

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT EUROPEAN AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Connecting Scotland Inquiry How Scottish organisations engage internationally

Evidence submitted by the East of Scotland European Consortium (ESEC) April 2015

ABOUT ESEC

The East of Scotland European Consortium (ESEC) was established in 1992 to represent the European interests of local authorities in Eastern Scotland. We have membership of 8 Local Authorities within this area (*Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee City, Falkirk, Fife, Perth and Kinross, and Stirling*) who collaborate on a shared European agenda. With a population of just over 2.34 million (46% of Scotland's total) the East of Scotland is an area of contrasting industrial, rural and urban landscapes with significant North Sea coastline.

ESEC aims to:

- Influence, where directly relevant, the development of emerging European policy and legislation as it affects Eastern Scotland;
- Maximise European Union financial assistance;
- Foster cooperation between local authorities in Eastern Scotland and to provide a framework for the promotion of appropriate geographic and sectoral groupings; and,
- Develop links with similar regional groupings within Scotland, the United Kingdom and other European Member States and develop Eastern Scotland corporate representation on appropriate bodies.

ESEC is chaired by Councillor Mairi Evans (Angus Council), with Councillor Alison Evison (Aberdeenshire Council) serving as Vice-Chair. Angus Council will serve as the host authority until 2017.

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Twinning Aberdeen

Twinning Aberdeen maintains and develops the relationships with Aberdeen's twin cities and international partnerships. These projects are based on cultural, educational, social and economic exchanges. Twin cities participate in Aberdeen's Events, giving these occasions an international dimension, increasing awareness of Aberdeen's strong international links and providing locals and visitors the opportunity to see a different culture.

International Twinning Grant

The International Twinning Budget is grant money to help support Aberdeen City groups or organisations in twin city projects and exchanges. The money for the International Twinning Budget comes from the Common Good Fund. Grants of up to £7,000 are available and applications can be submitted throughout the year.



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Angus
Council

Dundee
City Council



Fife
COUNCIL



Project Examples:

Europe for Citizens

Aberdeen City Council has successfully applied for EU funding from the Europe for Citizens Programme twice within the previous two years. The first project was for a three day conference titled 'The Impact of the Great War on Aberdeen and her Twin Cities'. Delegates were from Clermont-Ferrand, Regensburg and Gomel and comprised of upper secondary school pupils and visiting speakers. Local and international speakers presented on the impact WWI had on various sections of their community, such as propaganda art in Russia and healthcare in the UK, at a free public event which attracted an audience of over 150 people.

Twinning Aberdeen also successfully applied for funding for a project that will take place in Autumn 2015. 'Cultural Connections' is a cultural networking event designed to create dialogue between cultural organisations in Aberdeen, Clermont-Ferrand and Regensburg which will increase future projects and partnerships between the cities. Delegates from all three cities will present on projects in their cities to a public audience and a networking event will take place to provide an opportunity for delegates to meet and discuss ideas for future collaborative work.

Aberdeen Festivals

The International Twinning Grant has also supported the participation of groups from cities at key festivals in Aberdeen which enhances the city's cultural calendar: Sound Festival created an innovative partnership with Musiquee Démesurées in Clermont-Ferrand which resulted in the world premiere of a new work in Aberdeen; Aberdeen International Youth Festival successfully applied for support for a group from Bulawayo; a band from Clermont-Ferrand performed at the Aberdeen Jazz Festival; and the Twinning & International Partnerships Officer arranged for delegates from partner organisations in Stavanger and Regensburg to visit TechFest and Dancelive to see the vibrancy of these events in Aberdeen and discuss future collaborative projects. Young Norwegians will participate in TechFest's 2015 programme and collaborate with local young people through a Heroes of Tomorrow programme; and young dancers from Aberdeen and Regensburg will collaborate and perform in public performances in both cities during summer 2015 as part of 60th twinning anniversary celebrations.

Cultural Projects

The Write Aberdeen-Write Regensburg project was launched in May 2014. Citizens of both cities were invited to submit short written works inspired by their city. The project was supported with free writing workshops at Seventeen by esteemed local writers, such as Professor Alan Spence. The selected works are being translated into Doric and Bavarian and will be launched in a new publication at the University of Aberdeen's 2015 May Festival.

Court Metrage in Clermont-Ferrand is one of the world's largest short film festivals. Groups and individuals from Aberdeen have been involved with projects with the festival in recent years: A Creative Learning Officer created a project for local primary schools to work with a director to create their own short films to be submitted at the festival and distributed to local primary schools in the French town to initiate future partnerships; the University of Aberdeen's Film Studies Department has been to the festival and the Festival Director will present at the Director's Cut series in September 2015; a selection of shorts from Court Metrage was exhibited at the local independent cinema at a free public event.

