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Convener  
European and External Relations Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
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By email: Joan.McAlpine.msp@parliament.scot  

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Dear Joan  

At her appearance at the EERC on 14 September 2016 the First Minister promised to provide the Committee with further information on the work of the Standing Council on Europe. I attach a note of the Council’s meeting on 29 August 2016 for your information.  

Scottish Ministers will, of course, continue to inform Committee Members about the Council’s work as this evolves in line with their commitment to report to Parliament on its efforts to consider all options for protecting Scotland’s place in Europe.  

Michael Russell
Standing Council on Europe
Second Meeting 29.08.2016

Present: Chair: Prof Anton Muscatelli, Principal and Vice Chancellor, University of Glasgow

Members in Attendance

Vasco Cal, David Frost, Dame Anne Glover, Charles Grant, John Kay, Lord John Kerr, Dame Mariot Leslie, Sir David Edward, Amanda McMillan, Alan Miller, Frances Ruane, Anne Richards, Alyn Smith MEP, Grahame Smith, Professor Andrew Scott, Fabian Zuleeg.

Apologies: David Martin MEP

Ministers in Attendance

Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister
Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs
Alasdair Allan, Minister for International Development and Europe
Michael Russell, Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland’s Place in Europe

Opening Remarks

- Meeting opened with a short introduction from the Chair.
- First Minister then gave a short context and introduction:
  - Welcomed support from the Standing Council in working through detailed and complex issues and welcomed the sub-groups which had been developed;
  - Stated there was no clarity from UK Government on when Article 50 will be triggered or on what the UK negotiating strategy would be;
  - Scottish Government undertaking detailed preparation for negotiations on which the work of the Standing Council was key;
  - Engagement with the UK Government on the question of how the Scottish Government will be involved in developing the UK position is progressing, but has not concluded;
  - Welcomed work of the Council to understand impacts at sectoral level.

Meeting

- Professor Drew Scott gave a presentation. There was a discussion around a range of options that might be available to Scotland, including options which would allow membership of full access to the single market either on a UK or differentiated basis.
- Engagement with the UK Government should focus on bringing Scotland’s policy position as close as possible to the five tests set out by the First Minister. Full membership of the single market is very important because it encompasses much more than just trade in goods – includes free movement of people and services and rights of establishment for business and cross border trade.
- There was a discussion on the importance of engagement with EU states to set out Scotland’s position and to appreciate and listen to what EU states are thinking.
- There was further discussion on the working groups of the Council which will develop more detailed positions in due course. The work-groups set out are as follows:
- Economy and Financial Services;
- Social Protections;
- Higher, Further Education and Funding;
- Diplomacy and Influencing.