

## CONSTITUTION, EUROPE, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE - REQUEST FOR MEMBERS TO TRAVEL TO BRUSSELS

### Nature of request

1. As required under Rule 12.10 of Standing Orders, Bureau approval is sought for the CEEAC Committee to travel to Brussels on 19-21 June. It is intended that seven members of the Committee, if available, and one clerk and one SPICe researcher will undertake the visit which would run from Sunday to Tuesday.

2. Approval has been sought separately from the Conveners' Group, which considered and granted the request on 27 April.

### Justification/benefit

3. The Committee has recently published a report on its inquiry into the Scottish Government's international work. The Committee's view is that it is essential that both the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament continue to have a strong relationship with the EU. The Committee recommended that the Scottish Government publishes a clear strategy and priorities in relation to its engagement with the EU. This should include its priorities in relation to—

- The policy commitment to align with EU law;
- The operation of the EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement;
- Engagement of Scottish institutions in EU programmes;
- A UK-wide approach; and
- Soft power and informal engagement.

4. The purpose of the visit will be to follow up a number of issues which the Committee considered as part of the inquiry including –

- developing future relations with the EU;
- the role of Scotland House in Brussels following the UK leaving the EU including engagement with EU institutions and the UK Mission to the EU; and
- scrutiny of the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) including the UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly.

4. The Session 5 Europe Committee recommend in its legacy paper that a successor Committee “will need to monitor EU policy and legislative developments in order to assess the extent to which a future Scottish Government is remaining aligned with EU law and the implications of the policy approach being taken”. The visit will allow the Committee to discuss EU policy and legislative priorities with both the European Parliament and the European Commission within the context of the Scottish Government's commitment to align with EU law.

5. A key priority for the Committee is developing inter-parliamentary relations and the visit is also intended to allow all Members of the Committee to build relations with the European Parliament including in relation to its role in scrutinising the TCA. The need to build informal relations at an EU level was also raised by a

number of witnesses during the Committee's recent inquiry on the Scottish Government's international work. To increase the benefit of the visit it is anticipated that Members will split into two groups for some meetings in order to widen engagement and cover a wider range of issues.

6. The Committee's programme is still being finalised but meetings are expected to include –

- Scotland House;
- The UK mission to the EU;
- European Parliament;
- European Commission;
- Non-EU embassies;
- Sub-state representations to the EU;
- Policy think tanks.

7. It is expected that the visit will help to enhance Members' awareness of the work of the EU institutions and also to inform the Committee's work priorities for the remainder of the session especially in relation to scrutiny of the Scottish Government's commitment to align with EU law and wider engagement with the EU as well as scrutiny of the TCA.

8. For the reasons stated above – the building of informal relations at the EU level, following up on a number of specific issues raised in the Committee's recent report on the Scottish Government's international work, enhancing Members' awareness of the work of the EU institutions, and informing the Committee's scrutiny of the Scottish Government in terms of its EU engagement over this parliamentary session – it would be of benefit if all Members of the Committee were to attend the visit.

### **Travel and costs**

18. In order to maximise the time available for Members to engage in a full programme of meetings during the visit it will be necessary for Members to travel on the Sunday. This means that they will have almost two full days in Brussels in which to meet with as broad a range of people as possible.

19. Members were provided with additional information regarding travel options for the Brussels trip. The clerks calculated the estimated CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions attributed per passenger using this UK Government document: [Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors 2021](#), for emissions per kilometre travelled as follows –

- Air travel: estimated emissions per passenger is approximately 242kgCO<sub>2</sub>e.
- Train: estimated emissions per passenger is approximately 48.51kgCO<sub>2</sub>e

19. Having been presented with this information and the given the option to either fly or to travel by train, five Members of the Committee opted for the former and two have chosen the latter.

20. The anticipated costs for the visits are set out below.

<b>Costs</b>	<b>£</b>
Return flights from Edinburgh to Brussels (7 people)	1,000
Return Rail Travel from Edinburgh to Brussels (2 people)	565
Overnight Allowance for 2 nights x 9 people	3,960
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,525</b>

**Decision**

20. **The Committee seeks the Bureau's approval for travel to Brussels and for the associated expenditure as detailed in Annexe A.**

**CEEAC Committee Clerks  
April 2022**

## Annexe A

**Visit to Brussels**

<b>Travel</b>	<b>£</b>	
7 economy class air fares from Edinburgh to Brussels	1000	
2 return rail journeys from Edinburgh to Brussels	£565	
 Subtotal	 1565	
<b>Expenses</b>		
2 x overnight allowance for 9 people	3960	
<b>Total</b>		<b>5525</b>

**Costs incurred in current financial year**

Total		<b><u>5525</u></b>
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**Cost Codes**

Committee Travel	Cost
SP414030	1565
Committee Expenses	
SP414035	3960