School partnerships

At the beginning of 2014-15 two active school exchanges existed between schools in Aberdeen and twin cities. Manor Park Primary School and Kincorth Academy continued their exchanges with schools in Clermont-Ferrand and Gomel with pupils from Aberdeen visiting the twin cities. Staff and pupils from Kincorth Academy also began a new exchange with Albertus Magnus Gymnasium in Regensburg. A delegation of teachers from Von Mueller Gymnasium visited Aberdeen in February with the aim of establishing new educational partnerships. Teaching staff from Harlaw Academy are planning a reciprocal visit in June 2015 to further develop the partnership. Pupils from Seaton Primary School are also in correspondence with pupils from Von Mueller Gymnasium to prepare them for visiting Regensburg this summer. Several primary schools in Aberdeen have made contact with primary schools in Clermont-Ferrand in preparation for an interactive music exchange project in June. Aberdeen Music School has also made contact with a music school in Stavanger and are in discussions to develop future projects. Furthermore, discussions are currently taking place between the University of Aberdeen's Education Department and ESPE Blaise Pascal regarding the provision of a partnership which will support primary education students in the teaching of modern languages within schools.

(For more detailed information on Aberdeen's international activity, please see Aberdeen City Council's separately submitted written evidence).

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

Aberdeenshire Council does not directly engage in twinning activity, but a number of our towns and communities do have their own links and partnerships.

Communities have participated in cultural exchanges through the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER programme, with a notable project undertaken between Huntly and Finland. The project enabled a group of delegates from Huntly to travel to Juankoski in Finland to discuss the potential for collaborative projects. Both regions are working individually on a number of rural community projects and wanted to learn from each other's experiences. The visit resulted in a determination to work together on a number of initiatives at local level in each community exchanging skills and knowledge from both sides. For example, the Finns were very impressed with Scotland's pride in its traditional music culture and are interested in developing a programme and in 2013, young local musicians and dancers from the area performed alongside heavy metal Finnish rock bands as part of the innovative "Rising Youth Bands" project, during the first international programme of the YesCommAct transnational LEADER funded project. In addition to collaborating on the music front the project is focusing on developing traditional building skills and includes visits to rural and forestry development projects.

Most of Aberdeenshire Council's engagement is for policy influencing and learning. International networks include membership of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), the North Sea Commission (NSC) and KIMO (the Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation) with both Elected Member and Officer participating. Aberdeenshire Council's main thematic interests in these networks are marine resources, transport, tourism, economic development, energy, sustainable development and regional policy.

These networks provide an opportunity for the Council to learn about international approaches to policy challenges from other members of the partnerships, develop and



participate in joint projects to learn, develop and apply new policy approaches and influence European policies through lobbying.

Aberdeenshire Council also engages in a number of INTERREG projects which provide opportunities for international learning. One such initiative is the Cruise Gateway project, which was developed alongside partners from Germany, Norway, Denmark and Belgium. The objective of Cruise Gateway is to start the development of the North Sea programme as a cruise destination in its own right by opening up the accessibility of local ports currently not featured in cruise itineraries while promoting the region as a leading example of a sustainable cruise industry.

ANGUS COUNCIL

The Angus International Framework was adopted in December 2013 to consolidate council wide international activity into a Framework with an associated action plan to ensure that activity across the council was coordinated, focused and linked to council priorities. In its objective to work, grow, support and sustain the local economy, international markets and international profile are essential. For Angus and Scotland, international engagement is a key component to secure our common future. Jobs, prosperity and quality of life will all be enhanced by collective efforts to engage with the wider world.

At the EU level, since its establishment Angus Council has successfully engaged with the European agenda for the benefit of individuals, communities and local businesses. European funding has been used to lever in other funds to the area and helped to deliver a diverse range of projects, from large-scale tourism infrastructure such as developments at Arbroath Harbour, SME business support and infrastructure development such as Brechin Business Park, to employment and training initiatives that support the most disadvantaged people in our communities.

Twining activity

Forfar in Angus has been twinned with Chabanais in France since 1993 and to celebrate the recent 20th anniversary, a delegation from Forfar visited the French town. During the visit, the visitors from Angus were presented with a plaque to commemorate the occasion and a tree was planted in the garden of the town hall.

The relationship between Forfar and Chabanais and the long-standing series of reciprocal visits is an opportunity to share examples of traditional food and drink, sports and dance, and brings many benefits to people of both communities.

