

CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS INQUIRY

SUBMISSION FROM [ANONYMOUS]

Engaging with the European Union

What principles should inform the focus of the Scottish Government's external affairs policy with regard to the European Union?

There should be a recognition that this is, broadly, not a devolved matter and that the taxpayer should not be paying for a duplicated service. There should also be a recognition that, as a point of courtesy, the UK Government does not intrude on devolved matters. That courtesy should be repaid.

If the Scottish Government persists in creating a duplicated service, the costs should not be borne by UK taxation. The Scottish Government should raise another Scottish tax to pay for this specific purpose, over and above the UK taxation. In these circumstances, the moral hazard of Scottish taxpayers paying for duplicated services *which may not seek the same ends* must be recognised.

More generally: if the Scottish Government chooses not to respect its own remit it cannot complain if others do likewise, and therefore its moral authority in defence of its own remit would be undermined by an extensive footprint in external affairs. In short: the authority of the Scottish Government in devolved matters would be enhanced, if only it would abstain from meddling in the reserved.

Are there examples of best practice for ways in which nations / regions from non-EU Member States engage with and influence the EU?

There appears to be very little evidence of regions attempting to *influence* the EU outside of their overarching nation-state policy.

If *engagement* is understood as the pursuit of investment, etc, then care should be taken to avoid duplication of UK tasks, or the tasks of the other devolved administrations.

What should be the focus of the business plans for the Scottish Government Innovation and Investment Hub offices in Berlin, Brussels, Dublin, London and Paris be?

The pursuit of innovation and investment in Scotland, delivered in co-operation with the UK Government.

How can the Scottish Government Innovation and Investment Hub offices best support the Scottish Government's external affairs policy?

They should not do so. It is not the function of an industrial development organisation, in a liberal and democratic state, to support any Government policy – let alone one that the Government is (largely) not even competent to promulgate.

How can the Scottish Government's Innovation and Investment Hub offices be evaluated effectively?

Perhaps the UK Government or the Scottish Office could carry out an effective and disinterested near-peer review?

How should the Innovation and Investment Hub offices most effectively engage with other Scottish organisations such as Scottish Development International and Visit Scotland?

No response.

Engagement with the rest of the world

What principles should inform the Scottish Government's international engagement? For example, should economic priorities be the key priority or cultural / 'soft power' priorities?

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If the Scottish Government persists in creating a duplicated service, the costs should not be borne by UK taxation. The Scottish Government should raise another Scottish tax to pay for this specific purpose, over and above the UK taxation. In these circumstances, the moral hazard of Scottish taxpayers paying for duplicated services *which may not seek the same ends* must be recognised. Where this extends to troubled areas, these hazards cease to be merely financial. Opponents could play two overlapping layers of Government off against each other. Ultimately, lives could be lost if incompetent interference created the impression that we do not behave in a predictable and coherent manner.

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the Scottish Government in devolved matters would be enhanced, if only it would abstain from meddling in the reserved.

How should the Scottish Government prioritise its international engagement – for example, should the locations prioritised be based on a geography or policy focus?

This is not a devolved matter, and therefore there is no policy focus beyond, for example, selecting a target for trade or investment missions. In that case, the priority is the business case.

What should be the key aims of the Scottish Government's international offices in Beijing, Ottawa, Toronto and Washington DC?

The pursuit of tourism, innovation, and investment in Scotland, delivered in co-operation with the UK Government.

Currently, the Scottish Government has international engagement strategies with Canada, China, India, Pakistan and the USA. Do these strategies and their geographic focus remain appropriate post-Brexit?

There is no reason to believe that these targets were poorly chosen. The question is just whether or not there is a need to complement them in the EU, or repurpose an existing mission in the EU, if and when the Brexit context changes. As that context is still unknown, it is probably too early to answer the question.

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No response.