the Committee will consider Creative Scotland’s ongoing efforts to respond to concerns expressed by artists and, as part of this, may follow-up its questioning about European structural funding for film-making in Scotland.

As the Committee develops the detail of its work programme over the coming weeks, the EU Reporter will continue to look for opportunities to highlight relevant EU issues and will raise these with the Committee, as appropriate.

As the Committee’s work programme takes shape, I will ensure that further updates on our EU priorities are made available to the EERC clerks in the lead up to the debate in February.

Yours sincerely

STEWART MAXWELL MSP
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