EU project examples

Angus was lead partner of a 3 year ERDF project Rural Tourism Business Support supporting SMEs across the east of Scotland in the key sectors of golf, food and drink, outdoor tourism and heritage and is a partner in the ERDF funded East Coast Renewables project. Under this project Angus organised a learning journey to the world Sustainable Energy Days Conference in Wels Austria and took a number of companies

Angus Council was the lead partner for the Rural Tayside LEADER Programme 2007-13 delivering a £2.8 m programme and is the lead partner for new Angus LEADER Programme 2014-2020.

Looking ahead, Angus Council is involved in a number of transnational funding bids in the new 2014-2010 programmes, particularly to support objectives in the fields of social innovation, schools and learning and agri-food and civil society.

(For more detailed information, please Angus Council's separately submitted written evidence).

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

Twining activity

Dundee's first twinning link is almost 70 years old, forged when Dundee was twinned with Orléans in France. Links with Würzburg in Germany, Alexandria in the USA, Nablus in Palestine, and Zadar in Croatia followed. Twinning is an important aspect of Dundee's international activity, and the aim is to promote the fostering of friendship and understanding between the areas and to encourage visits by individuals and groups between the cities, developing personal contacts thus broadening understanding of cultural, educational, recreational and commercial activities between the cities. Dundee's Lord Provost, Bob Duncan, said of the initiative "Dundee prides itself on being a cultural city and twinning reinforces that. It is promoted in our schools and we help to arrange exchange trips for pupils. It is always a pleasure to welcome visitors from our twin cities and I extend an open invitation for them to discover Dundee."

Dundee-Alexandria

The Dundee-Alexandria twinning association was launched in 1993, and since then members have taken part in many exchange activities, including the schools, music groups, sports clubs and most recently the rugby clubs of both cities. In the intervening years numerous visitors from Alexandria have travelled to Dundee and while there they have also enjoyed visiting local places of interest and other parts of Scotland. The major event of the year in Alexandria is the Annual Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend which takes place in December and is an event designed to mark the City's Scottish ancestry.

Dundee-Orléans

After D-Day it was proposed that Scottish towns and cities "adopt" newly liberated French towns and cities, and so Dundee "adopted" Orléans. Since 1948 Dundee has been represented at the famous Joan of Arc Festivities which take place each year in Orléans on May 8th and every post-war Lord Provost has visited Dundee's oldest twin. In 1996 Evelyn Hood, who has been involved with the link since 1951, was made a Citoyen d'Honneur de la Ville d'Orléans. Since 1946 Dundonians and Orléans have exchanged thousands of visits including civic exchanges, school children, golfers, members of the various professions, Planning Departments personnel, broadcasters, choral societies, rugby teams, cycle teams, university and college students, teachers, doctors and nurses, and amateur artists. The towns will celebrate the 70th anniversary in 2016.

EU project examples

INTERREG IV InCompass

The creative industries are a key growth sector in the city and the potential to support economic sustainability in the sector encouraged Dundee City Council to participate in an INTERREG IVC project led by Dundee & Angus College. The InCompass Project sought to develop policy solutions to support the self-sustainability of creative incubator units and enable them to develop and share innovative methods to move away from a general dependence on public funding. The partnership consisted of 14 partners in 11 countries across Europe and in undertaking a range of study visits and workshops the city was able to

develop a new action plan to support the creative industries sector. For more information please see [here](#).

URBACT City Logo

URBACT III funded the CityLogo project from 2013 to 2015. Dundee City Council participated in this project which created a network on innovative place-brand management, to support the integration of city-branding into broader and participatory processes of re-thinking of urban identities and to engage stakeholders more effectively. The project engaged 10 cities from across Europe and enabled Dundee to create a new and supportive network of cities with similar ambitions, to learn from best practice and to develop a new approach to city branding. For more information please see [here](#).

Intelligent Energy Europe – ENCLOSE Project

Dundee City Council's Transportation Team participated in the Intelligent Energy Europe funded ENCLOSE project from May 2012 to December 2014 as a follower city. The project brought together 9 cities from across Europe to work together to develop solutions to urban freight logistics such as urban consolidation centres, optimised urban freight transport and delivery plans, clean vehicles, last mile logistics and the overall management of urban mobility. Dundee was able to create a Sustainable Urban Logistics Plan as a result of participation and is also looking at wider engagement in an Horizon 2020 project as a result of our involvement in ENCLOSE.

Other international activities

Dundee: UNESCO City of Design

In 2014 Dundee achieved UNESCO City of Design status, the first UNESCO City of Design in the UK and one of 15 globally. Building upon Dundee's history of creativity and innovation, which has seen the city reinventing itself on numerous occasions and our ambition to use design to drive urban regeneration and growth, from the V&A Museum of Design Dundee to using the power of design to engage and develop our citizens and communities. Membership of the UNESCO Creative Cities network will enable us to share experience, knowledge and resources with like-minded cities to promote the value of design and creative industries and to foster world-wide cooperation for sustainable regeneration and development, offering the perspective of an average sized world city to the network. Other design members include: Buenos Aires, St-Etienne, Berlin, Seoul, Nagoya, Montreal, Helsinki, Turin, Bilbao and Beijing. For more information please see [here](#).

Study visits

Dundee regularly hosts study visits from other cities across Europe. Last November saw the University of Abertay and Dundee City Council hosting colleagues from Orebro in Sweden who were looking at the social innovation agenda, the outcome of which is a bid to Horizon 2020, and this month, the City Council hosted guests from Berlin who were looking at sustainable urban mobility.

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Since its establishment in 1996, Falkirk Council has successfully engaged with the European agenda. European funding has been used to lever in additional monies to the area and



helped to deliver a diverse range of initiatives, from large-scale tourism infrastructure projects, local business development and growth, to employment and training programmes that support the most disadvantaged people in our communities. Engagement with EU partners has also helped to develop and promote town-twinning, provide additional learning and exchange opportunities for both young people and adult learners and enabled the exchange of best practice between teaching professionals. These are aspects the Council wishes to continue and build upon.

Twinning examples

Falkirk Council area has 2 twinning partners: Creteil, a large cosmopolitan town south of Paris and the Odenwald, a rural region in South West Germany. The Falkirk District Twinning Association and The Odenwald Association promote twinning with these areas. Twinning activity helps to promote a greater understanding of cultures between different areas within the EU and helps support exchange of ideas and best practice that will have a positive impact for the Council area. Successful exchanges have taken place with our twinning partners and we would envisage this activity to continue in the future, particularly as future funding programmes are placing greater emphasis on partnership working.

European funding

Falkirk Council has been the lead applicant in 46 projects during the programme from 2000 to the present day. During this time additional funding accessed through the European Social Fund (ESF) has assisted 580 unemployed people who are the most disadvantaged in the labour market to access employment and training support. A further 180 young people will be supported into employment through targeted interventions and gain a vocational qualification. Falkirk also participated extensively in the last LEADER programme, which developed and managed several projects in the Falkirk area, and will engage with the new LEADER programme, taking the accountable body role for the first time. Falkirk will also be involved in delivering its part of the Business Gateway-related Structural Fund 2014-2020 intervention for Scotland.

Project examples

Education exchange with Sweden and Norway

Kinnaird Primary School participated in a project with schools in Sweden and Norway, funded by the European Union's Comenius programme. Pupils took part in a TV programme called "TV Europa", showcasing key features of each country's culture. The use of ICT has enabled the three schools to regularly share work. A core part of the programme is visits to partner schools and the partnership involved three planning meetings, one held in each school, giving all staff a chance to engage with their counterparts from their partner schools.

Interreg Young SMEs Project

SMEs are vital part of a successful economy but research shows that most new firms do not appear to survive beyond their 5th year and only 46% of businesses survive for 5 years (Eurostat, 2013). Therefore, Falkirk Council, alongside partners from Spain, Ireland, Malta, Hungary, Germany, Lithuania, Greece, Slovenia and Poland developed a project - via the INTERREG IVC Programme - to understand why SMEs are failing at this age and what can be done to help reverse this situation. The ERDF Interreg IVC Young SMEs Project developed a model of best practice taken from examples from across the partner countries which was refined into a "Young SMEs Road-map" to be used as a tool by policymakers across Europe and as an aid to developing and implementing local and regional action plans specifically to support young SMEs. As a result, other European regions can now benefit from the roadmap to help them transfer and develop specific support to help the survival and growth

of young SMEs. It is intended that policymakers from across Europe will use this document to help them develop and integrate targeted support specifically for SMEs aged 3-5 years into regional action plans by following the steps identified in the roadmap model.

FIFE COUNCIL

Fife's local community is very active in the field of twinning and Fife Council always has, whenever requested, played a very supportive role. The twinning associations deliver their agenda with an emphasis on youth, economic and community development, encouraged by Fife Council. Fife currently has 20 twin and partner towns.

Twinning associations in Fife see forging these links as a long-term commitment which will benefit future generations. The experience has been a successful driver to help young people to understand for social and cultural differences and as a means to address racism or exclusion. It has also been a driver to transfer local knowledge thus generating a pride for people living in Fife, giving them a sense of ownership and "belonging". It is about discovering that people have many things in common all over the world.

Projects have led to finding work placements for youngsters from disadvantaged areas, or helping young artists to have the experience of exhibitions abroad, or for musicians to perform in front of a big audience.

In Fife, activities have taken place among all the twin towns involving individuals, groups, organisations and businesses. Schools, voluntary organisations, local associations, elderly people, youngsters, retail associations, residents, firefighters, health groups and sports clubs have all benefited from twinning activities. Their projects have been mostly self-funded or supported by the European Commission and by other sources of funding (lottery, community grants schemes, youth funding, Fife Council grants) etc. Several years ago Fife Council started to organise exchanges of officers between local authorities to share the expertise or to give some officers work experience in a different cultural environment. Areas of work have included the integration of travelling people into the local community, planning and building control regulations and education methods.

Twinning examples

Myeloma twinning group

Several people who had Myeloma (a very rare form of incurable cancer) formed a group in Fife. At the time, Fife had the highest number of people with Myeloma in Scotland and the group was aware of different treatments which existed in various parts of Europe. Via twinning, Myeloma Fife approached other groups affected by the disease in order to exchange information on different treatments and effects encountered when in treatment. This interaction lasted for three years and helped to raise awareness of the condition. Some of Fife's twin towns provided additional support to the initiative by writing articles in local and regional newspapers calling for more support and providing information on the condition.

Historical twinning arrangements

Some examples of historical note include the twinning arrangement with Trondheim in Norway with Dunfermline which was signed on 6th May 1945 and will celebrate 70 years next month.

Culross is twinned with Veere in the Netherlands, which was formerly the port through which its export goods entered the Low Countries, and this relationship goes back more than 400 years.

Lower Largo in Fife was twinned with Robinson Crusoe Island in Chile in 2004, which is part of the Juan Fernandez Islands in the Pacific Ocean. It is where Alexander Selkirk – who was born in Lower Largo - spent 4 years as a castaway from 1704 and who is said to be the real-life inspiration for Robinson Crusoe.

(For more detailed information on Fife's twinning arrangements, please see Fife's Council separately submitted written evidence).

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Twinning activity

There are several twinning arrangements within the Perth and Kinross area, including with towns in France, Canada, the USA, Germany, Poland, Russia, Australia and China.

The most high-profile twinning arrangement in the region is that of Dull, a Perthshire town of 85 residents, with that of Boring in Oregon, population 10,000. The difference in population means that they cannot be officially twinned, nevertheless cultural connections between the two towns are strong. After forging the link in 2012, the governor of Oregon officially declared 9 August as Boring and Dull Day across the entire state and they celebrate it annually, including by holding a party with a Scottish twist. The pair was joined in 2013 by Bland, a farm community in New South Wales, creating not a "twinned town" relationship but a "League of Extraordinary Communities" as a means to encourage travel and to promote all three places. The coming together of Dull, Boring and later Bland attracted widespread national media coverage in all three countries.

EU project examples

Storytelling in French and English and creating language resources

This Comenius project was a collaboration between several primary and secondary schools in France, Perthshire, and Perth and Kinross Council. The project used storytelling as the vehicle of the production of twelve stories in French and in English for primary and early secondary pupils. Pupils in both France and Scotland were involved in the planning, writing, enacting and recording the stories. The planned activities included classroom observations by French teachers in Scotland and by Scottish teachers in France. The final product is an interactive CD Rom that has been distributed to participating schools. The product has been well-received and has been used as a teaching resource in primary and secondary schools in both countries.

STIRLING COUNCIL

Trade relations with Turkey

Stirling has made strong relationships with Turkey at very senior levels. The benefit of the relationship that the Provost has formed is now being shared across Scotland in a trade mission which will take place at the end of August 2015. Whilst Stirling will have a strong facilitation role, the invitation to companies will be national, to ensure best use is made of that relationship - not just locally but across the country. This is a great example of where civic relationships play a role in broadening Scotland's international networks for the benefit of all.

Languages and education

In Education, with the "A 1+2 Approach to Language Learning" strategy, Stirling Council is ensuring that it continues to build strong, strategic links with cultural organisation partners: l'Institut Francais, the Spanish Embassy and the Goethe Institute. For example, the Council is developing a programme of professional learning for Secondary Modern Languages teachers with the support of the Spanish Embassy which will culminate in growth of professional exchange programmes for teaching staff along with cultural exchange opportunities for our children and young people. Links with Lille continue through l'Institut Francais but with a tighter focus on building teacher capacity in integrating the learning and teaching of French through Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM), along with the development of Scots-French resources to allow children and young people in Lille to celebrate the Scots language. Stirling Council is very keen to ensure that its provision for the learning and teaching of German continues to be a main part of its languages provision in the authority through working with the Goethe Institute.

Twining activity

Stirling has twinning arrangements with Dunedin in Florida, Óbuda in Hungary, Summerside, Prince Edward Island in Canada and Villeneuve-d'Ascq in France.

For more information, please contact:

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Aberdeen City Council – Twinning & International Partnerships

Twinning Aberdeen

Twinning Aberdeen maintains and develops the relationships with Aberdeen's twin cities and international partnerships. These projects are based on cultural, educational, social and economic exchanges. The International Partnerships Officer can help connect groups between twin cities, facilitate communication and relationships and build on strengthening existing twinning projects to create lasting legacy. Additionally the Officer can help support and organise hosting international delegation visits to Aberdeen.

Our Twin cities participate in Aberdeen's Events, giving these occasions an international dimension, increasing awareness of Aberdeen's strong international links and providing locals and visitors the opportunity to see a different culture.

Twinning Aberdeen acts as an excellent platform for promoting the vibrancy of Aberdeen, opening economic opportunities and stimulating interest in Aberdeen as a destination to invest in, live in and visit.

International Twinning Grant

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their community, such as propaganda art in Russia and healthcare in the UK, at a free public event which attracted an audience of over 150 people; secondary school pupils also met with these speakers at more informal learning stations during the first day of the conference; local and international pupils then engaged in a debate facilitated by Europe Direct about how the war currently impacts upon their lives. The event was a great success with participants engaging in lively debate about historical and cultural issues. Secondary school partnerships within the city have since been established with schools in other cities as a direct result of this project.

Twinning Aberdeen also successfully applied for funding for a project that will take place in Autumn 2015. 'Cultural Connections' is a cultural networking event designed to create dialogue between cultural organisations in Aberdeen, Clermont-Ferrand and Regensburg which will increase future projects and partnerships between the cities. Delegates from all three cities will present on projects in their cities to a public audience. A networking event will be organised for the evening with the aim that it will provide an informal opportunity for delegates to meet and discuss ideas for future collaborative work. International delegates will also tour the cities venues and cultural organisations to promote the opportunities that are available with groups in Aberdeen City.

Aberdeen Festivals

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Cultural Projects

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School partnerships

The Twinning and International Partnerships Officer works closely with local schools and colleagues in the Education Department to increase the awareness of international cultures and languages, as well as to foster new and existing international links. 'Global Citizenship' is a core strand of the Curriculum for Excellence. Opportunities to participate in twinning exchange projects enables local young people to actively engage with global citizenship. The Scottish Government has also embedded a new strategy into educational policy which makes it mandatory for all young people to be exposed to learning two additional languages by the time they reach secondary school. Throughout 2014-15, the Twinning & International Partnerships Officer has worked closely with the Education Development Officer for Modern Languages to develop opportunities for pupils and support for teachers.

At the beginning of 2014-15 two active school exchanges existed between schools in Aberdeen and twin cities. Manor Park Primary School and Kincorth Academy continued their exchanges with schools in Clermont-Ferrand and Gomel with pupils from Aberdeen visiting the twin cities. Staff and pupils from Kincorth Academy also began a new exchange with Albertus Magnus Gymnasium in Regensburg. A delegation of teachers from Von Mueller Gymnasium visited Aberdeen in February with the aim of establishing new educational partnerships. This was met with enthusiasm from schools in Aberdeen and teaching staff from Harlaw Academy are planning a reciprocal visit in June 2015 to further develop the partnership. Pupils from Seaton Primary School are also in correspondence with pupils from Von Mueller Gymnasium to prepare them for visiting Regensburg this summer. Several primary schools in Aberdeen have made contact with primary schools in Clermont-Ferrand in preparation for an interactive music exchange project in June. Aberdeen Music School have also made contact with a music school in Stavanger and are in discussions to develop future projects. Furthermore, discussions are currently taking place between the University of Aberdeen's Education Department and ESPE Blaise

Pascal regarding the provision of a partnership which will support primary education students in the teaching of modern languages within schools.

For more information please contact:

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TWINNING IN FIFE

Fife's local community is very active in the field of twinning and Fife Council has always, whenever requested, played a supportive role. The twinning associations deliver their twinning agenda with an emphasis on youth, economic and community development, and are encouraged by Fife Council.

The External Relations Coordinator provides, on request, advice and information on what is twinning, then guides the new partnerships through writing a Constitution, applying for funding or organising some joint inward or outward visits involving members from the local community together with Fife Council officials. The twinning associations also receive guidance through the official twinning process.

Fife has understood that twinning can bring many benefits to people from the community here and abroad. Bringing people together from different parts of the world gives an opportunity for citizens to share problems, to exchange views and to understand different viewpoints on any issue where there is a shared interest or concern. Many twinning associations in Fife see twinning as a long-term commitment which will benefit future generations.

Members from the local community often contact Fife Council's External Relations officers to seek advice on how to go about finding a twin town and how to form a successful partnership. The following should be taken into consideration:

- Twinning can take place between even the smallest villages of similar sizes in terms of area or population but needs careful preparation in order to succeed;
- Participants need to take into consideration the similarities between the two areas such as:
 - Number of inhabitants
 - Size, geography and area (rural or urban)
 - Shared activities (social, economic and environmental)
 - Shared history
 - Similar issues or assets

This is in order to ensure that each town shares the same aspirations and is able to sustain their twinning relationship, involving the communities year after year.

In the experience of Fife Council, twinning has often been a successful driver to help young people to understand social and cultural differences, as a means to address racism or exclusion. It has also been a driver to transfer local knowledge thus generating a pride for people living in Fife, giving them a sense of ownership and belonging. It is about discovering that people all over the world have many things in common.

The future of a strong twinning partnership relies on involving both communities at all levels, providing the means and knowledge through which they are able to engage with other people, and become and remain active participants.

In Fife, many activities have taken place among all the twin town relationships involving individuals, groups, organisations and businesses. In Fife, many schools, voluntary organisations, local associations, elderly people, youth, retail associations, residents, firefighters, health groups and sports clubs have benefited from twinning activities. Their projects have been mostly self-funded or supported by Fife Council grants, the European Commission and other sources of funding (lottery, community grants schemes, youth funding) etc.

Several years ago we started to organise exchanges of officers between local authorities to give them work experience in different cultural environments and to look at specific issues in order to share expertise, in turn building their personal and professional confidence. All the work placements were successful and led to the individual feeling stronger and ready for new challenges. The areas of work which they studied were varied, and included the integration of travelling people into the local community, planning and building control regulations, methods of education or cemetery maintenance.

For many years we also had a Twinning Forum, where the Chairs of the twinning associations convened to present their activities, projects and ideas to their counterparts. New partnerships joined the Twinning Forum in order to receive support towards creating a twinning association. On occasion, the Forum invited speakers such as those from business or MSPs. This was a great medium to generate ideas and to share information about twinning, for example on new activities, funding or fundraising ideas. The forum met every two months and was eventually replaced by email correspondence to circulate information faster and more frequently, and to save on travel costs and time.

Several years ago a group of people who had Myeloma (a very rare form of incurable cancer) formed a group in Fife. At the time, Fife had the highest number of people with Myeloma in Scotland (13 individuals) and the group was aware of different treatments which existed in various parts of Europe. Via twinning, Myeloma Fife approached other groups affected by the disease in order to exchange information on different treatments and effects encountered when in treatment. This interaction lasted for three years and helped to raise awareness of the condition and provided the participants with strength and comfort. Some of Fife's twin towns provided additional support to the initiative by writing articles in local and regional newspapers calling for more support and providing information on the condition. Sadly, in the intervening years, many of the group has passed away.

Other successful projects have led to finding work placements for young people from disadvantaged areas, have helped young artists gain the experience of involvement in exhibitions abroad, or have enabled local musicians to perform in front of large audiences.

A list of all the twinning and partnerships can be found in the annex of this briefing. Some of the links are dormant or have disappeared as indicated. Also in the annex is an example of the information we suggest to submit in a profile about a twin town, providing the information to officials involved in a twinning visit (twinning association and Fife Council).

For more information please contact:

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ANNEX

I. Fife twinning arrangements

Fife has 20 twin and partner towns (both dormant and active) as follows:

TOWNS	STATUS	DATES FORMED	2015
ALBUFEIRA (Portugal) with DUNFERMLINE	Dormant link	May 1995	
BAPAUME (France) with ANSTRUTHER	Twinning	Oct 1991 5 th Sept 1992	
BÖBLINGEN (Germany) with GLENROTHES	Twinning	30 June 1971	
BRUGES (Belgium) with Levenmouth	New partnership One twinning association in each country	Starting in 2015	
CORTE FRANCA (Italy) with ABERDOUR	Twinning	31 st July 2004	
ENCONGOLWENI (Malawi) with Dalgety Bay	Bond of Friendship	7 th September 2009	
FLEKKEFJORD (Norway) with BURNTISLAND	Twinning	24 th February 1946	
HOLZMINDEN (Germany) with LEVENMOUTH	Twinning now closed	27th June 1986	
GANSU (China) with FIFE	Partnership - Not active	1989	
INGOLSTADT (Germany)	Twinning	1962	

with KIRKCALDY			
LOCHES (France) with ST ANDREWS	Cultural partnership	1995 in Loches 1996 in St Andrews	20TH
LOGROÑO (Spain) with DUNFERMLINE	Dormant twinning link	1990	
ÓCSA (Hungary) with Dalgety Bay	Twinning link to be formalised this year		
Robinson Crusoe Island (Chile) with LOWER LARGO	Twinning link	10th Sept 2004	
Ste MÉNEHOULD (France) with CUPAR	Twinning	16 th October 2010	5th
SARASOTA (USA) with DUNFERMLINE	Twinning	23 August 2001	
TRONDHEIM (Norway) with DUNFERMLINE	Oldest twinning link	6 th May 1945	70th
VEERE (The Netherlands) with CULROSS	Partnership at community level only	More than 400 years old	
VICHY (FRANCE) with DUNFERMLINE	Partnership	Since 1990	15TH
WILHELMSHAVEN (Germany) with DUNFERMLINE	Twinning	24 th August 1979	
ZOLOTAREVO (Ukraine) with NEWPORT-ON-TAY	Twinning	20 th July 2002	

II. Requested information for new twinning arrangement

Twin town name / Fife town

1. TOWN	
Address of Municipality	Tel: Fax: E: Mail: Website:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

2. LOCATION
Number of residents (+ number of people in the district or region) Where is it situated?

3. MAIN ACTIVITIES
(E.g.: tourism, agriculture etc.)

4. PARTICULAR ASSETS / PROBLEMS

(E.g. assets such as important factories, geographic location, easy access, or issues such as unemployment etc.)

5. NEAREST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

(In kilometres and miles or in minutes or hours)

DESCRIPTION OF TOWN COUNCIL OR MUNICIPALITY**6. RANGE OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

(e.g. education, planning etc.)

7. HIGHER AND/OR LOWER TIER OF GOVERNMENT

Region or District name (plus functions)

8. NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS

Please indicate date of last local election or future election if you already know it.

9. POLITICAL BALANCE

List or political parties and number of Councillors representing each political party.

10. CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Name of Mayor and date of last and future election
Name of other senior figures (and same as above)
(Please specify which political party for each)

**11. NAMES OF POLITICIANS AND OFFICERS
(responsible for twinning and overseas links)**

Name(s) (please indicate languages spoken, including English)
Tel:
Email:

**12. CONTACT NAME AND NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT
TWINNING ASSOCIATIONS**

Abroad and in Fife
Email:

INVOLVEMENT IN EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**13. JOINT EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES**

(E.g. Objective 1, 2, Etc.) - N/A outside Europe

14. SPECIAL EUROPEAN OR INTERNATIONAL FUNDED PROJECTS

(E.g. Leonardo, Socrates etc.) -

15. MEMBERSHIP OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

(E.g. AER - Assembly of European Regions, NSC - North Sea Commission...)

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

16. MAJOR ANNUAL FESTIVITIES OR TRADE FAIRS

All year round activities:

- 1- Names in the local language
- 2 - Brief description
- 3 - Dates

17. WHAT TO SEE AND DO

Museums, galleries, exhibitions, events etc.

18. HISTORY OF THE TOWN

Summary

You may also want to include a web site address (tourism office etc.)

19. FAMOUS PEOPLE

For example writers, scientists, actors, musicians etc.

TWINNING AND PARTNERSHIP DETAILS

20. OTHER TWIN AND PARTNER TOWNS

Names and countries

21. HISTORY OF LINK WITH FIFE

Signature in Fife + date

Signature abroad + date

How did the partnership begin? Please give as many details as you can.

22. LINK ANNIVERSARY

Forthcoming important anniversary e.g. "The 15th anniversary of the partnership will take place in 2018".

23. SUMMARY OF INWARD AND OUTWARD VISITS

Please list the visits that have taken place between the 2 towns this last year (at community level, youngsters, businesses etc.)

24. SCHOOLS

Primary, secondary, universities etc.

25. TWINNING LINK OFFICER IN FIFE

To be filled in by External Relations Coordinator

26. FIFE TWINNING FORUM

To be filled in by External Relations Coordinator

(Summary of its function and frequency of meeting

Name of Chairman, Secretary + their contact details)

27. STUDENT PLACEMENTS

Nature of work placement (paid, unpaid, training, exchange) and with which service.

28. WORK EXCHANGES

Please indicate if an exchange of employees has taken place and with which business, service, etc. and for how long + generic description of tasks undertaken.

29. NUMBER OF YOUNGSTERS INVOLVED THIS YEAR (2004/05)

Visits, e-mails, youth projects etc.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

30. CURRENCY

AVERAGE EXCHANGE RATE

Use Universal Currency Converter web site

31.

32.

33.